

UNITED NATIONS AND GENDER: A STUDY OF 'UN-WOMEN'

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

RITWIZA ASTHANA



**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, ORGANIZATION AND
DISARMAMENT STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
INDIA
2012**



Date: 6.07.2012

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled “United Nations and Gender: A study of ‘UN-Women’” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy**, of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my own work. This dissertation has not been previously submitted for the award of the any degree of this University or any other university

Ritwiza Asthana

CERTIFICATE

WE recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

(Prof. Swaran Singh)
Chairperson

Centre for International Politics,
Organization and Disarmament
School of International Studies
J.N.U., New Delhi

(Dr. Archana Negi)
Supervisor

Dedicated to my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Supervisor Dr. Archana Negi for the guidance she gave me during the writing of this dissertation. Always encouraging and patient, she helped me improve my research with her insight and invaluable criticisms and comments. Through the process of working on the research, she taught me the value of discipline, of meeting deadlines and, most importantly, the ethics of research.

Besides, I would also like to convey my thanks to Prof. C.S.R Murthy, Dr. Moushumi Basu, Dr. Yeshi Choedon and Prof. Nivedita Menon for helping me with their inputs at various stages of writing this dissertation. The understanding that I have developed on the subject and also otherwise is all thanks to their kind efforts.

I want to thank my mother, father and both my brothers for being gracious and patient with my ways at all time. Among my friends Sonam Chaudhari deserves mention thanks for extending her help at the most critical of times. I would also like to particularly thank Anshul Dua and Ankita Varma for continuing to indulge me despite their busy schedule.



Ritwiza Asthana

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ACRONYMS

BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for New Era
UNESCO	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GA	General Assembly
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
OSAGI	Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women

OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
TNAs	Transnational Advocacy Networks
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UFDW	Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN- Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Chapter 1: Introduction

With its near universal membership and its status as the custodian of international human rights, the *United Nations* (UN) is a major player in the area of social development. When the UN came into being after the end of the Second World War, it was expected to work as an inclusive institution that would address the social disquiet and the political turmoil that had characterized the interwar period. The UN was expected to provide a platform for the underprivileged to have a voice in the international system. The UN Charter as well as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) address all forms of discrimination, including that based on race, class, religion, sex, etc. One of the recognized “underprivileged” groups that the UN has engaged with is “women”. Although the nature of this engagement has varied over time, the UN can be credited with undertaking some path-breaking initiatives that have favorably impacted the lives of women, directly or indirectly. This study seeks to trace the nature of the UN’s engagement with gender issues, with a special emphasis on recent institutional innovations. This will entail a critical study of the 66 year long history of the UN to understand the political culture prevalent within the institution. A key point of reference in any such research project is the politics that is visible at the various levels, from the politics amongst states, amongst the agencies working on gender to the politics within the women’s movement.

Critics point to the lack of enforcement mechanisms within the UN, which often disables it from acting in key situations. Yet, one cannot easily dismiss the power of ideas and the UN is at the forefront of the process of churning of ideas that eventually become norms.

Mainstream International Relations theory might dismiss ideas as playing a rather rudimentary role in the larger power politics, but states more often than not cannot afford to be seen as acting in violation of such widely accepted norms. When it comes to gender issues, the UN is at the center of the global norm making and standard setting processes. It has led the way in bringing issues that were politically divisive and controversial-domestic violence, sexual violence directed against women in conflicts, absence of women from political positions of power etc - within the domain of international political decision making.

The institutional architecture for women's advancement at the UN has been continuously changing, and its evolution also captures the story of women's struggle to be heard. Before the creation of *UN-Women* in 2010, this institutional architecture comprised the *Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)*, the *Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)*, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, the *United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)*, the *Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)* and the *United Nations International Research and Training for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)*.

Interestingly, in 1945, at the time of the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco, only four of the total 160 signatories were women. This small number notwithstanding, the preamble of the UN charter reaffirms "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of Nations large and small" (UN Charter 1945: 3). This was followed up by the creation of a *Sub-commission on the Status of Women* under the Commission on Human Rights in 1946 with Bodil Begtrup from Denmark as its first Chairperson. The Sub-Commission was soon upgraded to a separate Commission dedicated to ensuring gender equality and promoting women's rights. In the many years of its functioning, the mandate of the CSW expanded significantly. Its contribution included working to establish legal foundations for gender equality like ensuring women access to political rights, drafting of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and promoting participation of women in development. Key areas of success for the Commission were the development of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* and the four world conferences on women.

When the Commission began working, it was aided by the division on the status of women within the UN secretariat, which in 1978 was rechristened as the *Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)*. DAW played a prominent role in supporting the Commission as well as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in promoting the advancement of women. A part of the *Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)*, the Division was mandated to give policy advice and research global norms and to mainstream gender perspectives within the UN system.

The other prominent part of the UN system's gender architecture was the *UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)* which was established in 1976 as a separate entity in autonomous association with the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*. This meant that those applying to UNIFEM for funding would have to do it through the UNDP, but UNIFEM continued to be independent in its organizational functions. UNIFEM focused on four core areas – (a) women's economic security and rights, (b) violence against women, (c) reducing levels of HIV and AIDS in women, and (d) advancing gender justice in democratic governance – and was concerned with implementation of international commitments in national policies. Funded by the voluntary contributions of UN member states, UNIFEM provided funding and technical assistance to activities that promoted gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries. It also managed the *United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women*.

The *Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)* was created in 1997, following a recommendation made at the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995. The idea behind creation of the position of OSAGI was to have someone with direct access to the UN Secretary-General. OSAGI was thereby mandated to advise the Secretary-General on gender issues as well as to represent him/her at forums on gender issues and advancement of women. The main objective of OSAGI was to formulate strategies that promoted and strengthened the implementation of the Platform for Action of 1995, the Millennium Declaration of 2000, and the Outcome Document of the Special Session of the General Assembly on Beijing+5 in 2000. It was also the key institution to implement gender mainstreaming in the overall UN system and provided leadership to the *Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE)*, in addition to offering policy guidance to DAW.

Established in 1976 on the recommendation of the first World Conference on Women, the *United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW)* worked to promote policy research and training programmes on gender, migration, remittances and development; gender, peace and security; and governance and women's political participation. These research programmes are then

used to make policies more gender responsive. It also facilitated information sharing and supported capacity building through network mechanisms and partnerships between UN agencies, governments, academia and civil society to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. INSTRAW functioned through voluntary contributions from NGOs, governments, and academia. The headquarters of INSTRAW are located in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic since 1983.

In 2010, this setup was fundamentally altered with the creation of 'UN-Women', which merged the four previously distinct parts of the UN system – DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI, UNIFEM – in the hope that the merger of mandates as well as resources would ultimately lead to gender issues getting due attention within the UN System. UN-Women will be funded in two ways: through the regular UN budget for its normative work (funds to be approved by the General Assembly), and by voluntary contributions for its operations. The budget for UN-Women is estimated to be at least \$500 million – double the combined budgets of DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM.

The creation of UN-Women is the result of a long pending demand asking for a more concerted effort on women's issues that could only be achieved through a single point agency. One of the critiques of the UN's work on gender has always been fragmented effort which caused loss of funds and duplication of effort. Compared to the other UN bodies that dealt with specific vulnerable segments of the world's population such as UNICEF, the gender architecture at the UN prior to the creation of UN-Women lacked leadership, cohesion and funding, which led to less visibility as well as operational capacity. The multiplicity of agencies also caused friction between agencies and governance became problematic. Lack of a focal point was established as the prime impediment in implementing many of the initiatives of the UN on gender issues. For example in the case of UNIFEM, unlike other specialized agencies, it lacked a governance structure and in-country operations. Being attached to the UNDP, the executive director of UNIFEM was responsible to the UNDP administrator and thus had to depend on UNDP and others to implement any project. Even in terms of funding, if we look at the combined budgets of UNIFEM, DAW, OSAGI and INSTRAW for 2008, they

sum up to \$247 million, while the UNICEF alone had a budget in excess of \$3.3 billion (UNICEF Annual Report 2008: 33).

The demand for a separate entity for women was being made since long by various women's groups citing lack of leadership, coordination, coherent governance structure, funding and capacity. However it was the recommendation of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence set up by the then Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2006 which finally set the ball into motion. Articulating concern with the UN System's gender architecture, the Report criticized the existing set up for being "incoherent, under-resourced, and fragmented" and recommended establishment of an entity focused on gender equality and empowerment (General Assembly 2006b: 24).

Following this Report, the clamor for a new agency became louder. The Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR) campaign, a coalition of some 300 women's, human rights and social justice groups came together in 2008 to demand the creation of UN-Women. The GEAR campaign was a comprehensive effort with regional lobby groups working with governments to gather support for this new entity. While some countries like Japan, India, Germany and U.S. raised concerns about the funding mechanisms for the new organization and also regarding possible duplication of activities between UN-Women and other UN system bodies, there were others like Egypt, Sudan and Pakistan who were skeptical of the power of the new agency to dictate an agenda to the countries (GEAR, 2010). The proposal to have a separate entity for gender equality and women's empowerment received backing primarily from the Scandinavian countries (Center for UN Reform Education, 2012).

The passing of UN General Assembly Resolution 64/289 in July 2010, established UN-Women, and outlined the broad contours of its functioning UN-Women. Assuaging the skeptical member countries and addressing the demands of women's groups, the new organization promised a more streamlined structure guaranteeing less duplication of effort and increased funding. Civil society, however, was left disappointed with no formal position being granted to it. There was also some confusion regarding the nature of the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure with the General Assembly, the ECOSOC and CSW granting "normative guidance", while the General Assembly, the

ECOSOC and the Executive Board of the UN-Women providing “operational policy”. Nonetheless, UN-Women offers a consolidation of institutional efforts towards gender equality and women’s advancement.

In this study, the aim is to look deeper into the debate that led to the creation of UN-Women, and analyzing the roles of the major players involved. The relationship between UN-Women and the other UN system entities is a key area of interest, with the UN-Women acquiring a higher status in the UN system. Another issue of research interest will be the high expectations deriving from the new entity. The effectiveness of UN on gender vis-à-vis in-country operational capacity is expected to increase with UN-Women opening up regional centers. One criticism of the pre-UN-Women gender architecture had been the lack of gender perspective and programming in UN country teams. Now with UN-Women proposing to lead and coordinate the UN system on gender equality, the in-country operations are expected to become more gender sensitive. The creation of UN-Women is also expected to make the UN more accountable in terms of the implementation of the policy of gender mainstreaming adopted at the Beijing Conference. A perspective from organization studies will be central in analyzing the inter-organization politics preceding the creation of UN-Women and the expectations for its future.

Understanding the trajectory of the UN’s engagement with gender over the years is the first objective. Thus the aim is to analyze the evolution of gender issues within the UN and the means sought to address those issues. Strategies and measures taken up by the UN have often been criticized by women’s movements for falling short of expectations in offering a radical break. This study seeks to find those gaps in policy and implementation and to assess how the creation of UN-Women would change this scenario. This is done by analyzing the key policy documents of the UN on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Policy initiatives such as gender mainstreaming, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* of 1979, the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* of 2000, etc. By studying these documents and the steps taken to implement these, one arrives at an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the UN System’s gender architecture.

Such a study helps in narrowing the implementation gap and also in narrowing the substantive problems with such policy mechanisms.

One prominent aspect of the nature of the UN's engagement with gender issues has been the impact of the transnational women's movement. The movement has been backed by institutional mechanisms powered by the UN such as the World Conferences on Women in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995, and other measures like the International Decade for Women (1975-85) and most recently, the Global Civil Society Advisory Group to UN-Women created in 2012 to facilitate regular consultations and dialogue between civil society and UN-Women. The transnational women's network has played a key role in the creation of UN-Women as well. It worked as a lobbying group engaging with governments and the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence established by the Secretary-General. The network which culminated in the *Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR)* network, a congregation of over 300 women's groups from the world over, made presentations to the High-level Panel and held workshops in countries to put pressure on Member States to support the new entity. The present research studies the transnational women's network and its association with the UN and the effect this association has had on the UN system gender architecture.

The implicit assumption in the study is that the UN through its normative power can influence state behavior. Following from the normative position that provides the UN with agency as an independent actor, the study then aims at tracing the genealogy of the UN system's gender architecture. The basic idea is to understand why the need was felt to have a separate entity within the UN dealing with gender issues. Using aspects of Christer Jonsson's Interorganization theory and network analysis, the study looks at issues such as inter-agency competition, duplication of efforts, the governance structure, etc to understand how all of these affected the effectiveness of the UN system's gender architecture.

The UN system's gender architecture that existed prior to the establishment of UN-Women comprised four distinct agencies in addition to the CSW. They had different mandates which were often not clearly demarcated, but they continued to coexist and

function. The interaction between these agencies and their individual mandates provide a significant understanding of the functioning and direction of the UN system gender architecture. With the creation of UN-Women, the four agencies UNIFEM, DAW, INSTRAW and OSAGI merged into one. The study aims at understanding what this merger meant for inter-agency rivalry.

By analyzing the creation of UN-Women and its subsequent work, the study seeks to understand what having a separate entity for women means in terms of the UN's commitment to gender issues. The debate that preceded the creation of UN-Women as documented in the various UN General Assembly resolutions, Panel Reports and the reaction of women's groups provides an understanding of the new architecture and the vision behind it. The key resolutions that set in motion the process that led to the creation of UN-Women such as the World Summit Document of 2005, the Report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence of 2006, or the Resolution 64/289 of 2010 and the formal as well as informal debate that accompanied each of these resolutions are indicative of the position of Member States and also of the UN system itself on gender issues.

The study aims to provide an institutional understanding of the changes within the UN system on gender issues and while doing so, it also emphasizes some of the substantive changes that have accompanied these institutional changes. While primarily looking at the evolution of the UN system's gender architecture, the study also delves into the way the UN has engaged with women on issues of development, security and rights.

The analysis of various facets of the UN system's interaction with gender issues over time is done by compiling the various primary documents of the UN and the reports made by various women's groups. Security Council Resolutions like 1325 that details the need to include women in the peace and security discourse, or SCR 1820 that addresses the instances of sexual violence directed against women during conflicts and the need to recognize such acts as war crimes, or the discourse on development that has evolved from the Women in Development to Gender and Development approach, signifying the change in understanding of women as passive recipients of development aid to one which recognizes them as active agents with capabilities of partnering the development agenda.

The CEDAW is the single most important document on women's rights to emerge from the UN. The study goes into the details of the convention and tries to understand the way women's rights were recognized as human rights. By analyzing the text of the convention, the country positions on the CEDAW, the additions made to the convention such as the Optional Protocol adopted in 1999 and the General Recommendation number 19 made in 1992 dealing with the issue of gender based violence, one can arrive at an understanding of the nature of the engagement between the UN and gender issues. The study also uses the example of India and its reports to the CEDAW committee to understand the reasoning of Member States while dealing with issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. The public-private dichotomy, the importance of cultural and religious traditions and the issue of state sovereignty are cited by states to make exceptions to the CEDAW.

On the issue of the transnational women's networks, prominent work has been done by Keck and Sikkink. In their analysis they emphasize the important role that transnational networks play as sites of cultural and political renegotiation (Keck and Sikkink 1997: 502). On the buildup to the World Conferences on Women, the work done by Peggy Antrobus is particularly useful as she carefully details the underlying debates and dialogues happening during each of the conferences, taking into account both the intergovernmental as well as non-governmental setup. Taking it further is the work by Zinnser who tries to understand the difference between the women's groups from the North and the South and how this difference played out during the conferences (Zinnser 2002: 149).

The study also takes much from the work done by scholars working on women's rights such as Hillary Charlesworth and Elizabeth Riddell-Dixon who provide a critique of the international human rights regime from a gender perspective. Both the author's works have focused on the need to bring women's rights within the larger human rights agenda. Though critical of the use of gender mainstreaming as a concept that neutralizes gender, Charlesworth makes the case for an approach that goes beyond the legalistic understanding of women's rights (Charlesworth 2005: 16). Elisabeth Prugl and Mary K. Meyer in their book on gender politics and global governance provide a diverse

understanding of the ways in which gender issues have seeped into the agenda of different organizations from the European Union to the UN. Prugl and Meyer deal with the various aspects of global governance and provide a gendered analysis of the same. In all the case studies offered the focus is on strategies taken up by women's organizations working in global spaces. The major objective of the book is to give a view of the prevalent political culture within these organizations and the impact this has on gender issues (Prugl and Meyer 1999: 3). Prugl also emphasizes on the perpetuation of gender inequality in certain areas of global governance. Giving a broad overview of how feminist analysis of international institutions should move forward, she argues for theorizing international institutions as the crossroads of agency and structure (Prugl 2004:69).

While on the issue of gender and international institutions, there are also authors such as Jacqui True, Jan Jindy Pettman and Cynthia Enloe who, through their work, seek to understand the way power operates by examining gender. By providing a feminist analysis of areas such as peace and security, they seek to understand how gender comes to be formed and reformed in the international system. Interestingly in her work, while amenable to the idea of engagement, Sandra Whitworth exemplifies the different worlds of feminism and international politics. Nonetheless, she points out how by using the vocabulary of gender mainstreaming, organizations de-politicize gender. She argues that international institution such as the UN do not actually understand gender as constituting of relation of power and instead treat it as a gender neutral category (Whitworth 1996: 132). Similar argument is also made by Baden and Goetz in their analysis of the use of "gender" at the Beijing Conference in 1995, whereby they contend that by using gender as a substitute for "sex" the UN neutralized the struggle that went into recognizing gender as a social construction depicting a power relation (Baden and Goetz 1997: 19).

In studying the establishment of UN-Women, the various primary documents starting from the World Summit Outcome document of 2005 to the General Assembly Resolution 64/289 are of importance. The various formal and informal consultations in addition to the work done by the transnational women's network and other social groups are also of relevance to understand the process and politics behind the creation of UN-Women. The

major journals that work extensively on the UN and gender issues such as *Feminist Review*, *Gender and Development*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *International Organization*, *Harvard Human Rights Journal* and the Center for UN Reform agenda, etc. are also prominent sources of information on the issue.

Overall, the aim of the study is to provide an institutional understanding of the UN's engagement with gender issues. It looks at transnational women's groups, the World Conferences on Women, the policy of gender mainstreaming, MDGs, CEDAW, SCR 1325, 1820, etc., in addition to the analysis of the institutional set-up at the UN. The study further delves into the working of the various agencies on gender issues prior to the establishment of UN-Women and analyzes the problems that accompanied their functioning. By doing so, the study prepares the ground for analyzing the new entity of UN-Women. The essential question the study tries to address is the reason for the need felt by the UN to innovate and create a new agency for women and how it is an improvement on the previous UN system's gender architecture. The study goes further in looking at UN-Women's work, funding and mandate and tries to understand the ground it needs to cover to fulfill the expectations that accompanied the euphoria of its establishment.

Chapter 2: The United Nations and the Transnational Women's Movement

International politics was traditionally understood to be state centric, both practically and theoretically. Mainstream International Relations theorists either dismissed the idea of a model of international politics that used non-state actors as their primary variables, or considered these actors as peripheral players. Nonetheless, in recent times there has been an acknowledgement of the role that certain non state actors can play in shaping the course of decisions. Prominent amongst these actors are the transnational advocacy networks who, through means varying from pressurizing to lobbying, manage to reframe ideas and change the nature of policy debates. These actors find in international organizations a forum where they can come together to influence policy debates. The UN, owing to its status and its representation, provides for these transnational networks, the ideal platform to consolidate their position as a relevant player in the international arena and to build better linkages with likeminded groups from around the world.

The role of transnational networks has been particularly prominent in bringing gender into focus in the international institutional agenda. Women's organizations have come together to form an alliance that challenges the traditional nature of discourse in international politics and in doing so, the UN has provided them with greater strength. Ironically, the UN has also aided the transnational alliance of women's organizations by failing to address gender as an issue. As international organizations with powers to influence laws and norms that directly affect the lives of women, the UN failed in some way to capitalize on its position thereby inspiring the dialogue amongst women's organizations on ways to fill this gap. The space to carry out such a dialogue was provided by the UN itself through its various conferences, particularly the women's conferences.

The process to validate the inclusion of gender issues at the UN was initialized with the creation of the *Sub-commission on the Status of Women* in 1946 which was shortly

upgraded into a commission. Despite of the rather limited representation of women in decision making during the initial days of the UN, the preamble of the Charter however reaffirms faith “*in the equal rights of men and women*”. The Charter identifies promotion and protection of the fundamental freedoms and human rights of peoples and individuals without distinction as to race, *sex*, nationality, or religion as one of its primary goals. This equality principle went a long way in providing the women's movements with an opportunity to make demands and to converge together to bring about a change in women's lives. The International Women's Year of 1975 and the UN conferences on women in 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1995 provided an apt forum for consolidation of the efforts being made worldwide.

The global movement thus developed was also representative of the changing nature of international politics where *Nongovernmental Organizations* (NGOs) and women's groups which are generally domestic in nature joined hands with likeminded organizations worldwide and together influenced international decision making process. As Keck and Sikkink point out these networks “carry and re-frame ideas, insert them in policy debates, pressure for regime formation, and enforce existing international norms and rules, at the same time that they try to influence particular political issues” (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 501). The transnational women's movement does away with the myth of the monolith of an all pervasive state, and sees it as a transmission belt that transmits the preferences that society has across the international system. This understanding, grounded in liberal theory and borrowing from the constructivist school, blurs the difference between the domestic and the international.

Theorizing the global women's movement

The transnational women's movement that linked together different experiences and life stories is fascinating for the sheer array of groups and individuals it claimed to represent. The diversity of the women's movement is unparalleled and also often inexplicable. Chandra Mohanty builds on the concept of “imagined community” as developed by

Benedict Anderson and stresses that the “solidarity across often conflictual locations and histories derives from the political links we choose to make among and between struggle” (Mohanty 1991: 51-80).

Globalization has been a great enabler in providing the means and a conducive environment for women's organizations to network. However, there co-exists a debate over how localization and the “politics of location” can enhance or curb the women's movement (Naples 1998: 328-329). Globalization and localization in fact operate hand in hand, with local sites providing groups the space for politicizing their actions and in doing so, also providing the environment that facilitates a global linkage. The *Women, Food, and Agriculture Network (WFAN)* is an example where a small group of women ended up building a network of activists, farmers and consumers (Dickenson and Schaffer 2001: 220). Delving further into the notion of “local”, Naples argues that “many of these sites for building alliances and political strategies may not be coterminous” (Naples 1998: 348). The concept of ‘collective identity’ which is seen as essential for a movement to sustain itself was always problematic for women's movement. The difference of class, ethnicity, religion, geographic location, caste, etc is hard to ignore while such a collective identity of the movement is being defined. According to Keck and Sikkink, collective identity consists of three parts: the boundaries that mark off a group; consciousness, or the ways of defining a groups' common interests; and the politicization of everyday life, embodied in symbols and actions that challenge received wisdom (Keck and Sikkink 1998:505).

Another way to understand the women's movement is through the concept of feminist consciousness-raising or “Freirian conscientization”. In order to develop a “Freirian conscientization” reflection on personal experience is combined with socio-political analysis to construct and generate global advocacy. In combination with praxis whereby this reflection leads to action, the women's movement developed to challenge neo-liberal and fundamentalist state policies at the national and global levels (Antrobus 2004: 19). In their seminal work on transnational networks, Keck and Sikkink point to the four

strategies employed by such networks to be effective which includes information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics and accountability politics (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 502-503). An assessment of the transnational women's network using these categories shows that the network has in fact managed to galvanize sufficient mileage through symbolic events and conferences to make themselves a significant player. Not only has the movement used dramatic information but has also depended on personal testimonies in phrasing their demands, it has also used symbols such as the doves used during the International Women's Year to establish its identity while also using both moral and material leverage to make states and non state actors accountable.

Stienstra, meanwhile, sees the growth of the transnational women's movement as a response to the changes in the system of production or other global dislocations. Women's movements have organized transnationally especially over the past twenty years in response to critical changes in women's lives (Stienstra 2000:215). These women's movements have taken their strength from the organizing done locally and nationally and translated it into transnational networks .

This being said, the movement while going global has defied some traditional understandings of a social movement. Not only does it not have a well defined identity of its own but it also doesn't have a defined agenda or means of dealing with issues. The transnational women's movement therefore does not fit into the traditional understanding of a social movement. While it does not have an identity, or common objectives or coordination of efforts, but over the course of time, it has managed to consolidate itself while celebrating the diversity that it represents.

When the transnational movement first started to emerge in the 1970s with the various conventions being held at the UN and the declaration of the International Women's Year, there were doubts being raised about whether the movement could be properly called a movement in the absence of shared objectives, standard language, common identity, continuity and a coordination mechanism. But the women's groups banked on a more fluid agenda that could help involve maximum number of women in the movement.

Acknowledging the differences between women worldwide and the differences in their demands and problems averted the homogenizing practice that a traditional definition of social movement entails. This was a strategic decision as much as it was a political point; it was a way to get the numbers and thereby the legitimacy required to be heard at the international stage. As Ruppert puts it, "The political process of international women's movements has been shaped by the insight that international politics does not simply take place at the inter-nation-state level, but also encompasses multi-centric and multilevel processes. Thus the movement's multidimensional political understanding, which is sensitive to differences, almost predestined it to become the most global of social movements of the 1990s" (Ruppert 2000: 147).

The women's movement is particularly significant as a player as issues related to women have generally fallen victim to the logic of sovereignty. States have often been rather protective of their power when it comes to international norms that can potentially alter women's lives. This is more to do with the inherent patriarchy in the society, in addition to the traditional understanding of home. The public-private dichotomy is vital for certain states to retain domestic legitimacy. Culture and religion which are used to enhance this dichotomy, are important issues in domestic politics and thereby prevent states from taking actions that will be unpopular among the masses, even if these decisions are emancipatory. When the League of Nations asked for information on the status of women in 1935, the United Kingdom replied with the following statement: "The extent to which effect should be given in any State to the principle of the equality of the sexes is a matter for that State to determine under its domestic law according to its own circumstances and requirements" (Miller 1994: 239).

In such situations, where the structure of domestic institutions is closed and it is difficult for local women's groups to gain leverage with the state or to participate in decision making processes, transnational networks become key. They provide women groups a chance to engage with international organizations such as the UN and thereby use the

leverage gained in their interaction with international society to put pressure on their governments.

Even within the UN, addressing gender concerns was a problem, as many states did not consider the issue to be a "collective goods" problem that needed to be addressed globally through an international forum. However, as Keck and Sikkink argue, issues concerning bodily harms to vulnerable individuals, and legal equality of opportunity manage to transcend political and cultural contexts making state more willing to take necessary actions (Keck and Sikkink 1998: 506). Since most of gender issues fall within the ambit of these broadly recognized norms, the lack of action by states becomes more difficult to understand and this then instigates women groups to form networks that can address the gap in actions.

While the need for a transnational network of women's groups is most important, caution is required in understanding the nature of such alliances. Power is an inevitable component in any such alliance and the transnational women's movement is not free from power equations. Owing to their resources and technological gap, women groups from the North tend to be in a dominant position in the movement. Not only do they have an edge financially but also in decision making as most of the international organizations are located in the North. It is easier for them to network and galvanize support, and so the agenda that is presented as that of the global women's movement bears a distinct imprint of the Northern women groups. The Western NGOs with their funding and access are often in conflict with other women's groups from the South as was witnessed during the Mexico Conference in 1975.

This supremacy of a particularistic understanding of 'women' has often been criticized by groups in the South who see this as a homogenizing exercise. However, networks also offer space for negotiation where meanings and understandings can be moulded and reformed and be made more inclusive. David Harvey aptly summarizes the need for the transnational movement to move beyond "narrow solidarities and particular affinities shaped in particular places and adopt politics of abstraction capable of reaching out

across space, across the multiple environmental and social conditions” (Harvey 1999: 351).

Another problem with the transnational women's movement has been its NGO-centric nature. Sonia Alvarez points to the problems with such a transnational movement, where “States and Intergovernmental organizations increasingly turn to feminist NGOs as *gender experts* rather than as citizen's groups advocating on behalf of women's rights. Second, neoliberal states and IGOs often view NGOs as *surrogates for civil society*, assuming they serve as “intermediaries” to larger social constituencies. And third, *States increasingly subcontract feminist NGOs* to advise on or execute government women's programs” (Alvarez 1999: 181-209), emphasis added.

When NGOs dominate the discourse and direction of the transnational women's movement, the other multiple ways in which women organize themselves become invisible. This is especially true for a country with the kind of divergence that are visible in India. Unlike the NGOs which are mostly led by middle class, professional women often with a degree in social work, there is also a large number of associations that are not “organized” in the technical sense but are more closely involved with the lived experiences of many women.

Ellen Dorsey summarizes the obstacles that the transnational women's movement faces as being too philosophical, displaying competing strategies and finally having to prevent demobilization (Dorsey 2001: 440). With a movement that organizes itself across different identities, the women's movement faces the test of disagreements over principles, goals, strategies, etc. However as Sidney Tarrow argues, an apt political opportunity can structure a social movement. “Social movements form when ordinary citizens, sometimes encouraged by leaders, respond to changes in opportunities that lower the costs of collective action, reveal potential allies and show where elites and authorities are vulnerable” (Tarrow 1994: 169). And such an opportunity was presented to the women's movement by the UN through its various International Conferences on

Women as well as other conferences in the 1990s that provided for women groups to get together.

The transnational women's movement has been successful in transcending the differences and working its way through disagreements and has evolved into a political movement that engineers social changes. As Antrobus points out, "one way of clarifying these apparent contradictions is to recognize two mutually reinforcing tendencies within women's movements – one focused on gender identity (identity politics) and the other concerned with a larger project for social transformation" (Antrobus 2004: 11).

This complex relationship between the transnational women's movement and 'gender' identity provides an interesting understanding of the content of the movement and the direction it has taken. With its core constituency comprising women with different identities and with strands within the movement that challenged what they perceived as an attempt to de-politicize gender, the movement found it difficult to find a common voice. Working in a scenario where language itself is seen as a part of politics, and words such as 'women' and 'gender' are contested as representative of a certain power equation, the transnational women's movement has had to trudge carefully in its effort to arrive at an acceptable agenda.

Joan Scott defines gender as a "primary way of signifying relationships of power" (Scott 1986: 1067). Thus the use of 'gender' by institutions or the transnational women's movement becomes problematic as it tends to simplify this relationship. Charlesworth argues that by using the technique of gender mainstreaming, the feminist concept of "gender" has been "stripped of any radical or political potential. Gender has been defanged" (Charlesworth 2005: 16). In a similar vein, Elson points out that the "gender-disaggregation approach tends to a static and reductionist definition of gender (as woman/man)-stripping away consideration of the relational aspects of gender, of power, and ideology and how patterns of subordination are reproduced" (Elson 1993: 240).

The use of 'gender' by the UN and the transnational women's movement has attracted criticisms that are manifold. While some feel that the way 'gender' has been deployed leads to feminist policy ambitions being "sacrificed to the imperative of ease of institutionalization" (Baden and Goetz 1997: 3), the other strand feels that the focus on using gender as a social construct moves attention away from women's subordination to gender constructions, from the politics and choices of the agents (including women's movement) to gendered structures that passively envelop both men and women and make it increasingly difficult to develop strategies for emancipation of women (Zalewski 1998: 127).

Though the nomenclature of 'women' has come to be regarded as the strategic tool to present a collective will at the international stage, but there continue to be differences amongst feminists on what this collective identity really represents. To arrive at an all encompassing identity of a 'woman' is problematic as it ends up being a homogenizing exercise that ignores crucial differences based on class, geographical location, race, etc. These differences are crucial if the emancipatory strategies being pursued by the movement are to be made meaningful for the women who need it the most.

Baden and Goetz emphasize that such differences in defining 'women' risks "the reality of women's oppression falling between the many stools of feminist anxieties over identity" (Baden and Goetz: 7). As a way forward for the women's movement, Mohanty suggests that elision between 'women' as a socially constructed group, and 'women' as material subjects of their own history be made, in order that "the material and ideological specificity of women's position are appreciated, and generalization about gender relations is avoided" (Mohanty 1991: 123).

The transnational women's movement and the UN

Owing to its status as both an actor as well as an arena, the UN is perhaps the best forum for women's groups to converge. It provides them with the means as well as the method to register their presence and to influence the norm making process in a way that can

elevate the condition of women around the world. Though being a primarily state centric organization, the UN is handicapped when it comes to controversial issues or even in the matter of enforcement of resolutions. Traditional excuses of state sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction in addition to the cultural-religious argument prevent the UN from implementing path-breaking solutions. Nonetheless, the UN has managed to trudge a rather difficult middle path maneuvering its way around state resistance.

While doubts can be raised about the seriousness of the UN in addressing gender issues or its approach in dealing with gender concerns, the UN's role as an arena for convergence of different viewpoints has been particularly helpful for the transnational women's movement. It has been successful in providing women from around the world a chance to meet and exchange their thoughts through various conferences and other events. Not only does it mean a more inclusive agenda for the movement, but it also greatly increases the strength of the movement. This power of numbers becomes significant in drawing the attention of the states at the UN as well as domestically. With an international alliance to monitor the working of the states, it becomes difficult for states to relegate gender to a secondary concern.

Tracing the history of feminist organizing, Leila J. Rupp contends that women initially started to organize around the end of the nineteenth century. Three major international women's organizations that developed around the same time were the *International Council of Women (ICW)* in 1888, the *International Alliance of Women in 1902 (IAW, originally the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, IWSA)*, and the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)* in 1915. This process of organizing women around different issue areas came to a partial halt during the First World War and was completely stalled in 1939 with the outbreak of the Second World War; however some semblance of activity was felt during the interwar period with representatives from the transnational movement forming coalitions that lobbied with the League of Nations. Emphasizing the action on the ground, Rupp quotes the experience of a woman in Geneva between the wars, "everyone was "getting together"" and "all the

"get-togetherers" would "get-together" once again, centrally and all-embracingly" (Rupp 1984: 1576).

Nonetheless, these organizations and coalitions suffered from lack of inclusiveness. Coming as they did at the time of colonization, the Euro-American women from the North were the obvious leaders of such bodies taking all the decisions and also defining who could be a part of the collective identity of the movement. Other than the obvious socio-cultural bias in the movement, the women from other parts of the world also had logistical problems with the language of debate, the venue, the cost of travelling etc. serving as further hindrance in reaching a more equitable and inclusive identity. Also the movement lacked a common platform with a worldwide presence that could help build alliances and increase leverage internationally.

The UN was not the first international or intergovernmental body to deal with questions that affected the status of women. Indeed, the groundwork for its Charter had already been laid by the Hague Conventions on Private International Law in 1902, the Covenant of the League of Nations in 1924, the Pan-American Union's Lima Declaration of 1938, and the Declaration of Philadelphia of the International Labour Conference in 1944. However, previous attempts by women to obtain international recognition of women's right to equality in the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations, had brought mixed results. Despite demands from women delegates, particularly Latin American women, the League failed to draft an equal rights treaty or take the initiative in conducting an investigation of the legal status of women worldwide (Miller 1994:239).

After the end of the Second World War and with the coming into being of the UN, much of this was about to change. In terms of language and thought, the Charter was more progressive than these documents and quite categorically declared its belief in the equal rights of men and women. However, only about half of the UN's member countries gave women unrestricted rights to vote and hold public office, and very few countries found it necessary to include women in their delegations.

The four women signatories among the 160 who assembled in San Francisco in 1945 for the signing of the UN Charter, the “founding mothers,” as Hilikka Pietilä refers to them, “laid the groundwork for the struggle for gender equality that has since gained momentum throughout the world” (Pietilä 1970:9). The handful of women participating in this event collaborated with forty-two NGOs to ensure that the phrase “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” was included in Article 1 of the Charter. They also succeeded in changing the language of the Preamble and the Charter from “equal rights among men” to read “equal rights among men and women” (Jain 2005: 15).

Women inscribed their identity as holders of rights in the founding documents of the UN—the UN Charter (1945) and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* of 1948. Minerva Bernardino, Bertha Lutz, Wu Yi-Fan, and Virginia Gildersleeve used their influence to create a separate human rights body for advancing women's rights in the UN almost immediately thereafter; what would become the *Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)* was established as a sub-commission of the UN's *Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)* in 1946 (Fraser 1986: 77). The seed of the transnational women's movement was actually sown during the creation of the *Sub-commission on the Status of Women* (which was subsequently upgraded to a commission status) when for the first time a formal setup was created to address concerns of women specifically. The idea of a separate Commission for women was a novelty and an indication that the UN understood the need for gender to be a significant issue that needs to be addressed internationally.

Despite being a small body with just fifteen members, the Commission was able to draw the attention of the other key bodies such as the Commission on Human Rights. The members of CSW regularly attended the meetings of the Commission on Human Rights as it worked through the long and arduous process of drafting the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*. Articles of the draft declaration were sent to the CSW for comment, and commission members insisted that the language of the declaration be gender specific and gender inclusive (Emmerij, Jolly, and Weiss 2004: 189).

In 1952, the UN put the campaign for women's suffrage on a legal footing. That year, the General Assembly adopted the *Convention on Political Rights of Women* "to implement the principle of equality of rights for men and women contained in the Charter of the United Nations" (General Assembly 1952: 2). The Convention was to bind the countries in contract to ensure that women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination, women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination and that women shall be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination (Razavi and Miller 1995: 14) . The CSW went on to take up many more contentious issues like female genital mutilation, violence against women, etc. In fact, at the instance of the CSW and ECOSOC, the UN General Assembly adopted conventions seeking to establish equality for women in areas as diverse as political rights, marriage laws, laws relating to nationality, and trafficking/slavery. The UN in its effort was backed by a much larger constituency of women on the "outside". These were women from the nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations such as the Inter-American Commission of Women, women's associations, trade unions, cooperatives, academia, professional bodies, and political parties.

The women who were on the outside and on the inside formed coalitions which were sometimes based on ideology or could be issue based but it was this coalition which helped the small number of women who were involved with the UN institutionally to gather the necessary force behind an issue. Devaki Jain points out that, "Strategic combinations of women located in different spaces in the system were a not uncommon feature of these "acting styles". Often a triangular alliance formed between three sets of women: women delegates to UN bodies, women working in the Secretariat and other parts of the UN, and women working outside the UN, the representatives of nongovernmental organizations and academicians or other individuals who were working on the same issue" (Jain 2005: 119).

This paradigm has come to become one of the mainstays of the UN system's gender architecture. So much so that even in 1950, Marie-Helene Lefauchaux, chair of the CSW, remarked that one of the "outstanding characteristics" of the CSW's sessions was "the excellent collaboration of the specialized agencies and the non-governmental organizations" (Galey 1995: 8). The ECOSOC would go on to sign a consultative agreement which would make certain NGOs a part of the discussion and debate on issues related to women. Though such an arrangement was not free of critique owing to its Eurocentric nature and the predominance of middle class white women, it still was a step towards a more organized movement which set the ball rolling for the inclusion of women's groups as formal dialogue partners, as has happened with the new agency for women, UN-Women.

The UN Conferences and women's movement

The CSW, in addition to the other agencies that developed over time such as the *Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)*, the *UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)*, the *International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSRAW)*, and the *Office of the Special Advisor to the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)* together created a network whereby women's groups and other individuals could connect and talk. These agencies also provided an opportunity for non state actors such as women's groups, NGOs etc. to work with the UN. With provisions that sought to draw the views of local groups, the UNIFEM was particularly useful in getting such groups and individuals involved in the institutional set up. The role of these agencies and particularly of the CSW underwent a huge transformation because of the UN World Conferences on Women held between 1975 and 1995.

The UN Conferences on Women were an ideal platform to converge the different splintered groups and individuals who were working on gender. Often there were groups and organizations that were working on the same issue but had no way of getting in touch

or even benefitting from the other's work. With the first conference in 1975, this changed to a significant extent. Using Zambian women groups as a case study, Eve Sandberg concludes that the three UN world conferences on women served as a catalyst for Zambian women's domestic organizing, legitimated their activism, and provided resources and strategies for successful mobilization. However she notes that these benefits accrued more to elite women than to less privileged Zambian women (Sandberg 1998: 277).

Taking this further, Ellen Dorsey states that the UN conferences came to frame symbolically the stages of the global women's movement. According to Dorsey, the evolution of the transnational women's movement can be characterized across decades into three central themes of development, substantive equality in the administration of justice, and women's rights as human rights (Dorsey 2001:440). The conferences went a long way in creating networks at local, national, regional and global levels based on the tacit understanding that gender equality was a topic that transcended national boundaries. According to Antrobus, the conferences "facilitated the growth of a global women's movement of the greatest diversity and decentralization, a movement that expanded its agenda from a narrow definition of 'women's issues' to one that embraced a range of concerns for human welfare. In the process it transformed itself into a major alternative political constituency" (Antrobus 2004:62).

The International Women's Year, which was celebrated in 1975, was in recognition of the effort that sought to highlight the status of women around the world. It was a delegate from Romania, a communist country, who, at the 1972 meeting of the General Assembly, introduced the resolution calling for a specially designated year for women. By 1975 there was already significant movement towards bringing greater attention to women with the UN passing key resolutions on marriage, suffrage and equality of pay and the International Women's Year further invigorated the movement. Feminist activism around the world was reflected in the work of the women's collective, *Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE)*, founded in 1974 'to promote the

widest possible exchange of ideas, contacts and resources among women and women's groups in Africa, Asia, Australia and Latin America and to women and women's groups in Europe and North' (Antrobus 2004: 34).

World Conference on Women, Mexico City, 1975

The first international conference was held in Mexico City in 1975 and was associated with the UN International Year of Women. It was at this conference that "The Declaration of Mexico", the first global statement to be produced by informal groups of women, was produced. The Declaration concentrated on the economic situation of women and talked of empowerment through development. The conference in itself was the first organized effort to get individuals and groups working on gender related issues to come together and share information and possibly build alliance.

In total over 8,000 women and men participated (70 per cent women) in the conference and the parallel meeting for representatives of women's organizations, La Tribune. At the conference, participants were drawn from 125 of the 133 UN member states, while at the Tribune participants were fairly evenly distributed between those from Mexico, North America and the rest of the world. Eighteen background papers prepared for the conference, commissioned by UN agencies and NGOs with consultative status to the UN such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF); were generally focused on women's role within the family (Zinsser 2002: 146).

The themes of IWY – Equality, Development and Peace – were symbolized in a stylized dove of peace, incorporating the symbols of women and equality. This was to become a powerful 'international symbol of the drive for women's equality, reprinted literally millions of times, recaptured in jewelry and printed on fabric used the world over ... put on stickers, bags, and appearing in countless publications' (Nelson and Chowdhury 1994: 5). One of the key themes discussed during the conference was the similarities between the women of the North and the South. The Secretary-General of the conference, Ms. Sipala emphasized the need of a transnational women's movement further:

“Admittedly, the status of women differs significantly from country to country, due to cultural, political, economic and social factors. There are also divergences in the condition of women within countries themselves, particularly between rich and poor, rural and urban, privileged and underprivileged. But I do not see a conflict between the prevailing conditions in developing and industrialized countries as regards the real aspiration of women for social justice and a better life. In fact, women throughout the world share so many problems that they can and must support and reinforce each other in a joint effort to create a better world” (Nelson and Chowdhury 1994: 5).

Keeping in tune with the future expectation of an active global women's movement, the key issues officially addressed at the conference were purposefully kept uncontroversial with no mention of violence or sexualities. However, issues like New International Economic Order and Zionism found mention during the conference and in fact exposed the crevices within the women's movement. So much so that the G-77 formed their own working group to draft the more political 'Declaration of Mexico' which was adopted despite the objections of many industrialized countries.

However, the NGO Tribune which was being held alongside the conference had an open forum and debate flowed freely, going beyond the planned thirty five events. The biggest success of the NGO Tribune, a parallel effort with no official channel to the UN conference, was the continuation of the organization infrastructure that had set up the tribune and the continuation of international communication. This establishment played an important role in organizing such tribunes in future conferences as well (Stephenson 1995: 144). According to Schuler and Kadirgramar-Rajsingham, “The bickering and political rhetoric was, at times, intense. Latin American women disrupted several sessions by vehemently insisting that equality for women was attainable only after economic and social changes had been made. US women wanted to have more impact on the official UN conference ... A group of critical American women led a charge on the US Embassy and another group interrupted the AID Director ... claiming men had no right to represent US women at the Tribune or the conference. The complaint was that the UN conference

and too many at the Tribune concentrated on political issues and not on women's concerns" (Schuler and Kadirgramar-Rajsingham 1992: 26).

The conflict regarding the Conference's failure in addressing women's concerns in particular or about a pertinent bias towards the NGOs and women's groups notwithstanding, the Conference did manage to set in motion the movement and was also successful in stirring debates in nations on key gender issues. But most of all, it provided women a chance to share knowledge and experience and to build a network that would strengthen the movement. "With all its apparent conflict, the meeting set in motion the most intricate network of women ever recorded. Women began to realize that collective action was the key to their power and effectiveness. Solidarity links forged over a decade turned out to be stronger than imagined. They formed an unbreakable chain of women throughout the world dedicated to healing and liberating themselves, their children, and in turn, their men and their nations." (Wetzel 1993:3)

The conference also recommended the Decade for Women (1975-85), taking cognizance of the fact that a year was insufficient time for women's issues to be brought into focus. The decision by the General Assembly in granting the Decade was instrumental in nurturing the women's movement with the right kind of forums, resources and opportunities. This renewed momentum helped in putting the Platform for Action agreed upon at the Mexico City Conference to be fully implemented. Women's organizations worldwide made governments take action to fulfill their commitment made at the conference while groups such as the *International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC)* were established with the goal to take forward the message of Mexico City and to not lose the momentum gained. Also, it was at this conference that the creation of the UNIFEM and INSTRAW was agreed upon thus expanding the formal organizational network of agencies working on women. The coming into being of INSTRAW was particularly useful for the movement as well for the UN itself as it was mandated to work as a research house on women and related issues. Significantly, at the same conference

negotiation was started to turn the *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (DEDAW)* into a Convention.

In 1979 came the landmark *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*. The adoption of the DEDAW in 1967 by the General Assembly was what finally laid the ground for the creation of CEDAW. The Convention was adopted with no votes against it and eleven abstentions. As of 2012, the Convention has 187 parties and 99 signatories. Importantly, countries like China and the United States of America are yet to ratify the convention though they did sign it. The Convention defines discrimination in its very first article as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex...in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”. It also enumerates the steps states need to take to prevent discrimination against women and to ensure equality. CEDAW marks a significant change from other human rights treaties by dealing with reproductive rights of women, in addition to the legal and economic status of women. It also gives formal recognition to the influence of culture and tradition on restricting women's enjoyment of their fundamental rights and thereby challenges the public-private dichotomy that had continued to hamper women's rights.

One major breakthrough in terms of implementation of CEDAW was made in 1999 when the General Assembly adopted its Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol allowed for inquiry procedure and most importantly individuals and groups of individuals and Non-governmental Organizations could now communicate and complain to the Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Optional Protocol proved to be most helpful for the women's groups in articulating their complaints without having to go through the states; they, as also NGOs and individuals, could take an issue directly to the Committee and this often shamed the state into action.

However, the Optional Protocol contains an 'Opt-out Clause' that gives the option to the state party to refuse to recognize the competence of the Committee to initiate and conduct inquiry at the time of ratification. Only 99 countries are party to the Optional Protocol.

But even for countries that are not signatories to the Optional Protocol, the Committee has been rather successful in using the yearly reports as a tool to remind them of their commitment and to fix accountability of the states.

Second World Conference on Women, Copenhagen, 1980

In 1980, the Copenhagen Conference took place, where unlike in Mexico City, the focus shifted from state governments to women's groups. Almost 8,000 people came from 127 countries with just 491 from Asia, 312 from Latin America, 222 from Africa, 132 from the Middle East, and 41 from the Caribbean (West and Landau 1980: 2). The conference was significant as it discussed the reasons for women's inequality and sexual division of labor. Female circumcision found a place on the agenda for the first time, along with violence against women. At the Forum, a space created by the organizers, workshops were conducted on issues as diverse as "Women's exploitation by transnational corporations" to feminism. The conference had its fair share of controversy with the Israel-Palestine conflict being dragged into it and also the presence of Iranian women raised criticism from the governments of western states (West and Landau 1980: 2).

Third World Conference on Women, Nairobi, 1985

At the end of the Decade for Women, the third conference was held in Nairobi in 1985. This conference was also special owing to its location which was in recognition of the more proactive role of women and groups from the South in the transnational movement. The mandate was to produce "forward looking strategies" that would look into the shortcomings in the implementation of the recommendations of the Mexico and Copenhagen conferences and provide for a strategy for the future. The conference also made a break from the language used in the Declaration, Plan of Action, and Resolutions of Mexico City (1975), the Programme of Action and the Resolutions from Copenhagen (1980). Women were no more victims, "in almost every section, women had become active agents in efforts to create new international institutions and practices. Gone are simplistic, essentializing categories of women. Instead, the

Forward-Looking Strategies present a multiplicity of explicit images: women in trade unions, rural cooperatives, health professions, young women, and old women. Thus, between 1975 and 1985, activists from around the world used the UN Decade to challenge the patriarchal model that frames national and international relations" (Desai 2005: 61).

The conference was viewed favorably by most for not just its language but also its success in getting fifteen thousand women to participate and for the strategies to mention "the deep rooted resistance on the part of conservative elements in society to the change in attitude necessary for a total ban on discriminatory practices against women at the family, local, national and international levels" (Fraser 1987: 82). Since, the conference was an intergovernmental event the failure to address the Washington Consensus did not come as a shock to many. However the forum provided an opportunity for women and groups to discuss the impact of the Washington Consensus on their livelihood and overall condition of life. A prominent role here was played by *Development, Crisis, and Alternate Vision* or the DAWN which offered a critique of growth oriented economic model and rallied support of most of the women from the South.

In the 1990s, there was a spate of UN conferences on related issues that helped the transnational women's movement to expand its ambit as well its strength. Five key conferences held between 1992 and 1996 included the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as the Rio Earth Summit); the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights; the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo; the 1995 World Social Summit in Copenhagen; and the 1996 Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat II) in Istanbul.

The Vienna Conference on Human Rights provided a chance to take forward the claim that women's rights are human rights. The conference saw a successful participation from the women caucus which vociferously and successfully demanded that rape be incorporated as a crime against humanity at war crime tribunals. Such caucuses at the

conferences have served as primary ways for women to organize transnationally. Increasing numbers of non-governmental organizations were given access to these conferences and thus were increasingly part of the negotiations processes. The women's caucuses at each meeting encouraged governments to pay greater attention to the inclusion of gender analysis (Stienstra 2000:221).

Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995

These conferences created the ground for the Beijing Conference in 1995 which marked the presence of over 35,000 women and men. The Platform for Action signed by 186 countries at Beijing stands testimony to the years of struggle to include issues such as sexual freedom, women's rights as human rights, violence against women and reproductive rights in an international document to which states could be held responsible. The platform also emphasized on the role of the women's movement as key to holding states accountable. This was also recognized by the UN Secretary General who talked of establishing a high level board on the Advancement of Women to strengthen the partnership between the UN and civil society.

The Platform identified 12 critical areas of concern:

1. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women;
2. Unequal access to and inadequate educational opportunities;
3. Inequalities in health status, inadequate health-care service, and unequal access to health care;
4. Violence against women;
5. Effect of conflict on women;
6. Inequality in women's participation in the definition of economic structures and policies, and in the production process;
7. Inequality in the sharing of power and decision-making;
8. Insufficient mechanisms to promote the advancement of women;

9. Lack of awareness of, and commitment to, internationally and nationally recognized women's human rights;
10. Insufficient mobilization of mass media to promote women's contribution to society;
11. Lack of adequate recognition and support for women's contribution to managing natural resources and safeguarding the environment;
12. The girl child (United Nations 1995a, The Platform for Action: 18-109).

The Beijing Conference also delved into the need to mainstream gender issues within the UN system. International institutions displayed policy documents and promotional literature that highlighted their gender sensitivity. World Bank launched its analytical framework 'Towards Gender Equality: The Role of Public Policy', while the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* presented the 1995 Human Development Report focusing on gender. The conference saw engagement being made with gender mainstreaming at several levels, both formal as well as at the NGO forum. The final chapter of the Platform for Action on institutional arrangements does in fact make a commitment to "promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective..in the monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes" (United Nations 1995a, 135).

Though these conferences were always accompanied with doubts about the legitimacy of the transnational women's movement or even of the UN itself in addressing women/gender concerns, the success of the conferences was in getting together disparate groups and individuals together. The conferences might not have been able to clearly differentiate between political issues and women's concerns but they did manage to get women groups working on issues to build alliances.

Regarding the North-South divide within the movement, in their analysis of the NGO participation in UN World conferences, Frideman concludes that the divide between the North and the South may not be the primary source of contestation. She explains that this

divide partially overlaps more persistent divisions between the new generation of small grassroots organizations focused on local action and more professional, often larger and older, organizations with long-standing activists at the UN (Friedman 1999: 369). In all, the conferences succeeded in more ways than one. Not only did these conferences provide the space and programmes that reflected the demands of women groups and other key stakeholders but it also gave the movement the instrument to reach their goals. The biggest success of the UN conferences however was in establishing an unlikely solidarity that cut across nation-state, class, ethnicity, religion, orientation etc. Letitia Shahani, the Secretary-General of the last of the Decade Conference in Nairobi, Kenya (1985) celebrated the success of the conference by proclaiming that “a critical mass has evolved to enable the women's movement to go forward on a more solid foundation. There is no more turning back” (Zinnser 2002: 140). Not turning back, in this case, meant moving forward together with a shared understanding and passion for the cause.

Reviews of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Five years after the Beijing Declaration was adopted, the General Assembly met in 2000 for a special session on “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”. The session was a review of the progress made and the problems plaguing the implementation of the Platform for Action. The Platform had given the CSW the responsibility to monitor the strategic objectives set forth in each of the twelve issue areas. The CSW was made the focal point which would work at global, regional and local levels with various actors to ensure the implementation of the Platform. Some of the actions taken by the CSW included asking governments to prepare national action plans in accordance with the Platform. It also kept a watch on the implementation of these action plans and made the governments answer a questionnaire set by the UN secretariat to gauge the success of these plans.

After much discussion at the CSW, and at the plenary meetings, it was on 10 June 2000 that the General Assembly adopted by consensus the Political Declaration and “further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Platform for Action”. The Declaration emphasized on the need to continue the focus on the implementation of the Platform and asked for renewed efforts towards gender mainstreaming (General Assembly 2000a, A/RES/S-23/2). The Outcome Document on the further actions and initiatives also mentioned the 199 actions that were to be taken at the national and international levels by Governments, the UN system, international and regional organizations, including international financial institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other actors of civil society in order to meet the strategic objectives in the key issue areas. It also added significant problem areas to the list of the twelve mentioned in the Platform including gender-sensitive approaches to HIV/AIDS and humanitarian crises, changing patterns of migratory flows, etc (General Assembly 2000b, A/RES/S-23/3).

In terms of NGO presence, the session saw a total of 2,052 NGO participants representing 1,038 NGOs registered for the special session. Almost 25 per cent of the participants were from the European region, 27.1 per cent from North America, 19.7 per cent from the Asia and Pacific region, 11.6 per cent from the Europe and Central Asian region, 10.6 per cent from the Latin American and Caribbean countries and 1.9 per cent were from the West Asian region. There were also approximately 2400 participants of non-governmental organizations who were registered for activities held outside of the UN facilities (DAW 2000, Report of the 44th session of the CSW).

Following the 2000 review, the CSW in its 49th session held a ten year review of the Platform in 2005. It focused on two thematic areas, first was the review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” and the second was the “Current challenges and forward looking strategies for the advancement and empowerment of women and girls”. A report by the Secretary General was submitted to the CSW that

detailed the efforts made by the UN, the Member States and important parties like regional organization, other international organizations, etc. and was based on the action plans made by the states, the reports submitted by states to the CEDAW Committee, the progress reports of the CSW, and also included Poverty Reductions Strategy Papers (PRSPs), national Human Development Reports, and many more documents. The CSW session also saw participation of over 2700 individuals representing 600 NGOs (DAW 2005, Report of the 49th session of the CSW).

In the latest review effort undertaken by the UN, the CSW in its 54th session met in 2010 to analyze the successes and obstacles in the implementation of the the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly of 2000. At this session, the two thematic areas that were the focus included review of the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, with an emphasis on the sharing of experiences and good practices with a view to overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges; and review of its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals. A total of of 3,440 NGO representatives from 138 countries attended the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The CSW in addition to calling the NGOs accredited to the ECOSOC also called NGOs that were accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) or to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (DAW 2010, Report of the 54th Session of the CSW).

The Transnational women's movement and UN-Women

Having found their voice, the transnational women's movement continued to remain a persistent presence during all the major conferences held since Beijing. From the Millennium Conference to the conferences held on environment or health, the women's groups made themselves heard. However one particular occasion which saw consolidation of efforts of different women's groups and ideologies was in 2006 when

member states started discussion on System-Wide coherence. The campaign this time was for a reform of the UN gender equality architecture.

Dissatisfaction with the gender equality agenda at the UN and the failure to reform the women's machineries was also heard during the 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. This was followed by an open letter from 240 women from 50 countries asking for a more coherent and effective gender architecture. During the interaction between the High-Level Panel on system-wide coherence and the women's groups in 2006, a paper was presented by the *Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)*, the *NGO committee on the Status of Women*, the *Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)* and the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)*. Titled "Gender Equality Architecture and UN Reforms", the paper gave a detailed understanding of the problems with the gender architecture within the UN system and the means and ways to improve it.

These efforts finally found a platform when the Gender Equality Architecture Reform (or the GEAR) movement was launched in 2008 during the 52nd session of the CSW. The GEAR campaign, which by 2010 had 300 women's, human rights and social justice groups with it, advocated a new and dynamic entity which would work as the focal point for gender equality within the UN system and would help in implementing a gender perspective within country programs as well. The demand of the campaign included a more persuasive entity with a more significant position and resources at its disposal (GEAR 2010, Campaign statement to the 54th session of the CSW). With the creation of UN-Women in 2010, these demands met a successful outcome but the campaign continues to exist as part of a monitoring system that aims to see the reform take root on the ground.

Chapter 3: The UN System's Gender Architecture

Countries, cutting across the political and economic divide, have time and again recognized the relevance of gender equality and women's empowerment to the success of the development agenda. The clamor around gender equality has been so much so that today there exists a network of policies, programs and legislation at national, regional and international level that aims at improving the status of women and promises them their rights. However, where national governments and the intergovernmental institutions have failed is in ensuring the implementation of these initiatives. Even with an extensive normative framework surrounding women's empowerment, there is a gap in delivery owing to lack of a proper institutional mechanism to ensure its implementation.

Being an organization with nearly universal membership and legitimacy amongst the global players, the UN bears the primary responsibility of designing and maintaining the normative framework on gender. Its actions inevitably have some impact both globally and at the country level. Even if some countries do not ratify certain conventions, they do become morally obligated to act in a way that does not openly defy the globally accepted norms at the UN. With such positioning, women's organization have tried to utilize the UN as a forum to air their views, build partnership, push for reforms in agenda, and to address the gender imbalance prevalent in the system.

The UN too has been progressive in reacting to the problem of gender inequality and has successfully adopted resolutions and constructed norms that could potentially benefit the lives of many women. Progressive policies and programs such as the *Convention for Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, gender mainstreaming, etc. are all a part of this structure.

UN system's gender architecture before the creation of UN-Women

Prior to the creation of the UN-Women in 2010, the UN gender architecture was fragmented and often criticized by women's groups as lacking sufficient authority to ensure implementation of the various norms and treaties on gender equality. There were also problems of resource, both financial and human, that left the UN entities working on gender severely handicapped in maintaining accountability or even to be able to respond to new challenges against gender equality. Nonetheless, the UN's gender architecture grew to be quite elaborate and the key entities in this structure were:

1. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

Initially established in 1946 as a sub-commission of the *Commission on Human Rights (CHR)*, this inter-governmental policy body was envisaged as the lynchpin of the gender framework within the UN system. The creation of the sub commission led to strong voices of protest from the various NGOs who thought that women deserved a separate entity dedicated to them so as to not become lost amongst the various other stakeholders within the CHR.

The first Chairperson of the Sub-Commission, Bodil Begtrup (Denmark), also requested the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in May 1946 for a change to full commission status:

“Women's problems have now for the first time in history to be studied internationally as such and to be given the social importance they ought to have. And it would be, in the opinion of this Sub-Commission of experts in this field, a tragedy to spoil this unique opportunity by confusing the wish and the facts. Some situations can be changed by laws, education, and public opinion, and the time seems to have come for happy changes in conditions of women all over the world (...)” (Jain 2005: 18).

These efforts led to the creation of a separate CSW in 1947 with the mandate to prepare policy recommendation and reports to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on promoting women in political social, civil, economic and educational fields and also on women's rights.

The commission had its first meet at Lake Success, New York with all fifteen members being women. CSW set a new precedent in its very first session by involving the civil society organizations as observers at its annual meeting. During its first session, the Commission declared as one of its guiding principles: "to raise the status of women, irrespective of nationality, race, language or religion, to equality with men in all fields of human enterprise, and to eliminate all discrimination against women in the provisions of statutory law, in legal maxims or rules, or in interpretation of customary law" (UN Yearbook 1950:556).

Taking into consideration the cross sectoral nature of gender and women's rights issue, the commission also established a relationship with the other international human rights treaty bodies. The chairperson of the CSW was also invited by the chairperson of the CHR to attend its sessions devoted to finalizing the draft international bill of human rights and copies of preliminary drafts of the international bill were circulated among members of the CSW. One of the first achievements for the commission was to modify the language of the international bill of human rights to make it more gender sensitive and inclusive, replacing "men" to "men and women" (Jain 2005: 87).

In its initial years, the CSW focused mostly on standard setting and on including women's rights as a part of the standard vocabulary at the UN. The Commission also relied on collecting facts and information on women's status that could prove helpful in drafting policy and in making a stronger case for women's rights. One of the key issues that the CSW took up early in its existence was that of political rights of women, where it advocated for the right to vote for women and also for the right of women to stand for

public positions. Other areas that dominated at the time were that of status of women in marriage and need to ensure access to education for the girl child, etc.

Economic rights of women became an important issue that the CSW took up along with other UN bodies such as the *International Labour Organization (ILO)*, *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)* and *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*. The CSW was conscious of the close functional and ideological links it needed to build and preserve with the other human rights bodies in general and specialized agencies and programs in particular. Besides the ILO, the UNESCO, the *World Health Organization (WHO)*, and the UNICEF, the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, a unit of the Commission on Human Rights, was an important ally. Representatives of these bodies could sit in on the CSW meetings and vice versa. Articles of the draft declaration being discussed in these bodies were sent to the CSW for comments, and at several times commission members insisted on the language of the said declaration be made more gender inclusive (Emmeriji et al., 2004: 62)

The CSW also conducted studies on the role of women in development and went on to draft influential and ground breaking documents like the *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (DEDAW)*, which it drafted on the request of the General Assembly in 1963. The declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in 1967. With voluntary reporting procedure, the Declaration fell short on implementation but it did manage to spell the legal rights of women for the very first time. This declaration also paved the way for the most revolutionary convention that went on to define discrimination against women, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)* which was ultimately adopted in 1979.

In the 1970s and 80s, with new entities on gender being created, the Commission saw a change in its nature of functioning. A particular low point for the Commission was in 1980, when it was suggested that the Commission be abolished as part of the

restructuring of the ECOSOC. But this proposal fell through and the commission was instead asked to look into the implementation of the Nairobi Plan of Action. The situation improved further with a case being made for strengthening of the Commission at the Copenhagen conference (Jain 2005: 87).

The mandate of the CSW was expanded by ECOSOC in 1987 to include activities for advocating the triple theme of “Equality, Development and Peace;” monitoring the implementation of internationally-agreed measures for the advancement of women; and reviewing and appraising progress at the national, regional and international levels (ECOSOC, 1987).

The commission was also deeply involved with the organization of the World Conferences on Women and was designated to oversee the implementation of the outcome documents reached at the end of these conferences. All of this prompted the Commission to meet annually instead of biannually, as it previously did from 1976 to 1985. Asked to monitor the implementation of the Platform for Action (1995), the commission agreed to adopt negotiated conclusions on its thematic areas of focus. Since 1996, experts are invited to participate in the substantive panels on the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern. The Commission also became the focal point for the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the UN system.

The Commission has continued to work as the preparatory agency for all important documents and meetings organized by the UN. It is involved not only in drafting key documents and organizing consultations on issues of importance, but it also monitors the progress of the goals arrived at in the UN. The CSW, owing to its function as the key planner for the UN on gender, played the most important role in introducing changes and often some difficult ideas for debate and discussion at the UN. This way it went on to mould the nature and content of the UN gender agenda. One example of the CSW initiating change within the UN system is the issue of discrimination in marriage. National laws on marriage, family residence and divorce were found to be one of the

primary reasons for discrimination against women. In the 1950s, the Commission took note of this problem and drafted the *Convention on the Nationality of Married Women* of 1957, followed by the *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages* of 1962 and finally the Recommendation on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages which was adopted in 1965 (DAW 2006: 6).

Meyer and Prugl also point out that though the CSW lacked sufficient fund, staff and political clout, it was able to maintain some space to conduct important work such as making technical reports, collecting information, drafting conventions or treaty language relating to women and children, etc. However, its wings were clipped since the political decision making bodies of the Commission were made up of women diplomats who were representing their governments and when the governments were none too keen to improve women's status, the Commission was left handicapped. "In a sense, the official CSW depended on activism of women's movement to break new ground, place new issues on international agenda and force governments to react" (Meyer and Prugl: 16).

One of the criticisms of the functioning of the CSW has been that it weakened the more radical voices and pedaled a more muted reaction to the gender question. Amina Mama acknowledges that the UN has been a good vehicle for bringing feminist concerns to the international arena, but she worries that "UN feminism" has co-opted the more radical voices from the various women's movements. She calls this the "bureaucratized version of feminism spawned by the United Nations" and feels that individuals who represent this kind of feminism are responsible for the "burgeoning development industry" that Africa has been "subjected to" (Mama 2002: 415).

2. *Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)*

When the Commission began working, it was aided by the section on the status of women within the UN secretariat, which was instrumental in supporting the commission as well as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in promoting advancement of women. A part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Division was mandated to give policy advice and research global norms and to mainstream gender perspectives within the UN system.

The Division for the Advancement of Women was established in 1946 as the Section on the Status of Women, Human Rights Division at the *Department of Social Affairs (DSA)*. In 1972, the section was upgraded as the Branch for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women under the newly created Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the UN Office in Vienna. The Centre was then headed by Ms. Helvi Sipilä (Finland), the first woman to serve in the UN as an Assistant Secretary-General.

In 1978, the branch was rechristened as the *Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)*. In August 1993, the unit was moved to New York where it formed part of the *Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD)*. As a result of restructuring undertaken in 1996, the Division became part of the *Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)*. DAW acted as the substantive secretariat for the four World Conferences on Women (Mexico 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985 and Beijing 1995). Under the guidance of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, DAW also carried out the preparatory work for the 23rd special session of the General Assembly in 2000. In 2005, DAW assisted the Commission on the Status of Women to conduct the Ten-year Review and Appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action during the Commission's 49th session. DAW also provided technical and substantive support to the Committee on CEDAW.

3. *United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)*

UNIFEM functioned as the key entity within the UN system that successfully brokered its resources to emerge as a leader on a number of issues that are important to the worldwide women's movement and as a node around which organizations in the movement can gather to focus their energy. UNIFEM played an important role in galvanizing the women's movement. It engaged with civil society groups regularly within the countries.

Operating as an autonomous structure associated with the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP), the fund had access to a strong base from which to cultivate donors. Unfortunately, UNIFEM never could meet the standard of other entities when it came to funding. To make use of the fund, women in countries needed to apply for assistance through any UNDP country office. Due to lack of funding, in the first fifteen years of its existence, UNIFEM operated effectively as a catalyst, funding women's projects that could potentially attract other sources of financial support or become self-supporting eventually (Jain 2005: 127).

UNIFEM was also one of the few organizations that took the innovative step of making Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) the executing agents of funded projects. This was a unique step as the larger UN system was still focused on its own organizations and on governments. The involvement of NGOs was mostly indirect. UNIFEM also set up revolving credit funds that generated renewable resources for poor women and their families.

The Fund also managed to establish a network to support women's networks working on macroeconomic issues. In order to mitigate the challenges that a globalized economy places on women, UNIFEM intervened on their behalf so as to make gender an important

marker in the formation of trade policies. For example, it supported the establishment of a new network of nongovernmental organizations called Red Mercosur to work on developing common strategies to advance gender issues and women's rights within the Mercosur trade treaty. The network successfully broadened existing women's NGO alliances to include other actors, such as trade unions and universities (Pietilä, Hilikka, and Jeanne Vickers, 1996: 115).

Apart from civil society groups, UNIFEM through its years of existence also managed to establish a mutual relationship with regional organizations. UNIFEM assisted organizations like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the South African Development Community (SADC) to enhance their understanding of gender equality and help them form relevant policies. Such collaboration also helped the Fund to explore new avenues that eventually helped it expand its areas of concern and affect the broader UN agenda as well. An example of this is UNIFEM's work on women's security issues. Its African Women in Crisis Programme, which supports internally displaced women, is an expansion of work that was begun in East Africa by Laketch Dirasse well before the UN had become engaged with peacebuilding operations of this nature. Her work gave UNIFEM the legitimacy to build a worldwide program on this issue (Jain 2005: 128).

Though the Fund managed to be reasonably successful in expanding its mandate, but other than limited funding it also faced the problem of lack of positioning and power. The head of UNIFEM being at the D-2 level rather than the assistant secretary-general (ASG) level of the UNDP's heads of regional bureaus meant that UNIFEM was never a stakeholder in the key decision making processes at the UN. Nonetheless, UNIFEM is a success story in as much as its ability permitted, achieved through the commitment of its staff, it remained aware of the changing nature of the problems faced by women and was

able to maneuver its mandate so as to bring those problems within its reach of understanding.

4. *United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW)*

Like UNIFEM, INSTRAW was also set up as an autonomous entity within the UN in 1976 on the recommendation of the first World Conference on Women in Mexico City. The primary function of the entity was to enable and conduct research on issues related to women's empowerment and gender equality so as to help the UN in devising appropriate policy guidelines. INSTRAW started with collecting data on women's work in the informal sector. The information thus collected was of much use in the UN and even otherwise in the development debate.

However, INSTRAW suffered much from lack of funding. So much so that in the mid-1990s, the Secretary-General initiated a program of reform that emphasized consolidation of programs and funds, and INSTRAW was targeted as a vulnerable fund that should be merged with UNIFEM. This lack of funding also impacted its collaborative work with the UN Statistical office, the ILO, and the ECA to further research on women's contributions in the informal economy (Rasheed, Sadiq and D.N. Sarr 1991: 15). Nonetheless, INSTRAW made the most of its funding and used internet as a vehicle to increase its outreach. INSTRAW started to provide web-based training sessions for women on issues such as gender and development, women's reproductive health, and gender and peacekeeping. It also conducted research on the economic contributions of migrant women through remittances and financing for development (Bouayad-Agha and Hernández 1999:28).

INSTRAW entered what its Board of Trustees called a vicious cycle: "Inadequate levels of funding hindered the sustainability of the Institute's operations, resulting in low level of programme implementation, thereby affecting its ability to attract funds and sufficient

human resources” (Jain 2005: 130). However, in 1999, a study by the UN’s Joint Inspection Unit recommended that INSTRAW remain a separate fund. The recommendation was influenced by the importance of the research being done by INSTRAW. The Fund also received a major push through the Beijing Platform for Action, which emphasized the need for new methodologies in research and training for the objectives to be fulfilled, particularly in the area of feminization of poverty, which has yet to be accurately measured (Pietilä, Hilkkä, and Jeanne Vickers 1996: 82).

INSTRAW also suffered due to it being located in Santo Domingo, away from the power center New York. INSTRAW placed greater emphasis on networking as it implemented a threefold strategy of networking with focal points, regional umbrella organizations of civil society, and ad hoc associations. Making maximum use of its resources, it managed to offer online training packages and courses on capacity-building in gender and development, peacekeeping, forestry, the environment, and promoting gender equality. It also provided Web-based training sessions for women on issues such as gender and development, women’s reproductive health, and gender and peacekeeping. It is also conducting research on the economic contributions of migrant women through remittances and financing for development.

5. The Office of Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

OSAGI was created in 1997, with the objective to make strategies that promoted and strengthened the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, the Millennium Declaration, the Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of the special session of the General Assembly on Beijing+5. OSAGI was mandated to work directly with the Secretary-General, advising him/her on gender issues as well as representing the Secretary-General at forums on gender issues and advancement of women. It was also the key institution to implement gender mainstreaming in the overall UN system and provided leadership to

the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), in addition to offering policy guidance to DAW. OSAGI is also funded by the regular budget of the UN. OSAGI was also mandated to work as the focal point for women in the Secretariat which would oversee the status of women within the UN system and look at ways and means to improve it.

UN and gender equality and women's empowerment

Of the 160 signatories to the UN's founding document at the San Francisco Conference only four were women, of which three were from the global South and one from the United States of America. These women started what went on to become a long struggle to recognize and grant women their legitimate space in the international and national discourse on socio-economic and political rights. The UN Charter benefitted greatly from the contribution of the experience of these women. The delegates to the San Francisco from the developing countries managed to wriggle their way in ensuring a more gender sensitive language being employed by the UN. As Ana Figueroa notes, "At the San Francisco Conference, the delegations of Brazil, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, with the support of the delegation of Chile, presented important amendments in order to include specific mention of the equality of rights for men and women in the Charter". They also succeeded in changing the language of the Preamble and the Charter from "equal rights among men" to read "equal rights among men and women" (Figueroa 1952: 37).

The UN also benefitted greatly from the work done by previous organizations. There were documents like Hague Conventions on Private International Law of 1902, the Covenant of the League of Nations of 1924, the Pan-American Union's Lima Declaration of 1938, and the Declaration of Philadelphia of the International Labour Conference in 1944 which had a more gender sensitive approach in their texts (Jain 2005:IV).

The UN itself began with great promise, with the Preamble to the Charter reaffirming “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women” (United Nations 1945: 3). This was followed by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* referring to the Charter of the UN thereby reiterating the commitment of the UN to gender equality. The document uses language such as “members of the human family” (Preamble) and “all human beings” (Article I). Like the Charter, the UDHR uses the phrase “men and women” (United Nations 1948:1). The UDHR enumerates basic rights and freedoms to which all men and women are entitled—among them the right to life, to work, to education, to liberty and nationality, to participate in government, to freedom of speech, to freedom of religion, to freedom of belief, and to freedom from fear. It describes rights as inalienable and indivisible. However, the draft formulation of its first article was not so clear on inclusion of women, and talked of, “All men are created equal.” But this language got changed into a more inclusive one when thirty-two countries voted in favor of the change, only two voted against it and three countries abstained. The language was changed from “all men” to “all human beings.” The UDHR became the first document that unambiguously declares thus (Jain 2005: 20).

The UDHR was followed by two international covenants—one on civil and political rights and the other on economic, social, and cultural rights. Though there was a clear demarcation made between the two covenants, with the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)* considered as one that needed immediate attention while the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)* was seen more as a vision for the future. The difference in approach was visible also in the fact that the ICCPR was made legally binding on Member States, while ICESCR was optional. The CSW nonetheless worked to bridge the gap between the economic, the social, and the political. While responding to a report on discrimination in education against minorities, it observed that “equality in educational opportunities was closely linked to

equality in political, economic, civil and social matters. Education for girls should be compulsory and the curricula for boys and girls should be identical” (CSW 1956).

The CSW became the most important forum for women from around the world. For its part, the CSW embedded its goals and thinking in the ideology of human rights that permeated the UN’s founding documents. This was a significant accomplishment at a time when most public agencies across the world viewed women either as mothers or as recipients of welfare services, not as citizens with individual rights.

Like much of the debate on gender today, the initial discussions at the UN on gender were also prone to getting embroiled in the sensitive issue of private-public dichotomy. Concepts such as sovereignty and socio-cultural traditions were employed as logic against what was perceived as UN intervention in the country’s sovereign domain and individual’s private space.

Human Rights

One of the first steps that the UN took was to advocate full political suffrage for women. This was at a time when only thirty of the original fifty-one member states allowed women to vote in their countries. In 1952, the UN put the campaign for women’s suffrage on a legal footing. That year, the General Assembly adopted the *Convention on Political Rights of Women* “to implement the principle of equality of rights for men and women contained in the Charter of the United Nations.” The Convention was to bind the countries in contract to ensure that:

Article I: Women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.

Article II: Women shall be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.

Article III: Women shall be entitled to hold public office and to exercise all public functions, established by national law, on equal terms with men, without any discrimination (General Assembly 1952: 1).

Underscoring the seriousness of the issue, the Secretary-General put the issue of suffrage for women high on the agenda of all seventy-four UN member governments at the time and called upon them to furnish progress reports. Thirty-five countries signed the Convention and three countries deposited instruments of ratification, the first being the Dominican Republic.

The new members from the erstwhile colonies came with a new vision where they saw democratic rights and political freedoms as being linked to the question of women's emancipation. They also moved beyond the traditional understanding of women rights and entered new domains. These women extended the concept of women's equality beyond legal equality in civil and political rights to equal participation in nation-building, social and economic development, the strengthening of civic responsibilities, and the overall improvement of the status of women. Equality for women became increasingly transposed into the debates on development.

One of the most contentious issues during this period, one that was considered to be "personal" or in the realm of customs and traditions, was that of "female genital mutilation" (FGM) in Africa. The issue first came to light in the 1950s and in 1952, ECOSOC, acting on the recommendations of the CSW, asked member states to "abolish progressively . . . all customs that violate the physical integrity of women and which thereby violate the dignity and worth of the human person as proclaimed in the Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (DAW 2006: 6).

The issue of female genital mutilation was an example of how certain customs are protected under the tutelage of 'traditions' violated the physical integrity of women, thereby violating their human rights and also how carefully the UN needs to be in dealing

with such issues. In the case of female genital mutilation, when the CSW asked the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1958 to conduct an “inquiry” into the “persistence of these practices”, ECOSOC substituted the word “inquiry” with “study” to make the proposal more acceptable but even then, the request was turned down by the WHO which stated that it was outside its competence because the matter was “cultural, not medical, and was thus outside its jurisdiction” (Galey 1995: 21).

Another example of the sensitivity of states to address gender can be found in the way the UN dealt with issues like refugees, genocide and repatriation. The UN continued to consider them as neutral subjects that didn’t need a specific gender angle. The *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* spoke only of “members of the group” and not specifically of men and women. It did not refer to sexual crimes or rape, though it did mention “causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group” (General Assembly 1948: 1).

Meanwhile the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* defined refugee as a person who “owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (General Assembly 1951: 2). Erin Baines in her study of the protection mandate of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees points towards the silence on the “ways in which gender may play a major role in how refugees are created, and how distinct the refugee experience can be for men and women.” The convention listed fear of persecution from race, religion but did not get into the discrimination and oppression that follows from gender (Baines 1999: 247-248).

However this problem was rectified in 1985, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees organized a Round Table on Refugee Women, and the Executive Committee, for the first time, adopted a conclusion highlighting the problems of refugee women. This was the start of the UNHCR’s engagement with the issue of refugee women as a particular group

that needed special attention, which finally led in 1992 to the *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee* (Snyder and Tadesse 1997: 28-32). Further acknowledging the new information gathered that showed use of sexual violence as being prevalent in conflict situations, in 1995 the UNHCR issued a set of guidelines on preventing and responding to sexual violence against refugees.

The UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 was an important landmark in bringing attention to women's rights being considered as part of the broader human rights regime. The CEDAW had detailed women's rights but with the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, there came greater recognition of women's rights as human rights. Member states were not out of the Cold War politics and there was widespread condemnation of use of sexual violence as a mode of war. The Global Campaign for Human Rights, which gathered half a million signatures from all over the world for a petition proclaiming that "Women's Rights Are Human Rights," was able to influence the outcome of the UN conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993. Charlotte Bunch and Niamh Reilly note that "[t]he petition is a good illustration of how networking occurs in women's organisations. At the time the petition was launched there was no women's human rights network, but there were international networks of women's movements that took it up" (Bunch and Reilly 1994: 14). The Vienna Declaration also recognized that all forms of violence against women are a violation of human rights.

Many other useful responses recognized the gendered experience of conflict. For example, Security Council Resolution 798 of 18 December 1992 referred to the "massive, organized and systematic detention and rape of women, in particular Muslim women, in Bosnia and Herzegovina." The council established a Commission of Experts (the Yugoslav Commission) to investigate violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia; in its interim report, it listed systematic sexual assault as one of the priority areas in its ongoing investigations.

Thanks to the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice and the willingness of some states, the International Criminal Court defines rape, sexual slavery, forced impregnation, forced sterilization, and any other form of sexual violence as war crimes and grave breaches of the Geneva Convention. The two ad hoc war crime tribunals, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in 1992 and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 1994, prompted the international community to include these acts as crimes against humanity (Bunch 2009: 7). Two UN thematic rapporteurs were also appointed in 1994 with mandates directly concerning the issue of sexual violence during armed conflict- one special rapporteur on systematic rape, sexual slavery, and slavery-like practices during periods of armed conflict and also a special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes, and consequences (Marchand and Parpart 1995: 132).

In the 1990s, the UN sponsored an unprecedented series of world conferences, starting with the World Summit for Children in New York in 1990 and continuing with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995. At each of these conferences, women used new tools and skills to bring issues connected to women and development to the agenda.

Women have kept up with the fast evolving agenda at the UN in the new millennium. The women's movement has managed to find space for gender in issues such as *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)*. At the World Summit on Information Society held by the UN in 2003 and followed up in 2005, the Gender Caucus consisting of civil society groups, NGOs, and private sector managed to integrate gender equality and women's rights in the summit. At the World Telecommunication Development Conference held in Doha in 2006, the *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)* was made to acknowledge the special need of ICTs being provided to

women and girls so as to increase their chance of getting an education and job training, to promote literacy, improve access to health care, enable the exercise of legal rights and participation in government (ITU 2006).

Similarly at the International Conference on Financing and Development held in 2002, the gender perspective was reflected in the outcome document. Most recently at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20) held to appraise the success and limitation of the 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio, women's groups put pressure for implementation of Agenda 21 that was agreed in 1992 and introduced in both the Rio's Agenda 21 outcome document and the Rio declaration. Agenda 21 calls for women's rights being upheld in areas including governance and decision making, environmental accountability, land rights, food security and reproductive health. Women's groups led by the *Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)* and the *Women Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO)* along with UN-Women lobbied to get Member States to reaffirm their commitments made in 1992 and in their respective action plans. However, the women's movement suffered defeat with reference to reproductive rights being omitted from the Outcome Document titled 'The future we want' (UN 2012).

The nature of the debate within the UN also changed considerably with issues of prostitution, sex work, migration and immigration becoming issues. The Palermo Protocol that supplements the UN *Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime* adopted in 2000 produced an operative definition of trafficking that impacts a large number of women. The CHR went ahead to appoint a Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons in 2004.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979

The road to CEDAW was hardly a smooth one. Nonetheless, CEDAW can be seen as a culmination of an effort that began with the establishment of the CSW in 1946 and was followed by the *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* in 1952 and *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages* in 1964.

The adoption of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (DEDAW) in 1967 by the General Assembly was what finally laid the ground for the creation of CEDAW. The need for such a Declaration was first felt by 22 mostly Eastern European, Asian, African and Latin American states who made the proposal to the General Assembly to request the CSW to draft such a Declaration (Gayle 1995: 20). While drafting of the declaration, the provision of Family laws proved to be a contentious issue with many countries prioritizing the protection of family as a traditional unit.

Many changes were drafted into the Declaration after the debate in the General Assembly. The clause of "Where available" was added to the provision of equal inheritance for men and women due to the objections raised by some Muslim countries. The Declaration was significant as it "moved the idea of women's equality beyond the confines of a rigid legal construct by pointing out those extralegal barriers that were socially constructed and more resistant to change." After the adoption of the Declaration, ECOSOC tried to introduce the provision of a voluntary reporting system on implementation of the Declaration but a lackluster response by the member states emphasized on the need of having a more binding mechanism.

The idea of equality of women gained further impetus from the pioneering work of Economic Commission for Africa that published reports studying the role of women in development and documented ways to see them as economic agents. UNESCO's work in

ensuring women got their place in any discourse of women was also helped in the process of creation of CEDAW.

It was at the Global Conferences on Women held in Mexico city in 1975 that the creation of the UNIFEM and INSTRAW was agreed upon. Also at the same conference that it was decided that negotiation was started to turn the DEDAW into a convention. This was followed by conferences in Copenhagen (1980) and a third in Nairobi (1985). The progress made in the three conferences culminated in the path breaking Beijing Conference in 1995 which was historical in bringing the gender dimension prominently in the UN.

The process of creating the CEDAW developed in three stages: first, the CSW worked on a draft from 1974-1976, second, from 1977 to 1979 three Working Groups of the Third Committee to the General Assembly continued. Third, in a few sessions in December 1979, the Third Committee as a whole came to a final agreement that was followed by immediate adoption in the General Assembly. The Convention was a result of a cautious negotiation process that had been heavily politicized owing to the Cold War politics (Galey 1995: 14). The Soviet Union played a major role in the process of creating CEDAW, owing to their communist beliefs and also in a bid to out-do their Cold War rival USA.

The most contentious and time-consuming discussions concerned the preamble, the protection of women workers, nationality rights and the concept of equality before the law covering equal legal capacities and equal rights within marriage for women and men. Also, there were sharp disagreements on questions of implementing and monitoring provisions. The Convention was criticized by many countries for having been formulated in haste.

Many women rights activists cite the insensitivity of the mainstream human rights bodies towards gender-specific abuses of human rights. The fact that the CEDAW was drafted

through the CSW, and not the Human Rights Commission as was the case with other human-rights treaties is seen as a reminder of the general neglect of women's issues in the mainstream discourse (Chinkin 1995: 25). Nonetheless, the Convention was adopted in 1979 with no votes against it and eleven abstentions. As of 2012, the Convention has 187 parties and 99 signatories. (Note: One key fact here is that though the United States has signed the Convention, it has yet not ratified it. China is still not a member to the convention. The absence of these two major contemporary powers from the arrangement has negatively affected the authority of the convention.)

Understanding CEDAW

According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, "the Convention is rooted in the goals of the UN: to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of human persons, in equal rights of men and women" (CEDAW, December 18, 1979). The Convention touches upon issues that were out of the mainstream discourse on human rights. For example, the preamble to the Convention mentions that the role of women in procreation should not be a cause of discrimination and thereby raise the issue of the relationship between women's reproductive role and discrimination. The CEDAW represents something of a breakthrough in human rights thinking, in that certain articles specifically refer to structural issues that must be confronted (Freeman 1997: 378).

The Women's Convention sets out the areas that require most attention owing to a history of discrimination that have been damaging for women and states the appropriate measures that signatories are to take in order to ensure equality. The CEDAW text can be divided into two parts where the first part comprises sixteen articles that enumerate the situations in which women may be discriminated against and include issues like access to education (Article 10), employment (Article 11), health care (Article 12), financial services (Article 13), and public policy and decision making bodies (Articles 7 and 8). It

also requires states to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination within the family (Article 16) (CEDAW 1979).

The first part stresses on equality as a basic objective and elimination of all forms of discrimination as an ultimate goal. The need here is to move beyond formal equality to de facto equality and transform the social and cultural norms. The convention makes it obligatory on states to abolish discriminatory norms and dictate new laws that provide for equality.

The first article recognizes two forms of discrimination as acts that either purposely or without intention result in some form of discrimination. The second article meanwhile stresses on the reforms needed at the legal, political and constitutional level. Article five is particularly important as it mandates modification in the cultural models and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women. However, the Convention does not specify as to the expected behavior pattern being referred to.

The Convention introduces the human rights protection tied to the public environment in the private environment through the sixteenth article which seeks to eliminate discrimination related to family and marriage. This article is path breaking in the sense that it allows the human rights movement to question tradition. However, the one big problem with the convention is the lack of any mention of violence against women in the text, whereas violence has been a major issue of concern for most women rights activist who see it as one of the most primordial tool of exploitation and suppression of women.

The second part of the Convention mentions the mechanisms available to monitor state parties. The state parties are expected to present a report every four years. Also, NGOs can present shadow reports to the CEDAW Committee. However, lack of a binding enforcement mechanism is seen as an impediment to the implementation of the Convention.

Though widely ratified and in theory incorporated into the national legal systems of ratifying countries, yet many legal scholars, activists, and NGOs are concerned about the lack of enforcement mechanisms. The primary mechanism for inducing compliance with CEDAW is the preparation of periodic reports that are presented by national governments to an oversight committee, called a treaty body. Pressure is exerted through exposure, shaming, and appeal to the international standards articulated in the convention. Committee members see the process as a “constructive dialogue” in which they pose questions to governments (Merry 2003: 942). There was also criticism of CEDAW for the lack of a complaint mechanism. These issues together led to the idea of an Optional Protocol that would improve the existing enforcement mechanisms for women’s rights.

Optional Protocol to the CEDAW

The need for a complaint procedure was felt as early as 1976, although some delegates thought that such procedures are meant for “serious international crimes” and not for issues like discrimination against women. It was only in 1993 that the need for new procedures to strengthen implementation of women’s human rights was acknowledged at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. This was followed by the Maastricht Draft in 1994 and the establishment of the Open ended Working Group on Optional Protocol by the CSW in 1996. Finally in 1999, the General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol that allowed for inquiry procedure and most importantly also allowed for individuals, groups of individuals, NGOs to communicate and complain to the *Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women*. The Optional Protocol also incorporated the Settlement Procedure which allowed the Committee to facilitate settlement of disputes.

CEDAW was found by many to be lacking a thorough enforcement mechanism to ensure protection and implementation of Women’s rights. The only tool available to it was the reporting mechanism which failed many a times to evoke a clear stand by the state parties

on key issues. Though Article 29 of the Convention does provide for an interstate arbitration and dispute settlement process that allowed for referring a dispute to the International Court of Justice, but it was subjected to a large number of restrictions and thus has never been used (General Assembly 1999, A/RES/54/4)

The Optional Protocol to the CEDAW includes two procedures, namely a Communication Procedure and an Inquiry Procedure. As mentioned, the Communication Procedure allows Individuals and NGOs to complain to the Committee on violation of CEDAW. The Inquiry Procedure, on the other hand, enables the Committee to conduct inquiries into serious and systematic abuses of women's human rights in countries parties to the Optional Protocol. The Committee could thereby advise the states in individual circumstances. The caveat here is that only 99 states are party to the Optional Protocol, with India being a prominent absentee. Also Article 10 of the Optional Protocol has an 'Opt-out Clause' that gives the option to the state party to refuse to recognize the competence of the Committee to initiate and conduct inquiry at the time of ratification.

One problem with the CEDAW was the absence of recognition of violence against women as discrimination. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) identified the omission and in 1989 it recommended that states should include information about violence in their reports as stated in the General Recommendation Number 12. The Recommendation asked the reports to include information about "legislation in force to protect women against the incidence of all kinds of violence in everyday life", including sexual violence, abuses in the family and also harassment at work. However, it was General Recommendation 19 made during the 11th session in 1992 that went on to describe in detail the meaning of discrimination as intended by the Committee.

General Recommendation Number 19, 11th Session, 1992

Article 1 clarified that discrimination here also “includes Gender based violence, and also acts that inflict physical, mental, sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other such deprivations”. Any such gender based violence that nullifies or impairs enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general International Law or under human rights conventions is discrimination.

Recommendation 19 analyses the Women’s Convention from the perspective of how violence impairs women’s physical and mental health, and thus undermines the implementation of the requirements of the Convention. The Recommendation also clarifies that the Convention applies not just to violence perpetuated by public authorities, but state would also be held responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent violation of rights or investigate and punish acts of violence, and for providing compensation. Article 16 of the General Recommendation 19 also talks about family violence, where by “within family relationships women of all ages are subjected to violence of all kinds, including battering, rape, other forms of sexual assault, mental and other forms of violence, which are perpetuated by traditional attitudes” (General Recommendation No.19, 11th session 1992).

In 1993, there were other significant developments. Firstly, in June, the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights at Vienna emphasised that elimination of violence against women is a human-rights obligation upon states, and called for the integration of women’s human rights throughout all UN human-rights activities. Also in 1993, the Security Council established the International Tribunal for prosecution of offences committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The jurisdiction of the Tribunal included rape and acts of sexual violence against women, and spelt out that systematic rape may constitute a crime against humanity. But the most significant step forward with regards to recognition of violence against women as an issue of concern in human rights was the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence*

against Women which elaborated on the core concepts and question of state responsibility in such cases of violence.

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women:

In December 1993, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*. This was the first broadly-based statement by the General Assembly itself on the unacceptability of violence against women.

Article 1 of the Declaration defines violence as: Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life. This is a significant advance from the limited concept of discrimination, and is reinforced by the Preamble, which recognises that “violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women”. The Declaration explicitly includes violence occurring within “public or private life”, and within the family.

Article 4(c) emphasizes on the need for states to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, and punish acts of violence against women perpetrated by the state, or by private persons. Failure by states to exercise 'due diligence', and to provide a secure environment for women, incurs state responsibility. The declaration also focuses on many difficult issues like religious and cultural practices and deplors their use as a justification for violent acts against women (General Assembly 1993, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women).

The Declaration is a significant document as it presents violence against women as a matter of international structural responsibility through the global power imbalance between men and women. However, some critics like Christine Chinkin point out the limitation of such a definition of violence. According to Chinkin, this definition excludes

systemic forms of violence such as those associated with structural adjustment policies (SAPs), certain forms of development programme, and the caste system (Chinkin 1995: 27).

Another problem with the Declaration is that it is not a binding legal instrument and this makes the appointment in 1994 of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women an important development as now activities of state parties could be monitored and recorded in the thematic and country wise reports presented by the Special Rapporteurs.

India and CEDAW

India's lack of ratification of the Optional Protocol and the numerous reservations that it has made to the CEDAW are mostly driven by the argument based on the dichotomy of public and private and the need of the state to protect 'cultural and traditional heritage'. In the initial report that India submitted to the Committee on CEDAW, there is a mention of two declaratory statements and the one Reservation that it makes to the CEDAW. The first declaration is regarding Article 5 (a) and 16 (1) of the Convention where the Indian government declares that "it shall abide by and ensure these provisions in conformity with its policy of non-interference in the personal affairs of any Community without its initiative and consent". With regard to Article 16 (2) of the Convention, the government declares that though in principle "it fully supports the principle of compulsory registration of marriages, it is not practical in a vast country like India with its variety of customs, religions and level of literacy" (CEDAW 1979).

India also made a reservation in the instrument of ratification that it deposited, whereby it declared itself to be not bound by paragraph 1 of article 29. The Article calls for compulsory arbitration or interpretation by the International Court of Justice of disputes concerning interpretation and allows for any of these parties to approach the International Court of Justice in case arbitration fails as a means of settling the issue and after a time

period of six months is completed since the date of the request for arbitration (CEDAW 1979).

During the deliberation on this report, India received much criticism for its unwillingness to intervene in the personal laws of the various religious communities. Some delegates were of the view that this unwillingness was a breach of the convention and said that “the Government should not use India’s cultural, religious and ethnic pluralism as an excuse for failing to meet its obligation of introducing legislation to counteract those discriminatory patriarchal norms” (CEDAW Committee Report 2007).

Women and development

On the relationship between women and development, the UN has witnessed huge change in both perspective and policy ideas. This change is also reflective of the deeper change within the UN on gender and how women are perceived in socio-economic terms. The discourse on development has evolved greatly from the understanding of women as dependents with no economic agency of their own to one that looked at women in purely utilitarian terms to a view which talks of capabilities and entitlement. The UN was the arena where this debate was forged.

The First Development Decade of 1961–1970 did not focus on women specifically. The CSW focused on women’s equal rights and didn’t see development as relevant to their demand for rights. Women were still primarily viewed as mothers and home makers and therefore not a significant independent stakeholder in the development debate. In a resolution to ECOSOC in 1962, the CSW called on UN bodies such as UNICEF to “expand and strengthen their efforts to assist women in developing countries,” but the issue of women and development was not a major part of the CSW’s agenda during these very early years of the decade (Marchand and Parpart 1995:11).

At the UN's International Conference on Human Rights at Tehran in 1968, resolution IX titled "Measures to Promote Women's Rights in the Modern World", containing a reference to the Secretary-General's proposal for a unified long-term program for women, was adopted. Two of the three objectives of the long-term program emphasized women's participation in and contribution to the development of society (United Nations, General Assembly, 1968). In 1970, the UN initiated a '*Programme of Concerted International Action for the Advancement of Women*' that put resolution IX in a development format. The actions proposed and the goals of the program were woven into a rights framework. The targets were divided into four segments—education, training and employment, health and maternity protection, and public life.

The International Development Strategy (IDS) devised for the Second Development Decade (1970–1980) re-defined the purpose of development as "bring[ing] about sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual and bestow[ing] benefits on all" (Snyder 1995: 97). During the Second Development Decade, both women and men became important to the development process and the IDS specifically called for "the full integration of women in the total development effort" (General Assembly 1970). Programming for women received another boost that year when the General Assembly approved a Programme of Concerted International Action for the Advancement of Women designed to "advance the status of women and increase their effective participation in all sectors." The goals of the program were to eliminate illiteracy, bring about universal acceptance of the principle of equal pay for equal work, provide "health and maternity protection," and facilitate a "substantial increase" in the number of women participating in public life and government at all levels (General Assembly, 1970b).

In 1970 came the historical work of Danish economist Ester Boserup on 'Women's Role in Economic Development' which forced countries to see women as productive workers (Boserup 1970: XXIII). This approach of women in development does not take into

consequence any of the more normative issues at play but works as a means to an end. The development approach of this era is described as the modernization project.

Boserup raised pertinent points about the investment that was happening under the modernization project. With modern technology and pattern of land use, women who were mostly engaged in subsistence agriculture became sidelined. Though technology eliminated the need for muscle power from agriculture, owing to the prevalent social conditions, it was the men who acquired knowledge of the technology. Using data from official statistics, Boserup provided “clear evidence of women’s contributions . . . to national economic productivity” (Boserup 1970: 105).

The burst of new knowledge about women’s work led to the emergence of a “new” development definition called ‘women in development’, or WID. Advocates of this idea, many of whom were women researchers and women policymakers, rejected the welfare approach that saw women as “needy” recipients of assistance. Instead, they saw women as vital producers who were the missing link in development. They were a valuable resource that had not been recognized (Razavi and Miller 1995: 4).

An Interregional Meeting of Experts on the Integration of Women in Development was held at the UN in 1972, co-sponsored by the CSW and the Commission on Social Development. The expert group recommended programs to create jobs for women and programs to provide education and vocational training, a clear departure from the way the welfare approach saw its beneficiaries.

In 1972, the commission embraced the new development goals of ECOSOC, but in its own language. It urged member states in planning and implementing their programmes of action to promote the advancement of women, to take account of the varying needs of women in their countries, with a view to enabling women to achieve their maximum

potential, not only as wives and mothers but also as citizens and full participants in the development of their countries.

This was a clear departure from the earlier modernization approach to women's role in development; the CSW envisioned women in developing countries as co-partners in policymaking and governance. Programming for women became a focus of work at the UN in the 1970s. Irene Tinker notes that a report on women and development that Gloria Scott wrote for the International Women's Year conference at Mexico "resulted in resolutions for integrating women into development programs being introduced into the working plans of most of the UN agencies in addition to the General Assembly" (Tinker 2004: 72).

During 1975-85, in development terms, both the welfare approach—one that sought to bring women into development as better mothers who could improve the lives of family members through better birth spacing and nutrition—and the emancipation approach—the socialist model that sought to improve women's status through state provision of goods and services—continued to be applied (General Assembly 1970).

The issue of female labor also came to the center with research done by the ILO, the UNDP, and the FAO as well as by scholars and organizations revealing that there were deep flaws in the tools used to measure female labor because of the nature and style of women's work. In 1981, the ILO took a deeper look at unpaid work and discussed several ways in which it could be measured and in 1983, the ILO, led by Richard Anker, undertook a study of "Female Labour-Force Participation: An ILO Research on Conceptual and Measurement Issues". By the time of the UN's Mid-Decade Review Conference in Copenhagen, the movement's analysis of women in development had sharpened to a complex understanding of "the interconnection between trends in women's roles and status in their societies and the nature and pattern of the development

processes, including the latter's dependence on international, economic, and political relations" (Emmerij et al., 2009: 68).

During the International Women's Decade, the UN held several regional seminars on women's participation in development, in particular with its regional economic and social commissions: in Buenos Aires (1976); in Kathmandu, Havana, and Mauritania(1977); in Amman (1978); and in the Mediterranean region (1984). Though planners understood the need to include women in development and the success of these plans at the country level, this time also saw what was called feminization of poverty with a large number of women being recorded as poor. This led to a fundamental break and a new approach called the "Gender and Development" (GAD) approach. This approach instead of calling on the productivity of women, talks of the need to change the development paradigm itself.

A series of reports from within the UN and from outside institutions pointed to the ways women suffered under the increasing inequality caused by structural adjustment and neoliberal economic programs. One such report titled "UN's World's Women 1970-1990" noted that with the onset of structural adjustment programs, "women [had] been disproportionately squeezed out of public sector employment" (Reeves 2000:4).

Reductions in government spending for health, child care, family planning, and education hit women particularly hard. Wage freezes and the high cost of imported goods meant that women worked longer hours. In 1994, Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, highlighted this differential situation: "Women have less influence in the market because they do not have control over their labour and have limited access to other means of production" (Jain 2005: 106).

The idea of human development followed these earlier explorations. The historical roots of the the Human Development Reports published by the UN "occurred under the remarkable leadership of Mahbub ul Haq, the great Pakistani economist. Even though

Mahbub's primary focus was on the evaluative aspect of the human development approach (he questioned, in particular, the commonly used measures of economic success, such as the gross domestic product, on which so much of the development literature had tended to concentrate), he also had deep interest in the agency aspect. Even as he was hammering home the need to judge progress differently, Mahbub was also scrutinizing the ways and means of enhancing—through commitment and determination—the “life chances” that people enjoy in the miserable world in which we live (Snyder 1995: 97).

The Human Development Report 1995, subtitled *Gender and Human Development*, was brought out by the UNDP Human Development Bureau in honor of the UN world conference in Beijing 1995 and was released at the conference. It reported that although gains had been made in women's education, illiterate women still outnumbered illiterate men by two to one. Poverty has a woman's face. The 1995 report innovated and developed two special indices for measuring gendered inequality, the GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure) and the GDI (Gender Development Index)

The International Conference on Human Rights in Tehran (1968), the World Population Conference in Bucharest (1974), and the World Food Conference in Rome (1974) were the conferences that managed to maneuver the gender dialogue within the UN owing to the participation of women at these conferences. This process was also aided by the fact that some of the agencies had sections that were predominantly managed by women, and these individuals became the “activators.” For example, the FAO had an efficient nutrition section that was staffed mainly by women (Jain 2005:65).

The decade from 1985 to 1995 saw the emergence of women as leaders. For example, women took over leadership of six important agencies: Nafis Sadik was the first woman to head a major agency, UNFPA (1987–2000); Catherine Bertini headed the World Food Programme (1992–2002); Gro Harlem Brundtland headed the WHO (1998–2003); Mary Robinson was the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997–2002); Sadako

Ogata was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1991–2000); Carol Bellamy headed UNICEF (1995–2005); and Louise Fréchette was named the organization's first deputy secretary-general (1998–2006).

In 1999 came the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* by the Division for the Advancement of Women focusing on globalization and gender. The report stated that macroeconomics is not gender neutral and has a disproportional effect on women and thereby called for engendering macroeconomics and measures to enhance the value of women's labour. This was soon followed by two reports by Lizin sanctioned by the Commission on Human Rights in 1999. These reports too pointed towards the gendered aspects of poverty and resonated with the concept of human security. In response to this new data on feminization of poverty, the UN introduced Microcredit for women in need designed to make them self-sufficient. This approach has been criticized as one that failed to look into the real reason behind the surge in extreme poverty amongst women, the modernization project with structural adjustment program as its flag bearer (Jain 2005: 65). The criticism of the neoliberal economic setup could also be heard at the Beijing conference.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration

Deriving from the Millennium Declaration of 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were designed to set out the strategic vision for the UN in the twenty-first century. Dealing with increased inequality and discontent against the Neoliberal economic setup, the MDGs were meant to provide time bound efforts to meet the needs of the many left disadvantaged by the globalization agenda. The Goals also marked a significant move within the UN on the understanding of development. Favoring human needs over statistics driven economic principles, the Goals offered an accountable, concrete, and time-driven development agenda which was backed by institutional support.

MDGs were seen as a perfect overlap between the development goals and the human rights agenda. The overlap was also celebrated by the Human Development Report of 2003 which said that the MDGs not only “mirror the fundamental motivation for human rights, but they also reflect a human rights agenda- rights to food, education, health care and decent living standards”. Ashton notes that the MDGs provide an “ideal lens through which to assess the current state of the debate over human rights and development, including the right to development”, however he cautions against mistaking this overlap as complete compatibility (Ashton 2006: 758). Nonetheless, the MDGs offered a new, more streamlined and outcome driven development paradigm that had the potential to impact people who had fallen short in the neoliberal economy. The Millennium Declaration and human development, according to Fakuda-Parr share a common vision, guided by the values of freedom, dignity, solidarity, tolerance, and equity among people and nations.

In brief, the eight MDGs aim to- (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; (2) achieve universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality and empower women; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) develop a global partnership for development. So as to monitor their progress, they have been accompanied by eighteen targets and forty-eight indicators (General Assembly 2000).

The declaration, though criticized for providing for just one concrete target dealing with gender equality (Bunch 2009: 5-8), does in fact ascertain the commitment of the UN towards gender equality. While emphasizing on certain fundamental values, the Declaration asks for equality and freedom for both men and women. The Declaration expresses the intention to “spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty”. It goes further to take up the commitment of ensuring that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that girls and boys will

have equal access to all levels of education and vouches to “promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable” (General Assembly 2000: 5).

Gender emerged as a cross-sectoral concern for the millennium development goals, with gender equality and maternal health being acknowledged as important development concerns. Goal 3 that talks of promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women focuses on the need to ensure universal education. The goal ultimately links education to the nature of employment of women and the vulnerability it brings and also calls for greater representation of women in political positions. On maternal health, the UN’s efforts are centered on ensuring reduction of maternal mortality ratio by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015. The need to have better healthcare facilities for pregnant women, the link between poverty and lack of education on high adolescent birth rate and expanding the use of contraceptives by women are issues that the UN engages in to fulfill its target (United Nations 2010: 27).

The UN has been working hard at achieving its goals. Following the Millennium Summit in 2000, the 2005 World Summit saw decisions being taken in areas of development and human rights, etc. which all got modulated in achievable set of proposals by the then Secretary General in a report titled “In Larger Freedom” (United Nations 2005).

In an unprecedented gathering of governments, foundations, businesses and civil society groups at the 2008 High-level Event on the MDGs, a call was made to slash poverty, hunger and disease by 2015 and new commitments were made to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The event saw countries making individual commitment on the goals and a collection of US\$16 billion was targeted towards the MDGs (United Nations, 2008). This figure jumped to \$40 billion when number of Heads of State and Government from developed and developing countries, along with the private sector, foundations, international organizations, civil society and research organizations met again for the 2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals. The summit witnessed adoption of

a global action plan which reiterated the commitment of Member States “to making every effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, including through actions, policies and strategies” and asked for “renewed commitment, effective implementation and intensified collective action by all Member States and other relevant stakeholders at both the domestic and international levels” (United Nations 2010: 3).

However, the enthusiasm around the MDGs is not universally shared. One of the most prominent criticisms of the MDGs is based on the concept itself. With focus firmly placed on numbers, the Goals are more pragmatic than idealistic in nature. Pogge in his criticism of the first goal says that the goal to halve the world poverty rate is “radically under-ambitious and actually constitutes a dramatic lowering of goals previously endorsed at the United Nations fora, such as the 1996 Rome Declaration on World Food Security”. He posits that the MDGs do not go nearly far enough to warrant support (Pogge 2003: 4). On the other hand of the spectrum are those who see the well defined goals as being essentially unrealistic and bound to cause discontentment. Clemens, Kenny, and Moss have warned that the MDGs could end up “undermining the cause by overreaching on the targets and over-selling the efficacy of aid”, by “making the perfect the enemy of the good”, and by “creating a climate of inaccurate pessimism about development and aid” (Clemens et al. 2004:33).

The MDGs have also been criticized for being a top-down effort, for selectively picking targets and ignoring certain rights thus settling for half measures instead of offering comprehensive solutions to individuals, for being generic in nature and ignoring specific concerns of states and people, for defining poverty in a narrow fashion denying its broader ramifications, for focusing on states when states themselves are being sidelined by privatization policies, for failing to address these private actors and for lacking provision for an in-depth analysis of progress achieved (Ashton 2005: 765).

On the specific issue of gender equality, Antobus criticizes the MDGs by calling them a “major distraction gimmicks - a distraction from the much more important Beijing

Platform for Action with its 12 Priority Areas of Concern” (Antrobus 2006: 39). She cites the failure of the MDGs to comment on women’s sexual and reproductive rights as inexcusable given that it is a crucial indicator for measuring progress in at least four specified goals of ensuring gender equality and women’s empowerment, the child mortality goal, the goal to protect maternal health and finally the goal to combat HIV/AIDS. She says that the “MDGs are discussed in the context of religious and economic fundamentalism” (Antrobus 2006: 41) and are designed to perpetuate the subordination of women. She also criticizes the lack of acknowledgment in the official literature on the MDGs of the impact the Neoliberal policy framework as exemplified by the Washington consensus on the progress of the Goals (Antrobus 2006: 41).

Peace and Security

According to UNIFEM, nearly half a million women were raped during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda while in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, at least 200,000 cases of sexual violence, mostly involving women and girls, have been documented since 1996 (UNIFEM 2001) . But sexual violence is not the only problem that women face in conflict situations. The issue of large scale displacement and depleting economic resources have been proven to have an adverse impact on the health and life expectancy amongst women in conflict areas. There have also been reports of rape and sexual harassment by the UN Peacekeeping forces as well as their complicity in such crimes. Many women activists also see lack of gender perspective in reconciliation and reconstruction efforts as a major roadblock in making genuine progress in conflict torn areas. More representation for women in decision making and conflict resolution structures is seen as being essential.

One of the earliest documents to emanate from the UN on peace and security was the *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict*. The Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court also identified that “a

broad range of sexual and reproductive violence crimes-rape, sexual slavery including trafficking, forced pregnancy, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization..as among the gravest crimes of war..and as crimes against humanity.”

In 1969, the CSW deliberated upon the need to accord special protection to women in conflict areas. This was followed by the General Assembly adopting the *Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict* in 1974. Thereafter, four UN World Conferences on Women were held which led to historical adoption of the CEDAW in 1979.

But it was the Beijing Declaration in 1995 that clearly identified women and armed conflicts as one of the twelve critical areas of concern. The Platform for Action and subsequently the 23rd special session of the UN General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century” focussed particularly on women and armed conflict and worked towards rectifying the lack of gender perspective and ensuring protection for women.

The UN moved towards a new understanding of the concept of security that goes beyond military terms. In fact, the UN Commission on Human Security in its report published in 2003, hailed the need for implementing the Human Security model in post-conflict countries to empower the girls who were victims of sexual violence.

The formation of tribunals that seek to punish the offenders, like the Special Court of Sierra Leone or the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were key in ensuring justice to victims and reflect an understanding of the gender implications of armed conflict. They are of great significance in the context of redressing the grievances of women and girls through the international criminal law process. Also since 1994, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur on violence that has highlighted sexual violence against women and girls committed during armed conflicts.

However, it was the passing of the special resolution of the UN Security Council to address women's role in war and peace on 31st October, 2000 called Security Council Resolution 1325 that firmly affirmed the important role women play in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts and in peace-building efforts. The resolution emphasized on the importance of women "in prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building" and also on the need to "take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence" (Security Council 2000: 3). Furthermore, it called for the implementation of women's right as human rights and to protect women and girls during and after the conflicts. This resolution was a recognition of the diverse role that women play in conflict resolution.

As complementary to UNSC Resolution 1325, SCR 1820 was adopted in 2008. The resolution seeks to explicitly link sexual violence as a tactic of war with the maintenance of international peace and security and sees it as a self-standing security issue and excludes sexual violence crimes from amnesty provisions. The resolution went on to delve deeper into the need to address sexual violence which is "used as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group"(Security Council 2008: 2). Thereby, the Security Council has a clear mandate to intervene through sanctions etc. Through this Resolution, other Resolutions like SCR 1325(2000), 1612(2005) and 1674(2006) and General Assembly Resolution 62/134 (2007) were also reaffirmed.

Reports in 2001 of persistent sexual abuse by UN personnel in West Africa led the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to commission a consultants' report in 2001 on the matter. UNHCR subsequently requested the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to enquire into the claims. OIOS in its report presented in 2002 confirmed the existence of the problem of sexual exploitation of refugees and identified specific cases of misconduct by at least one UNHCR volunteer and one UN peacekeeper, as well as several NGO workers (General Assembly 2002). Pursuant to

such reports of abuse being perpetrated by UN personnel, the UN Secretary General called for a policy of “Zero Tolerance” and establishment of measures to check such acts (United Nations Secretary-General Bulletin 2003). To support its policy of ‘zero tolerance’ on sexual exploitation and abuse by members of its multiple peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the UN opened a website in 2009 that makes aggregated data on such misconduct over the past three years publically available (UN Conduct and Discipline Unit).

Gender Mainstreaming

The idea of mainstreaming was first used within the UN in the *Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* adopted at the Nairobi Conference in 1985. But it was only in the Beijing Conference in 1995 that it gained significance as an effective policy tool. In the Platform for Action it appears multiple numbers of times as a strategy to redress women’s position in the twelve critical areas of concern marked in the Platform. This commitment was made to gender mainstreaming at Beijing was then picked up by the CSW and also the ECOSOC which organized a high level panel discussion on gender mainstreaming in 1997. The General Assembly was asked to mainstream gender in all its areas of work and make bodies more responsible to it.

Naming the commitments gender mainstreaming entails, ECOSOC in 1997 declared that, “Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” (ECOSOC 1997: 2).

The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality in all areas of life. ECOSOC clarified that while gender mainstreaming needs to be taken up more proactively in issues across all areas of activity, but this does not replace the need for targeted women-specific policies and programmes or positive legislation, nor does it substitute for gender units or focal points. The document also lists the institutional requirements for gender mainstreaming so as to ensure implementation, monitoring, evaluation and accountability.

One particular aim of the document was to ensure 50/50 gender distribution of staff within the UN to be achieved by 2000. The need to achieve gender parity within the UN was spelt out in 1974 when the General Assembly set the goal of achieving an equitable balance of men and women within the UN by 1980. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies of 1985 followed it up by setting the deadline of 2000 for the UN to achieve equal participation of men and women. But the goal of equal representation has been difficult to achieve, and the difference in numbers becomes more prominent when it comes to women who occupy senior positions within the UN system.

According to Francine D'Amico, women workers at the UN are concentrated at the gender-traditional, junior grade jobs. They are underrepresented in the managerial level jobs and are concentrated in economic and social fields and not in that of political and security (D'Amico 1999: 46). In the sixty years of peacekeeping from 1948 to 2008, there have only been seven women who have held the post of *Special Representative of the Secretary-General* (SRSG). As of 2010, there are three female SRSGs and three Deputy SRSGs. Overall, women represent approximately 30% of civilian staff at headquarters and 30% of international civilian staff and 20% of national staff in peacekeeping missions. Women make up less than 3% of military personnel and 8% of UN police personnel, far below the *United Nations Police (UNPOL)* 2014 target of 20%.

According to the figures available as of December 2010, women in the UN system constituted 40.3 per cent (12,005 out of 29,763) of all staff in the professional and higher

categories. In the senior category within the UN system, only 29.3 per cent (784 out of 2,674) of all staff were women while at the lower positions women occupied 41.4 per cent (11,221 out of 27,089) of all staff. Within the UN Secretariat, women were 39.1 per cent (3918 out of 10,011) of all staff in the professional and higher categories. The situation of women in the UN Secretariat was similar to that in the UN system when it came to higher positions with women having just 26.9 per cent (207 out of 769) share of the total senior staff. However, a significantly higher number of women, i.e. 40.2% (3711 out of 9242), made up the lower bureaucracy at the UN Secretariat (UN-Women 2012a).

Moreover, a trend report prepared by UN-Women projects that if the current average annual increment rate calculated from the period of 2001 to 2011 is to remain, there is absolutely no possibility of gender parity being achieved by the UN Secretariat at any senior level. Even if the rate is increased by 2 per cent, the number of women equaling men within the Secretariat at positions of D2 and above can only be achieved by 2036 (UN-Women 2012).

Gender mainstreaming and human rights

It was in 1993 that the Commission on Human Rights passed the first resolution calling for integration of women's rights with the UN human rights mechanisms. However the participants of the international human rights regime such as the *Convention against Torture* or the refugee law continues to not take into account the gender-specific forms that persecution can take. Even with the existence of the gender mainstreaming policy, the decision to include gender analysis was taken not by policy but by personality. With no single entity to elaborate on the initiatives needed to implement the gender mainstreaming agenda or to monitor its implementation, it depended on the personal preference of the person in-charge to take mainstreaming seriously or not.

In its 1993 resolution, the CHR requested "all special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of

Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in the discharge of their mandates, regularly and systematically..include in their reports available information on human rights violations affecting women” (United Nations 1993). Approaches to mainstream gender perspectives in the UN human rights system were developed by meetings of experts in 1995 convened by the Human Rights Commission and the UNIFEM. The report of the Expert-Group suggested the need to include gender-disaggregated data, to employ gender based analysis both to assess the data and to review existing human rights documents, and to coordinate the work of UN bodies more effectively to facilitate attaining these goals (United Nations, 1996). All this was even before the ECOSOC specifically asked for mainstreaming in the UN system.

Nonetheless, this early call for mainstreaming failed to change much. A look at the composition of the various committees of the human rights treaty bodies reveals the disproportionate gender representation. By 2004, though women made up 40 percent of the total membership of the human rights treaty bodies but most of the women were concentrated in two committees: the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The overall proportion of women in other human right treaty bodies was a meager 15 percent. (Charlesworth 2005: 7) In 2006, the female participation in the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was just four while the Human Rights Committee had just three women (Johnstone 2006: 163).

The latest figures are not any different either. Of the total nine committees of human rights treaty bodies, barring the CEDAW the Committee on the Right of Person with Disabilities (CRPD) and Committee on Rights of the Child (CRC) none of the committees are even close to achieving the 50 percent share for women representatives. As of April, 2011 Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, Committee against Torture and Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination have only three women representatives in a total of eighteen members. Meanwhile, Human Rights

Committee (CCPR) which monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has just four women members in a group of eighteen and the Committee on Migrant Workers has the same number out of a total of fourteen. The worst of the lot though is the most recently formed Committee on Enforced Disappearance which has just one woman in its membership (OHCHR 2011. See annex).

An analysis of the work done by the human rights treaty bodies shows the difference between the normative structure that exists and the lack of implementation. Gender Mainstreaming remains a policy that needs more than just a moral commitment to become operative in real terms. Even within the human rights framework, there is a difference in the approaches and attitudes towards gender equality. Some treaty bodies have taken up the policy much more proactively than the others. For example, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights refers to the position of women in its concluding observations on state parties report and in its General Comment, while the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination only adopted the recommendation for “gender based dimension of racial discrimination” in 2000. The Commission was reluctant initially, so much so that the Chairperson of CERD remarked in 1996 that directives to integrate gender into state parties’ reports were fundamentally misconceived (Charlesworth 2005:8).

The CESCR, as noted by Johnstone in her study on the feminist influences on the, has incorporated a gender perspective in a number of its General Comments since the 1990s. The General Comment on older persons asks states to be particularly sensitive towards women who spent their lives working in unremunerated care work (Johnstone 2006:163). Also in its comments on forced evictions, education and on healthcare, the Committee makes specific mention of women and asks states to be sensitive towards women.

The Human Rights Committee that monitors the implementation of the ICCPR amended its reporting guidelines in 1995 to require state parties to provide details of the “equal enjoyment” of civil and political rights for men and women in their state reports

(Johnstone 2006:164). In 2000, the HRC issued a general comment on Article 3, the obligation to ensure equal enjoyment of civil and political rights for men and women.

The HRC has managed to raise important questions at times, like when in its Concluding Comments it drew attention to Peru's 1996 periodic report under the ICCPR which criminalized abortions even in cases of rape which then led to unsafe abortions. Similarly, other recent General Comments have also been gender sensitive. In General Comment 27 on Freedom of Movement, the committee acknowledged the responsibility of state parties to ensure that freedom of movement is not restricted by private interference. In the Comment, the committee referred to considerations of state reports where it had found requirements for consent of a male relative or male escort to have violated the right to freedom of movement (Johnstone 2006:167).

The HRC has over time challenged states on laws that discriminate against women, such as age of legal marriage, marriage as a defense against rape, etc. It has also managed to raise concerns about domestic violence, trafficking of women and also murder and rape of women during armed conflicts, etc. The HRC has been prompt in taking up gender discrimination on a case to case basis. While it criticized Kuwait on failing to provide a right to vote, it also duly noted that there is significant gender pay gap in the Nordic countries (Johnstone 2006: 166).

However, the CERD text failed to refer to gender equality and even during the later deliberations the Committee was less than gender sensitive. In 1996, when the committee issued a general recommendation on refugees and displaced persons and in 1997 when it made a recommendation on the rights of indigenous peoples, there were no specific gender dimension. Johnstone points out that in consideration of the Yugoslavian State Report in 1998, the representatives were not asked about the systematic rape and torture of women civilians. In 2000, though the committee did take into account the disadvantage that is created when race and sex meet, the committee then noted that, "There are circumstances in which racial discrimination only or primarily affects women,

or affect women in different way, or to a different degree than men.” The Committee also made the states disaggregate the data in the report on the basis of sex (Johnstone 2006: 173).

The *Convention against Torture* suffers from a definition of torture that does not take into account acts of private violence. Since women are mostly victims of act of violence committed within the confines of their homes, the convention fails to offer them any protection. Johnstone notes the various instances when the Committee failed to take up gender concerns, like its failure to include rape as a form of torture in its concluding comments in 1999 though it was so recognized in the summary record, or during its 2002 Sri Lankan inquiry and 2003 investigation in Mexico. Though gender sensitivity did start to emerge later with the committee recognizing that human trafficking was, in fact, a form of torture (Johnstone 2006: 174).

These small interventions notwithstanding the human rights treaty bodies have no mechanism for regular discussion on gender mainstreaming. Even in cases where the Special Rapporteur has tried to mainstream gender, the reports only end up giving information about individual cases where women are victims of human rights abuse. There is a significant gap in understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming itself. More often than not, the treaty bodies end up looking at it only in statistical terms and no attention is paid to understand the larger question of power and authority that accompanies gender.

Sandole-Staroste emphasizes that gender mainstreaming is a top-down strategy that depends on political will of the top leadership to publicly support gender integration and to commit staff time, financial resources and set up accountability to succeed. Kiril Sharapov’s findings on the *UN Mission in Kosovo* (UNMIK) that showed the general disappointment over UNMIK’s handling and execution of Security Council Resolution 1325 proves the domination of personality over policy that continues to characterize gender mainstreaming (Sandole-Staroste 2009:233).

Another example of the lack of clarity regarding gender mainstreaming as employed by the UN is given by Charlesworth and Wood in their analysis of the case of East Timor where the United National Transitional Administration in East Timor (the UNTAET) was given unprecedented powers by the Security Council in 1999. Their mandate included the need to employ “personnel with appropriate training in international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, including child and gender-related provisions” (Security Council 1999, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1272).. However, the Gender Affairs Unit was reluctantly established in 2000 with six full-time employees, none of whom were from East Timor. Moreover the Gender unit had no clear mandate and suffered from lack of funding and institutional support (Charlesworth and Wood 2001: 315).

The UN has been unable to establish a mandate for mainstreaming. There are no guidelines, leaving it up to the people responsible at the missions and the other entities part of the UN system to either take it seriously or just to consider it as another statistical entity. Lack of training to arm the staff for a more gender sensitive analysis is also a problem that gets more complicated owing to the insufficient coordination among the UN bodies. The fact that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women is based in New York while the other five committees of the human rights treaty bodies are based in Geneva hampers any effort at achieving coordination. The absence of well focused work plans developed by these committees owes partly to their different locations. Most importantly, gender mainstreaming within the UN system suffered due to lack of a focal point which could conduct study, monitor and hold bodies accountable for their work. Riddell-Dixon sees the lack of an established and effective focal point as the main deterrent to the proper implementation of gender mainstreaming policy. She says, “As a result [of absence of an empowered focal point], no one is officially responsible for overseeing the implementation of the resolutions that emanate from the Commission on Human Rights” (Riddell-Dixon 1999: 152).

Studies done by various organizations such as UNDP and the World Bank have found that the policy suffers from inadequate funding of the gender components of projects, insufficient development of analytical skills, poor supervision and a general lack of political will. Hillary Charlesworth also emphasizes the problem with the use of political concepts such as gender by the UN which only goes to deradicalize the whole concept and takes away from the long political struggle that the feminist movement has had to endure.

The failure of the UN to understand or implement gender mainstreaming can best be understood through the analysis done by the United Nation Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women which says that instituting gender mainstreaming has been

“a long, slow process requiring input on many fronts over a long period of time...[and a] number of persistent constraints [remain]..including conceptual confusion, inadequate understanding of the linkages between gender perspectives and different areas of the work of the United Nations and gaps in capacity to address gender perspectives once identified.. The lack of understanding of “How” gender perspectives can be identified and addressed remains one of the most serious constraints” (United Nations 2002).

Critique of the UN system’s gender architecture (prior to the creation of UN-Women)

In her paper submitted to the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, Aruna Rao described the UN system as being “replete with example of structure and personnel mandated to do gender equality work that are under-resourced and under-prioritized” (International Women’s Tribune Centre and Heinrich Boll Foundation 2006). The words under-resourced and under-prioritized best sum the oft-repeated criticism of the UN system’s gender architecture. Though the UN has worked as a galvanizing force in

defining the global agenda for women's rights and empowerment and has consistently been at the center of the norm making process that challenges the gender bias in arenas of political, social, economic and cultural rights, it fell short on ensuring an adequate implementation process.

The UN system's gender architecture suffered most from lack of accountability. Absence of a focal point, an authority figure on the UN gender agenda which could monitor implementation of policies both within the UN system as well as in the member countries severely hampered the efforts of the UN towards ensuring a gender sensitive approach. Policies such as gender mainstreaming became a mere policy statement which failed to bring any real change in the handling of issues by the UN due to lack of training and expertise of the UN staff on gender. Even when gender mainstreaming was taken into consideration, there was no proper entity that could guide the contours and the shape such a policy was supposed to take.

Presence of the four separate entities all working on more or less similar mandates saw vast overlapping which ultimately led to wastage of precious resources. The conflicting mandates can be best seen through the example of gender mainstreaming, whereby both the UNIFEM and OSAGI were looking at defining the agenda for the programs trying to include a gender perspective. This also made monitoring of country programs difficult as no one body was in the position to challenge the country program for failing to include gender units.

This problem is also directly related to the problem of lack of resources. The existing gender architecture at the UN suffered from apathy of the system, with the total funding of the four bodies equaling just approximately \$247 million in the year 2008 (United Nations 2009). By comparison, for the same period, the total income for UNICEF alone was over \$3.3 billion (UNICEF Annual Report 2008). One more basic problem plaguing the UN system's gender architecture was that of governance. UNIFEM, despite being the frontal organization on gender at the UN, only had a secondary role in the UN system.

Unlike specialized agencies with their own governance and in-country operations, UNIFEM was autonomously associated with UNDP. It was led by an Executive Director, while the UNDP administrator was accountable for UNIFEM's management and operation. UNIFEM required involvement from UNDP, specialized agencies, and others when planning and implementing projects.

In a note prepared by the Deputy Secretary-General on the UN system support to member states on gender equality and women empowerment, substantive and programmatic aspects of the work of the UN system were analyzed. The note also mentioned the problems with the gender architecture and cites issues such as coordination and coherence, authority and positioning, accountability, country-level support, and emphasis on country-driven demands and ownership and resources as the broad areas of concern (United Nations 2008: 2).

Due to these problems, the report said that high priority issues were not given adequate attention. The report mentioned that “even in areas where effective interventions have been made by a large number of entities over many years, for example in the areas of violence against women, the lack of a coherent and sustained system-wide approach has limited the effectiveness of the work of the UN.” Lack of coherence in the UN system may also emerge from the diverse and sometimes contradictory types of policy advice of governing bodies of different entities.

There is no denying the success of the UN in developing a framework that pushes the agenda for gender equality and women empowerment but the sincerity of its effort came under criticism owing to the rather lackluster performance of its various policies and the position gender occupied within the larger UN mandate. The absence of a focal entity to guide, monitor, implement and to ensure accountability handicapped UN in its efforts to ensure a more gender sensitive UN system.

Chapter 4: A New Entity- ‘UN-Women’

“Gender equality is not achieved in hesitant, tentative, disingenuous increments. It’s achieved by bold dramatic reform of the architecture of the United Nations”

-Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa, to the High-Level Panel on UN Reform (AWID 2006).

Through a long and progressive process, the UN has continued reforming itself at different stages so as to live up to the challenges of the time. However this reform process has been slow in bridging the gap between the normative and the operative capability of the UN system. Though the UN managed to weave an extensive normative framework that evolved to include different issues impacting women’s empowerment, it did not have the means or the modalities needed to put these norms in action. The UNIFEM Report of 2005 evaluating gender mainstreaming in the UNDP in fact showed that the countries, bilateral donors and the multilateral system consistently failed to prioritize, and significantly under-fund, women’s rights and equality work (General Assembly 2005:6).

There are policy doctrines like gender mainstreaming, Security Council Resolution 1325, Gender and Development approach, key documents like the CEDAW, etc. but they failed to offer the radical breakthrough needed to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment on the ground.

Critics of the UN system point out that the gender architecture suffered from being fragmented, weak, and under-resourced. Moreover, they argue that the efforts of the UN suffered from lack of clear leadership and coordination. These weaknesses, critics maintain, hindered the UN system’s ability to promote and implement programs that enhance gender equality.

It was in this situation that the need for a clear break from the past was felt which got reflected in the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005. The summit which was held to gauge the progress of the Millennium Declaration of 2000 became the precursor for a reform process of the entire UN system. The Outcome Document reiterated the commitments made by member states on issues of gender equality and elimination of gender discrimination. The document renews the resolve to provide reproductive rights to women, ensure absence of gender bias in education, grant property rights to women, etc. On an institutional level, the UN pledged to “actively promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, and further undertake to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender” (General Assembly 2005:17).

Highlighting the need for improving the overall functioning of the UN, member states deliberated upon ways to make the UN more productive and to streamline its affairs. In consonance with this objective, paragraph 169 of the World Summit Outcome Document invited the Secretary General to “launch work to further strengthen the management and coordination of the UN operational activities”. This led to the creation of the High level Panel by the Secretary General to look into the possible ways to achieve a more coordinated UN system on the issues of humanitarian assistance, development and environment.

The 15 member Coherence Panel, of which only three are women, was mandated to make recommendations on how the UN should be structured, both at the country and global levels; address new challenges; and discuss how the UN system can meet goals such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Though gender did not feature as a standalone issue in the agenda for the panel, but following protests from women groups the Secretary General added it as a cross cutting issue thus paving the way for one of the most radical proposals to strengthen the gender architecture within the UN.

Delivering as one

The High-Level Panel released its 52-page report entitled “Delivering as One” on November 2006. The report accepted that the current structure of the UN failed to provide countries enough help and is fractured. Presenting a case for reform, the report went on to deal in depth with the three demarcated issue areas of development, humanitarian assistance and environment. It also added sustainable development, gender equality and human rights as cross cutting issues. The report also dwelt on the governance, funding and management function of the UN agencies involved and listed possibilities that can be taken up by the General Assembly for further debate (General Assembly 2006a:9).

The Report emphasised on the need for “ambitious and far reaching reforms”, without which “the United Nations will be unable to deliver on its promise and maintain its legitimate position at the heart of the multilateral system. Despite its unique legitimacy, including the universality of its membership, the UN’s status as a central actor in the multilateral system is undermined by lack of focus on results, thereby failing, more than anyone else, the poorest and most vulnerable”.

The Report goes further to list the reasons for the UN’s work on development and environment ending up being “fragmented and weak”. “Inefficient and ineffective governance and unpredictable funding have contributed to policy incoherence, duplication and operational ineffectiveness across the system. Cooperation between organizations has been hindered by competition for funding, mission creep and by outdated business practices”.

Coming to gender, the panel recommended “the establishment of one dynamic UN entity focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment.” The report proposes-

- Consolidating the three existing UN entities into an enhanced and independent gender entity, headed by an Executive Director with the rank of Under Secretary-General, appointed through a meritocratic competition demonstrably open to those outside the UN.
- The gender entity would have a strengthened normative and advocacy role combined with a targeted programming role
- The gender entity must be fully and ambitiously funded.
- Gender equality would be a component of all UN One Country Programmes.
- The commitment to gender equality is and should remain the mandate of the entire UN system.

The Report acknowledges that the current architecture “is too incoherent, under resourced and fragmented” to provide effective support to Member states and therefore, needs a complete overhaul. A stronger voice which is in constant touch with national governments and civil society groups is what is needed for the UN to overcome this problem. While calling for a separate entity for women, the report emphasizes that all the bodies within the UN should continue to consider gender equality as part of their mandate at all times.

Regarding the governance and structure of the new gender entity, the report calls for bringing together three of the UN’s existing entities under two organizational divisions. The “normative, analytical and monitoring” division would subsume the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI) and the Division for the Advancement of Women. The “policy advisory and programming” division would subsume the current activities of the UN Development Fund for Women.

In response to one of the critiques of the UN system’s gender architecture, the report asks for the new entity to be headed by an Executive Director who would have the rank of

Under-Secretary-General, which would guarantee organizational stature and influence in UN system-wide decision making. The new gender entity would also be a full member of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) and proposed UN Development Policy and Operations Group. The entity would be responsible to the ECOSOC and the General Assembly.

The Report proposals are guided towards ensuring the UN's provision of coherent, timely and demand driven support for the efforts of the member states in strengthening national capacity to achieve gender equality consistent with national priorities and international gender equality norms and policy framework. The new entity would provide a much stronger voice on women's issues, would work more effectively with the government and civil society and ensure greater coherence among the various assistance efforts. The new entity should have principal responsibility for linking system-wide research, policy and country level catalytic programming and leading effective gender mainstreaming work of the UN system. Though it would not replace the work of other agencies who would continue to be responsible for mainstreaming gender perspective in their sectoral programmes and policies, the new entity would contribute to reducing duplication in activities resulting from overlapping intergovernmental mandates. It would support and coordinate gender and women's empowerment activities of UN entities through an enhanced inter-agency coordination machinery to increase system-wide synergies and cooperate closely with them in carrying out holistic programming and gender related cross-sectoral projects.

The Report of the panel led to a renewed effort from the various women's groups from around the world to demand for a more powerful gender entity within the UN. The transnational advocacy networks nurtured during the world conferences held by the UN became instantly keyed to their chance at having a nodal agency looking at gender, thereby providing gender equality with the much needed push required. Many of these groups were also a part of the consultation process undertaken by the High-Level Panel and had raised their concern with the panel, prominent amongst these groups were

organizations such as Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) and Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), etc (CWGL and WEDO 2006:1-11).

Consultations on the new entity

The panel report set the ball rolling for what would eventually be a long and arduous process that would last for nearly four more years. Once it was made clear by the report of the Secretary-General that followed the High-level Panel report that there was broad consensus amongst states and the UN system about the need of a “consolidated and strengthened UN gender architecture”, it was now about reaching an agreement on the best possible organizational structure that would be agreeable to member states and would fulfill the ambition of a coherent gender architecture (Deputy Secretary-General’s report 2007:4).

The efforts gained momentum with the Deputy-Secretary General providing a Concept Note on a ‘Strengthened Architecture for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women’ in August 2007 to support the intergovernmental review of the UN gender equality architecture. The note followed the informal consultations among member states held in June and was prepared in consultation with the Inter-Agency Task Force comprising of a number of UN entities.

The Concept Note made a case for a complete overhaul new architecture and asked for a new entity to be “(a) given a much stronger voice on women’s issues to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are given adequate priority throughout the UN system, (b) ensuring that the UN works more effectively with governments and civil society in this mission to deliver results, especially at the country level and (c) ensuring greater coherence among the various assistance efforts. The note further asked for the new entity to be based on a hybrid model that would fully integrate normative dimensions

with demand driven operational aspects and to be led by an Executive head at the Under-Secretary-General level (Deputy Secretary General's office 2007:3).

In September 2007, after nine rounds of informal consultations amongst the members of the UN, a report of the co-chairs of the 61st session of the General Assembly was also presented. The report made gender one of the eight thematic component of their report and mentioned the substantive and procedural doubts that some members had against creation of a new gender architecture and the proposal to have a Under-Secretary General as its head (Deputy Secretary General's Office 2007:4-5). Following the report was another one made by the co-chairs of the 62nd session of the General Assembly in July, 2008 which emphasizes gender as an "important issue not just for the UN itself but also for all the states, the stage of their development notwithstanding as no member can boast to have fulfilled all of the agreed international targets and, therefore its own internationally given commitments in regard to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment". Recognizing the shortcomings of the gender architecture at the UN, the report asked for the institutional aspect paper from the secretariat with the recognition in mind that "gender equality and women's empowerment is of universal relevance to all member states; it is an issue that goes beyond development in its scope" (General Assembly 2008:1).

Institutional Options for the new entity

In 2008 and 2009, the Deputy Secretary-General's Office produced two 'Options Papers' on models for a new women's entity which could be agreeable to members and also be potent enough to achieve the designated mandate. The Options Papers set out four models:

- a) Maintaining the status quo
- b) Creating an autonomous fund/programme

c) Creating a department within the Secretariat:

d) Creating a “composite” (previously called a “hybrid”) entity that combines aspects of 2 and 3 (Deputy Secretary General 2008:5).

It was on October 2nd 2009, four years since the process for reforms began that the General Assembly passed the resolution stating that the General Assembly “strongly supports” the creation of a consolidated gender entity based on the composite - option D. The resolution called upon the Secretary General to produce a proposal spelling out its particulars to be submitted to intergovernmental negotiations. The resolution also “supports that the composite entity shall be led by an Under Secretary General” (General Assembly 2009:2).

The issue that remained unresolved was that of governance. Should it be governed as part of the UN Secretariat or should it have a governing board composed of government representatives? The difference in the governance structure is important as it is directly linked to whether the entity is a part of the normative and policy making branch or it falls on the operational side of the UN. There has always been an option for a hybrid entity amongst this clear divide and this is where the new gender entity was supposed to fall. Other issues of debate were the extent of the presence of the new body, the status of civil society vis-à-vis the new body and its resources.

To assuage most of these doubts and to provide a more detailed plan for the new composite entity for gender equality and empowerment of women, the Secretary-General presented a comprehensive proposal in early 2010. The report was a follow up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and discussed the entity’s mission statement, functions, structure and organizational arrangement. The mission statement of the new body read that the new entity:

“Grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the composite entity will work for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women’s rights at the centre of all its efforts, the composite entity will lead and coordinate United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. It will provide strong and coherent leadership in support of Member States’ priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with civil society and other relevant actors” (Secretary-General’s comprehensive proposal 2010b:5).

It proposed establishing a new organization with both operative and normative responsibilities which would operate at the global, regional and national level.

Creation of UN-Women

In perhaps the most significant shakeup of the gender architecture in the history of the UN, on 21st July 2010, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/289 on System-wide coherence that established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN-Women. The new organization, which was to become operational by 1 January 2011, consolidated and transferred the “existing mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat, as well as those of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, to function as a secretariat and also to carry out operational activities at the country level” (General Assembly 2010:8)

The new entity was proposed to work to fill existing gender gaps in the U.N. system. It would aim to ensure “universal coverage” of gender equality issues. To achieve this, the

proposal suggested the establishment of both an operational and normative entity addressing women at the regional, national, and global level

The general principles of UN-Women called upon the entity to “work in consultation with the respective national machineries and/or the focal points designated by the Member States” and notes that the entity would operate as part of the resident coordinator system, within the UN country team.

On the issue of an institutional position within the entity for civil society organizations, the Resolution is quiet. Though it “requests the head of the entity to continue the existing practice of effective consultation with civil society organizations, and encourages their meaningful contribution to the work of the entity”, there is no promise for inclusion of such groups in the governing board as is done by UNAIDS.

The Resolution puts into place a multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the entity comprising of the General Assembly, the ECOSOC and the CSW. The new entity is envisioned as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly, reporting through the Economic and Social Council, its normative work guided by the Commission on the Status of Women and its operational activities overseen by the Executive Board. The Executive Board is to comprise of forty-one members with

- (a) Ten from the Group of African States;
- (b) Ten from the Group of Asian States;
- (c) Four from the Group of Eastern European States;
- (d) Six from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States;
- (e) Five from the Group of Western European and Other States;

(f) Six from contributing countries;

Of the distribution of the six seats allocated for the contributing countries, four seats are to be decided from among the pool of the top ten providers, while two seats would go to developing countries not members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which provide voluntary core contributions to the Entity, to be selected from among the top ten of such providers by the developing countries not members of the Development Assistance Committee, with due consideration to be given to geographical balance.

The members of the Executive Board were to be elected by the ECOSOC for a term of three years and the board would report annually to the General Assembly through the ECOSOC. Importantly in order to quell the criticism regarding lack of position and operational power of the gender architecture at the UN, the resolution decided to “include the Executive Board of the Entity in the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the World Food Programme in order to promote effective coordination and coherence among operational activities on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women.”

Paragraph 69 of the resolution declares that the Entity shall be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, to be appointed by the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, for a term of four years, with the possibility of renewal for one term and the Under-Secretary-General/head of the entity shall report to the Secretary-General and will be a full member of the *United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)*.

On the issue of resources, the resolution provided for a hybrid model as well with regular budget approved by the General Assembly to service the normative intergovernmental processes while voluntary contribution approved by the ECOSOC to service the

operational intergovernmental processes and operational activities at all levels. The initial annual budget of the entity was set at US\$500 million. It included \$125 million per annum for basic staff, operating costs, and capacity at the country, regional, and headquarters level, as well as \$375 million to respond to country level requests for UN programmatic support.

Reservations on the creation of UN-Women

During the four years when the debate and discussion surrounding the new entity on gender equality and women's empowerment was on, there were reservations from different corners ranging from the agencies of the UN system's gender architecture prior to the creation of UN-Women as well as Member States. The nature of the reservation too varied from a normative disagreement to a more logistic driven one. Many, including DAW, the *United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*, the *European Union (EU)*, and Switzerland were worried that the new entity would not be able to make a fresh start and might suffer from systematic, coherence, and coordination weaknesses. Others such as OSAGI, UNIFEM, and the Canada, Australia, and New Zealand expressed their concern that it was not the management of the resources but the issue of available authority that would govern relative successes or failures (Center for UN reform education 2012).

Once, the Member States were made aware of the possible options to reform the UN gender architecture in the 62nd session of the General Assembly, the positions of countries became much clearer. Some like the Nordic Countries, Switzerland and Brazil were in favor of taking the next step, while the NAM countries were wary of the process for creation of new gender entity being disjointed from the other reforms suggested by the High-Level Panel in 2006. China, meanwhile, called for strengthening of the existing mechanisms. By the time the 63rd session of the General Assembly started, there was some consensus amongst Member states on the need of a new composite entity.

However, there were differences over the process to be used with Japan, India and NAM countries insisting on a more concerted approach towards reforms and also asked for greater clarification on issues of Governance and Funding. There were some differences in the General Assembly on the governance structure of the new body, with groups like the Joint Coordinating Committee of G77 and NAM calling for an Executive Board that would report to ESOCOC while Canada, Denmark and Switzerland argued for UNDP to act as the governing authority (Center for UN reform education 2012).

Though there were many differences amongst the Member states on the functioning, need and the logistics of the new entity, while voicing such disagreements the states were particular about reinstating their commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. According to Charlotte Bunch, executive director of the *Centre for Women's Global Leadership* (CWGL), the only country to openly express its desire to delay the creation of UN-Women was Egypt (IPS 2010). All the other countries principally were in support of the reform and differed mostly only on the nature of the entity and its funding and governance structure. Interestingly, one country that insisted on expediting the process was Kazakhstan which from the very beginning called for a new entity (Center for UN reform education 2012).

On its part, the four agencies that were fused to create UN-Women welcomed the new entity. UNIFEM Executive Director Inés Alberdi in the agencies newsletter acknowledges that UNIFEM faced serious challenges in our efforts to support countries to implement commitments to gender equality, in part because of inadequate funding and because there was no single recognized driver to lead the UN response for gender equality support (IPS 2010).

India and UN-Women

Reacting to the criticism leveled against the UN's gender architecture by the High-Level Panel, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Nirupam Sen in 2007 said, "Under-

resourced, yes, incoherent, perhaps, and fragmented, may be”. Questioning the Report’s underlying belief that coherence and coordination would help achieve the aim of gender equality and women’s empowerment, Sen argued that an issue like gender equality “some fragmentation in the sense of plurality was necessary” (Permanent Mission of India to the UN 2007).

The representative went on to highlight the problem with the report’s findings. On the issue of merger of the four agencies, India cautioned against mixing the normative mandate of the Secretariat bodies with the operational mandate of UNIFEM and also highlighted the need to focus more on funding and resources of the existing setup. In the informal consultations held on the issue of gender in 2008, the Deputy Permanent Representative emphasized this point further and called for availability of sufficient resources - core, predictable resources, resources without conditionalities. Later though, India was to extend full support to the new entity (Permanent Mission of India to the UN 2008).

UN-Women

As established by the founding document of the new entity, UN-Women has three main roles: It supports UN Member States’ deliberations at the global level, in intergovernmental bodies such as the CSW, where international policies, standards and norms are negotiated and agreed upon; it leads and coordinates efforts across the UN system to achieve gender equality; and it helps countries in translating international standards into practice, to achieve real changes in women’s lives.

These roles all run parallel making UN-Women the focal point for the UN and the world when it comes to gender equality and empowerment of women. By becoming the linking pin organization that links local women groups, Transnational Advocacy Networks, think tanks working on gender, states and other international organizations, UN-Women tries

to build for the first time at the international stage an entity that can both guide agenda while ensuring its operationalization.

Ever since it inherited the combined mandate of the four entities that made up the UN gender architecture, UN-Women has made concerted effort to bridge the implementation gap that plagued the earlier efforts of the UN to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women. Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile, became the first Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director to head UN-Women in September 2010 and by January 2011, when UN-Women's newly established Executive Board convened for the first time, she began charting the organization's course through a 100-Day Action Plan. The plan sought to build linkages with civil society groups, advocacy networks, private sectors, etc. to better address the dismal record on gender.

This 100-Day Action Plan soon made way for the first UN-Women strategic plan (2011-2013) which underlined the key focus areas of the agency

- a) Increasing women's leadership and participation;
- b) Ending violence against women and girls;
- c) Engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes;
- d) Enhancing women's economic empowerment;
- e) Making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting;
- f) And support for a comprehensive set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment that is dynamic, responds to new and emerging issues, challenges and opportunities and provides a firm basis for action by Governments and other stakeholders at all levels.

UN-Women's first Strategic Plan elaborates on the action plan, bolstered by consultations with 5,000 partners from governments, civil society, the UN system and academia in 71 countries and all five regions of the world (UN-Women 2011:5).

In the short period of over a year of activity, UN-Women has tried to be involved with host of issues marking its presence in over eighty countries. During the 65th session of the General Assembly in 2010, UN-Women provided key support to UN Member States at the 65th session of the General Assembly on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, trafficking in women and girls, and ending violence against women. It provided the Member States with analysis and recommendations that could help further strengthen global consensus on action against all forms of violence against women.

In a bid to improve the prevalent conditions in its focus areas, UN-Women has taken up specific strategies designed to take Member States priority in mind while promoting gender equality. On the issue of violence against women, UN-Women flagged of the Global Programme on Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women in Argentina and Peru. The initiative focuses on reducing sexual harassment and violence in urban public spaces, through community empowerment and partnerships with local authorities.

UN-Women also acts as the coordinator of the UN Secretary-General's 'UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign'. Established by General Assembly resolution 50/166, the Trust fund has delivered more than USD 78 million to 339 initiatives in 127 countries and territories. In 2011 alone, the UN Trust Fund distributed US \$17.1 million in grants to 22 initiatives in 34 countries, supporting programmes for the first time in Iraq and the newly independent Republic of South Sudan. This amount is expected to reach over 6 million beneficiaries between 2011 and 2014.

In the same year, the UN Trust Fund published the first-ever study using the "outcome mapping" methodology to analyze outcomes relating to ending violence against women and girls. Some of the recipients of the grant in the year 2011 included Karnataka Health

Promotion Trust in India which got US\$ 999,999 for a period of two years to work towards a community initiative to address violence against female sex workers in Karnataka. Similarly, victims Support Section of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) got a grant of US\$ 628,501 for three years to help promote gender justice in Cambodia's transitional justice process (UN-Women 2011a: 1-3).

On peace and security, UN-Women developed a comprehensive UN inter-agency framework for the implementation and monitoring of Security Council Resolution 1325. For the first time, in 2011, all UN organizations active on women, peace and security issues were asked to work towards common, time-bound targets and goals. The strategy builds on indicators adopted in 2010 that will track implementation of resolution 1325, reporting on essential issues such as funding allocated to women and the degree of women's participation. UN-Women has also entered into partnership with the UN Peacebuilding Support Office so as to coordinate work on areas of peacebuilding, security & justice, sexual & gender-based violence and post-conflict & humanitarian planning.

UN-Women also runs a Fund for Gender Equality which is used to ensure economic and political empowerment of women. Started in 2009, the Fund's total income till date equals US\$71 million of which \$43 million has been spent in support of 55 grantee partners in 40 countries. The Fund makes direct grants to women's groups and also to collaborations between governments and NGOs. As a result of the grants made in the year 2011, over 9,000 women and their families in Liberia are being impacted by the creation of their own sustainable income-generating markets and 8 newly constructed markets now have access to safe water and sanitation, storage facilities, literacy trainings, electricity, spaces for daycare facilities for children as well as for training and health facilities. Other countries to benefit from the grant in 2011 include Brazil, Uganda, Rwanda, etc (UN-Women 2011b:1-3).

Some of the other initiative taken by UN-Women include the UN Gender Task Force that was created by UN-Women in collaboration with the UN Population Fund to help Pakistan recover from the devastating floods that swept across much of the country in 2010. To make gender equality central to all aspects of humanitarian action, the task force conducted a rapid needs assessment with specific attention to affected women and girls. It called attention to the findings both at roundtable meetings with the President of Pakistan and women's activists, and in the US\$2 billion international flash appeal for disaster relief. Gender experts were sent to humanitarian hubs in flooded areas, and worked closely with humanitarian teams to distribute hygiene kits for women. They made food distribution stations more accessible for women and established emergency response units for survivors of gender-based violence.

In Iraq, UN-Women headed UN country team's gender task force supported the involvement of the team in the drafting of Iraq's National Development Plan, which now includes gender equality as a priority objective. UN-Women also led the joint efforts of six UN agencies to assist the Palestinian Authority in drafting and finalizing a National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women. It became the first of its kind in the Arab region to employ a broadly participatory preparation process that reached out to grass-roots groups, refugee women and national authorities. The strategy is geared towards changing or enacting laws where needed, and enforcing those in place with full respect for women's rights.

During the period of political transition in Tunisia in 2011, UN-Women deployed an expert to support the newly formed electoral sub-commission in its work to ensure that measures would be taken to achieve political parity. Due to such efforts, a consensus could be achieved that made it compulsory for women to comprise 50 percent of candidates for Constituent Assembly elections. This move was particularly helpful as it set a precedent in the region which was undergoing political and social churning at the time.

UN-Women also helped Georgia in drafting and enacting of the sweeping new Gender Equality Law in 2010 that strengthens women's political participation, advances gender equality in the labour market and establishes a national body dedicated to upholding women's rights. In Serbia, UN-Women helped the Judicial Academy, the only body that provides mandatory training for judicial officials, to adopt a new curriculum on the application of international and national legislation on women's rights (UN-Women 2011:11).

In order to build accountability and to ensure coordination in the UN System, UN-Women also takes part in evaluation in three main areas:

1. by fostering joint evaluations on gender equality and serving as a repository of evaluations in the UN system on gender equality and women's empowerment;
2. by drawing on the opportunities offered by UN system wide evaluation processes (i.e. Delivering as One and UN Development Assistance Frameworks) for generating evaluative information on UN system contribution to gender equality; and
3. Actively contributing to the work of the *United Nations Evaluation Groups* (UNEG) for the inclusion of a gender equality perspective in UN evaluations through the development of guidelines and accountability frameworks.

Issues with UN-Women

Though it has only been a year and a half since UN-Women came into being but some warning signs have already appeared. The biggest fear for the new entity is of it continuing the working pattern followed by the UN's gender architecture prior to the establishment of UN-Women. On important issues such as funding, UN-Women is still lagging behind. This is particularly bleak considering that the UN sanctioned US\$ 500 million, just half of what the women's movement had targeted. As of June 2011, UN-

Women had only accumulated \$80 million when the strategic plan of UN-Women for 2011-13 envisaged financial requirement of nearly \$1.2 billion (Third World Network 2011). Stephen Lewis, a former deputy executive director of the U.N. children's agency UNICEF, said that the delay in funding is leading to UN-Women “being strangled at birth by a coalition of the wealthy” (Taalif 2010)

Another problem with the new body has been the selection of its Executive Board. One of the first controversies that UN-Women faced was of Iran and Saudi Arabia vying for position on the Board. Iran was eventually disqualified but Saudi Arabia emerged victorious. Interestingly, Iran too is a member on the CSW. The selection of Saudi Arabia, despite its record on women's rights, was seen by some as a means for it to protect itself from international condemnation of its record on women (Huffington Post 2010).

UN-Women was also criticized for failing to provide a more institutional space for the civil society groups that lobbied hard for its creation. Even the NGO advisory groups that were to be formed at global, regional and national levels did not take shape for the first year of the creation of UN-Women. However, in May 2012 the UN-Women Global Civil Society Advisory Group was formed.

Women's movement and the creation of UN-Women

Civil Society became actively involved in the process of creation of UN-Women in 2006 when Member States initiated discussions on System-wide Coherence. At the 50th session of the CSW, the civil society participants voiced their concern over the lack of attention being paid to women's equality agenda and women's machinery within the UN. An open letter endorsed by over 240 women from more than 50 countries and international and regional organization was also handed to the Secretary General.

This was followed by a paper entitled “Gender Equality Architecture and UN reforms” commissioned by the *Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL)*, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom and the *Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)* being presented to the Coherence Panel in 2006.

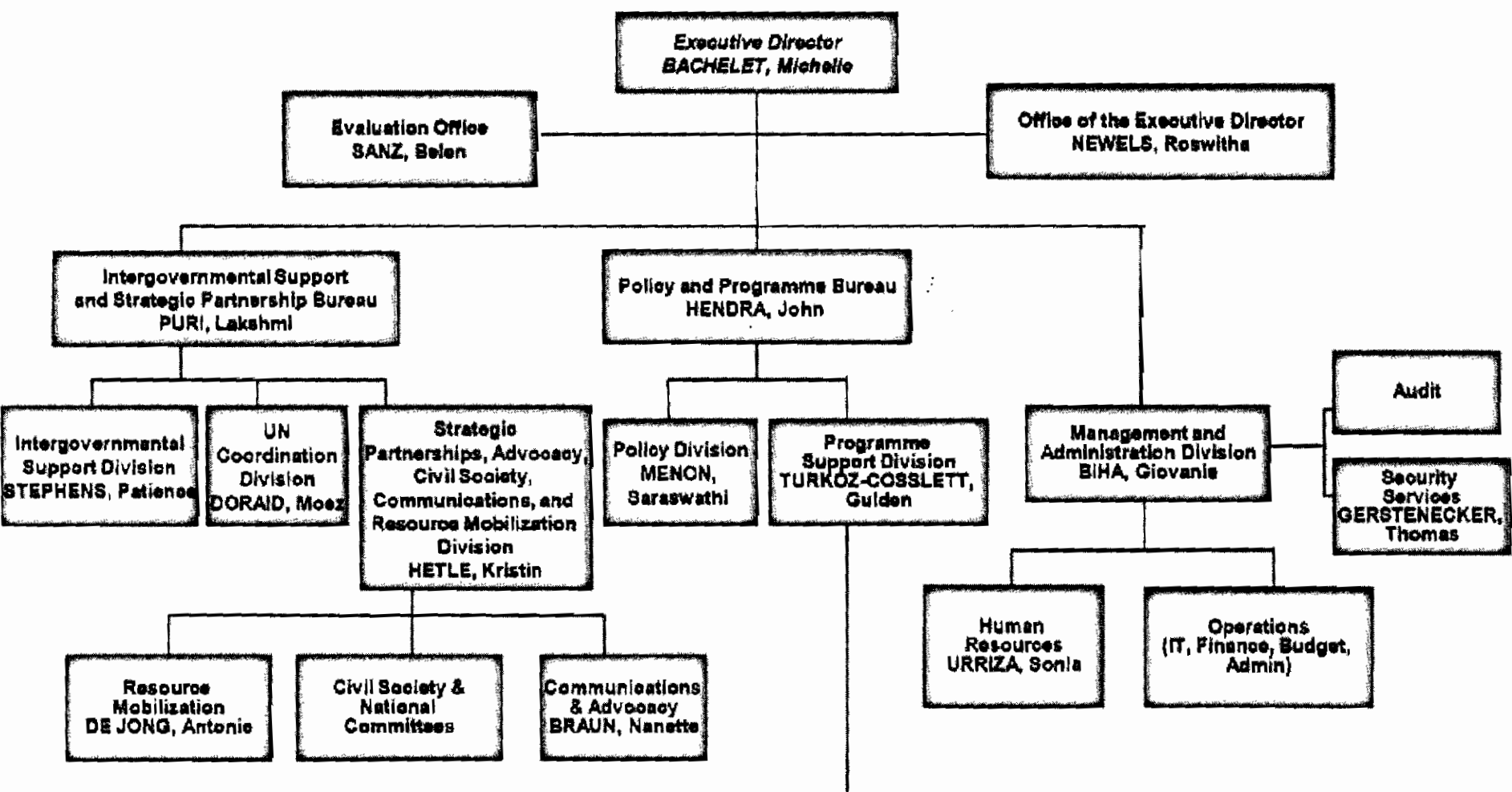
The *Gender Equality Architecture Reform (GEAR)* campaign, launched during the 52nd session of the CSW in 2008, came to be recognized as the focal point for the civil society’s efforts at achieving a fundamental change within the UN’s gender architecture. GEAR’s campaign demand included establishment of a composite entity combining normative, programming, analytical and monitoring functions, to be led by an Under-Secretary General with substantial and predictable resources of a minimum US\$1 billion (NGLS 2010).

The GEAR campaign, consisting of over 300 women’s groups, social justice and human rights groups, lobbied with Member States at a time when there was a deadlock in the General Assembly on some members demanding that all issues such as governance and funding which are much more controversial be discussed along with gender. The women’s groups lobbied with the governments both within the UN and also at the national level to build pressure for action. The GEAR campaign established focal points in different regions that strategized to build pressure on the governments and developed toolkits and used the media to increase awareness amongst the public on the need for a new entity on gender within the UN. The GEAR campaign has continued to stay active even after the establishment of UN-Women and now plays a role in monitoring the policy direction taken by the new entity. Acknowledging the work of the different organizations involved in the GEAR campaign, the recently formed Civil Society Advisory Group for UN-Women has as many as nine member of GEAR campaign organization were selected (GEAR 2012).

Conclusion

The UN system lacks a recognized driver that can identify and take action in response to critical gender-related issues, provide direction and support, including in emerging or new areas; and hold the system accountable for delivering results on the ground.” According to the UN, voluntary and U.N. regular budget contributions for these four bodies in calendar year 2008 totaled approximately \$247 million. In 2010, the fund made available to UN-Women remained at just US\$500 million, while the budget of UNICEF for the same year was \$4,644 million. This discrepancy in the budget is indicative of the more deep rooted belief of the UN system that while it continues to peg gender as a cross-sectoral issue, it doesn’t quite put it in the same league as a UNICEF (UNICEF 2012:4).

Nonetheless, with the creation of UN-Women and the proactive role taken up by the new entity there is already move towards a more forceful, authoritative and accountable gender architecture. With new powers and enhanced responsibilities, UN-Women is trying to respond to the challenges that women face owing to their sex. A more coherent and responsive agency that is willing to modify its programs and policies depending on the needs of the states and individuals concerned is one that is needed if the mandate for gender equality is to be more broadly accepted by the world at large.



Regional and Country Level Operations



* As on November 2011

Conclusion

By mid-2011 only 28 countries could claim that women's parliamentary representation had reached a critical mass of 30 percent or more while only 19 women were leading their countries as elected heads of state or government. The World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report, meanwhile, cites that 50 percent of women are in vulnerable jobs that pay little and can disappear without warning, and gender wage gaps are still on average between 10 and 30 percent. The report analyzing the data collected from 134 countries remarks that greater gender equality correlates with a higher gross national product. On the issue of peace and security, since 1992 there have been less than 10 percent of peace negotiators who were women. Even in the reconstruction budget, the share assigned specifically for the need of women and girls stands at less than 6 percent (UN-Women 2011).

These are some of the figures available that emphasize the need for a more concerted, international effort to address the vast gender gap in various areas. In spite of a rich and well documented network of norms and legislations, women rights and gender equality has only had a rough and uneven existence. At the national or global level, the normative framework has failed to lead to concrete results when it comes to women's rights. The reason for this range from lack of conviction or understanding of gender issues to failure in guaranteeing implementation of the plans. In case of international organizations, Anne Tickner suggests that being further removed from democratic accountability than even the Nation-states means that International Organizations such as the UN become less receptive to women's rights (Tickner 2001: 6). And the figures such as these provide credibility to these claims.

The problem of most social changes being essentially rhetorical and not leading to norm socialization is essentially true for gender equality norms too but there is hope in the need for states to conform to the internationally held norms and ideals. However, Keck and Sikkink in their analysis of International Human Rights conclude that the growing rhetorical commitment to human rights norms affects how state actors calculate their self-interests and make decisions and it is in space that UN-Women can push for reforms within member states (Schmitz and Sikkink 2002: 532).

The work done by Robert McLaren focusing specifically on the UN system and its quest for coordination is useful in understanding the reasons for the failure of the UN to establish a more cohesive network of relations on gender equality and women's empowerment. McLaren lists decentralization of socio-economic concerns, overlapping mandates and jurisdiction among agencies, independent resources, lack of a center within the UN to establish priorities and proliferation of agencies as some of the possible reasons why the UN system fails in achieving coordination. All of these problems are essentially what plagued the gender equality architecture at the UN prior to the creation of UN-Women. Conflicting mandates resulted in wasteful use of resources which then negatively impacted the outcome and owing to the overlapping agencies, accountability too became difficult to fix.

McLaren also provides an insightful analysis into the purpose of coordination, with rationalization, standardization and prioritization as the three basic advantages of a coordinated system. The need for rationalization flows from the arbitrary nature of functional activities and mandates that organizations assume with no clear demarcation possible or even desirable. It is in this situation that rationalization helps in removing duplication of activities between units. Standardization, meanwhile, is about achieving interagency comparability whereby effort is made to maintain some sort of balance and similarity in the personnel conditions and financial practices so that the positioning and power of any agency is not doubted. And finally prioritization is done to remove duplication and overlap by deciding on allocation of fund and requirements for a program on the basis of its merits (McLaren 1980: 145-146). In all of these three the gender architecture at the UN prior to the creation of UN-Women was hampered which resulted in lack of coordination within the UN system's gender architecture. Not only were there entities working with overlapping mandates, there was also severe problem of resources and lack of any real power with the gender units wherever they existed.

On issues such as Gender Mainstreaming, which was seen as a breakthrough policy at the Beijing Conference, there was rather limited success. With no one agency to define and defend the policy, it became a policy document that was added to the mix without much thought. The lack of focal point on gender also meant that the gender unit sent to post-

conflict states was often powerless and also lacking in proper knowledge of gender dynamics. Presence of an agency looking at gender is also beneficial in that it can provide for a better chance at getting the much needed resources. But most importantly, the agency could provide the existing normative framework on gender with a direction and a sense of coherence which was badly lacking in the gender architecture at the UN.

In an extensive analysis of the success of gender mainstreaming within the three UN bodies- the ILO, the UNDP and the World Bank- Razavi and Miller also highlighted the problem of limited funding that handicaps the mainstreaming agenda while at the same time deflecting attention from the core issue of *Women in Development (WID)*. They question the spending pattern in the three entities and ask, “Where should the balance lie between diffusing responsibility and strengthening the WID capacity?” (Razavi and Miller 1995: 5)

Though there has been substantial change in the nature of the UN’s engagement with gender issues in its sixty-seven years of existence. Women now are an essential part of much of the UN’s discourse. The fight for recognition has evolved into one that seeks equality and goes beyond just statistics. However, the discourse still suffers from lack of concrete actions and a radical break from stereotyping of women. While talking of the UN’s work on gender mainstreaming around peace and security issues, Whitworth emphasizes that the UN’s work has “tended to focus not on gender relations or prevailing assumptions about masculinity and femininity, as is implied in the more conceptual accounts of what mainstreaming would entail. Instead the focus has emphasized women as different from men, both in terms of the particular vulnerabilities they face in situations of armed conflicts and in terms of their contribution to peacekeeping efforts” (Whitworth 2006: 126). Whitworth sees the silence of the Brahimi Report on gender as an indication of the “deafening silence” accorded to gender by the UN on areas of war, security and peace operations.

According to Abbott and Snidal, centralization and independence are the two essential functional characteristics that make formal international organizations indispensable for states. A stable and concrete organizational structure and a supportive administrative apparatus along with autonomy (even if it is limited) make such organizations effective,

more understanding of state's interests and provide them with legitimacy. These qualities in addition to the effectiveness of the organizations in helping maneuver international cooperation in times of changes in conditions are needed for them to function effectively (Abbott and Snidal 2001: 15).

Changes in socio-economic and political conditions often warrant some innovation from the organizations for them to remain relevant. Institutional innovation then becomes the key for international organizations if they are to continue to remain desirable for states. An example of such a remodeling of an organization is the appointment of the *United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)* as the secretariat and the World Bank as the financial administrator of the several environmental agreements. The process of innovation continued further when in 2007 following the publication of the Fourth Assessment Report of the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)*, proposal was made at the 58th meeting of the General Assembly to upgrade UNEP into a new entity called the *United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO)*. Though the proposal is still pending, but the need for reform of the UNEP is indicative of the constant churning that international institutions go through to remain effective in the ever changing global environment.

The creation of UN-Women too is testament to the need for institutional innovation. The mandate with which it has been established includes the need to streamline the approach and delivery of the measures undertaken to tackle gender inequality. UN-Women, it is hoped, would emerge as a linking pin organization with different actors like civil society groups, advocacy networks, and Member States colluding and channeling their resources and efforts through the organization. Christer Jonsson in his analysis of interorganization theory and networks talks about the role of a linking pin organization in ensuring cohesion and optimal results and the expectations from UN-Women are no less. The agency came into being through a resolution that called for system wide coherence and the mandate of the agency only emphasizes this need for coherence. UN-Women, by establishing itself as a linking pin organization is expected to be that body that can make policy goals believable and ensure implementation by collaborating with all partners (Jonsson 1986: 41).

Emphasizing the centrality of linking-pin organizations, Aldrich and Whetten point out organizations “that have extensive and overlapping ties to different part of a network play the key role in intergrating a population of organizations. Having ties to more than one action-set or subsystem, linking-pin organizations are the nodes through which a network is loosely joined”. (Aldrich and Whetten 1981:390) This definition used to describe creation of transnational organizational network can be transposed to the network of women organizations worldwide, both intergovernmental and non-government. UN-Women is expected to utilize and build up on the expertise and work of the gender equality architecture present in the UN system and the wealth of information that could be gained from organizations working on gender around the world. Right from the time when consultations began for creation of a new entity on gender equality to finally its establishment in 2010, civil society groups were intricately involved. The need to network with these groups and organizations has been a well recognized one and UN-Women has worked to bring a network of such agencies, thereby strengthening its own delivery mechanisms.

Over the years, the success of the women’s movement in making their presence felt has also been a positive step for the UN. From the World Conference on Women to the other conferences held by the UN on key issues such as environment, health, etc., the presence of women has steadily increased both within and outside the UN. Issues such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation and sexual violence are now part of global discourse. Carol Cohn also observes the success of the women’s movement to find place within the normally closed institution like the Security Council when it deliberated on Resolution 1325. “NGOs, in short, went after the most difficult kind of resolution available at the United Nations-and one of the few instruments within the UN system that is actually binding-and they succeeded” (Cohn 2003).

Though the success of the transnational women’s movement in the UN world conferences needs to be celebrated, Risse cautions us against over-optimism. While agreeing on the usefulness of the UN as an arena that allows groups and people from around the world “regular access to policy-making. But access does not guarantee impact”. The transnational actors are sidestepped by states and organizations when it comes to policy

making, but he adds that they gain prominence once again when the process of states' internalizing these norms starts due to their legitimacy and capacity to gather information (Risse 2002: 265).

The need for institutionalizing the involvement of the women's groups within UN-Women has been one of the primary demands made by those championing the cause of UN-Women. While the founding document of UN-Women does ask for a more vigorous interaction between the new entity and the civil society, it fails short of providing an institutional space for them. This is required if these groups are to be made stakeholders in the decision making process at the organization and not just limit them to policy making with no scope of having any real impact.

During the four years when consultations on the need for a new entity for gender equality and women's empowerment were happening within and outside the UN, one of the primary contentions against such an organization was what some feminists call 'ghettoization' of women's rights. Even in 1945 at the time of the creation of the CSW, Eleanor Roosevelt and most of the US contingent were opposed to the idea of a separate body for women. This, they said, was against the principle of equality. Though the tenor of the argument against the new entity for gender equality and women's empowerment had evolved into one based on logistical requirement but the essential belief remained the same. Countries such as India and China felt that the need was to strengthen the existing architecture and to bring about a more fundamental change in the attitude of Member States. Devaki Jain also talks of the dilemma for women on how to proceed most effectively. Does having a separate space indicate a powerhouse or a ghetto? She calls it a 'Nethi nethi' syndrome, basically meaning 'not this, not this' directed at reaching the ultimate truth or in the case of the UN and women, the best possible outcome (Jain 2005: 4).

Nonetheless, with an increased resource and a more effective positioning within the UN system, UN-Women is culmination of a process constant evolution that started with the creation of the UN. Step by step, the gender equality architecture at the UN has been built, with newer alliances being formed between states, civil society groups, academics, etc at each stage.

In his analysis of the future of the UN, Chadwick F. Alger emphasizes the need for the UN system to draw closer to “We the people of the United Nations”, and through the latest reform process that led to the establishment of UN-Women, the UN made a fresh effort to reduce the gap between its larger mandate and delivery (Alger 2001: 493). UN-Women is a reiteration of the commitments made by states and the international community to uphold gender equality and ensuring empowerment of women.

Being the only global institution with legitimacy to create change in the lives of women and the power to hold states accountable, UN has the responsibility to bring the gender agenda at the focus of international politics. And UN-Women is to be the agency that is mandated to make sure that the international community does not dither on its commitment. It needs to make sure that states do not treat gender as a cosmetic policy too. The normative power of the UN to hold country to globally set standards is second to none, even if it suffers from lack of enforcement mechanisms and it is this power that UN-Women needs to use to tackle the wide disparity in gender relations.

Timeline of the UN and gender issues

1945 The UN Charter is signed on 26 June in San Francisco at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and comes into force on 24 October 1945.

1946 CSW, the Commission on the Status of Women is established by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). Its secretariat, then known as the Section on the Status of Women, is placed within the Human Rights Division. The Section is upgraded in 1972 and again in 1988 when it becomes known as the Division for the Advancement of Women.

1967 The Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women is adopted by the General Assembly.

1972 The Secretariat for the CSW is upgraded to become the Branch for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women, headed by Helvi Sipilä (Finland), the first woman to serve as a UN Assistant Secretary-General. The Branch is charged with responsibility for preparing for the UN World Conference on Women for International Women's Year.

1975 Designated as International Women's Year.

The First World Conference on Women is held in Mexico City, resulting in the World Plan of Action and Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and their Contribution to Development and Peace. UN Assistant Secretary-General Helvi Sipilä serves as secretary-general of the conference

The General Assembly proclaims the first United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace (1976-1985), which officially paves the way for various actions to improve women's status.

1976 INSTRAW - the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, based in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and UNIFEM - The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Women, based in New York, are established following a call from women's organizations attending the 1975 UN First World Conference on women in Mexico City.

1979 CEDAW - the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women is adopted by the UN General Assembly to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women. It defines discrimination against women and highlights actions on legal, political, civil, and cultural levels that need to be

taken.

- 1980 The Second World Conference on Women, World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace is held in Copenhagen, Denmark to review progress made in the first half of the Decade on Women. The Conference adopts a Programme of Action and a special ceremony takes place July 17th where 64 states sign CEDAW
- 1981 CEDAW enters into force on 3 September, 30 days after the twentieth member state has ratified it, - faster than any previous human rights convention - thus bringing to a climax United Nations efforts to comprehensively codify international legal standards for women.
- 1985 The Third World Conference on Women, World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development, and Peace, is held in Nairobi, Kenya. The Conference adopts the Forward-Looking strategies for the Advancement of Women.
- DAW, the Division for the Advancement of Women is the new name for the Branch for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women.
- 1993 At the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, Austria women lobby to get violence against women and other women's human rights issues integrated into overall UN human-rights work. The Commission on Human Rights appoints a special rapporteur on violence against women.
- 1994 International Conference on Population and Development takes place in Cairo, Egypt. Reproductive rights are clarified and endorsed internationally in the Cairo Consensus that emerges from conference.
- 1995 The Fourth UN World Conference on Women, Action for Equality, Development and Peace is held in Beijing, China. The largest of all international conferences ever it gathers delegations from 189 countries while 30,000 women participate in the parallel NGO Forum. The Beijing Platform for Action, identifying twelve critical areas of concern for women, is adopted
- 1997 OSAGI - the office of Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women is created.
- 1998 The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court which includes sexual slavery and forced pregnancy etc as "crimes against humanity" the treaty is opened for signature on July 17, 1998 and enters into force on July 1, 2002.

2000 The 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly, Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century (Beijing+5) reviews the progress of Beijing Platform for Action.

The UN General Assembly adopts the Millennium Declaration establishing Eight Millennium Development Goals, one of which is to “promote gender equality and empower women,” to work toward the implementation of the Declaration.

Resolution 1325 is adopted by the UN Security Council, urging member states to involve women in all aspects of securing sustainable peace, from conflict-prevention to post-conflict democracy.

2005 The 2005 World Summit is held to discuss the progress made since 2001 and the next steps for attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

2006 A High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence is established by the Secretary-General to explore how the United Nations system could work more coherently and effectively in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and environment.

On 9th November of 2006, the High-level Panel presented its report titled “Delivering as One” which calls for the establishment of one dynamic entity on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

2008 Security Council adopts Resolution 1820. The resolution marks the recognition by the Security Council that sexual violence in conflict is a matter of international peace and security and therefore within the purview of the Security Council.

2010 UN General Assembly after much deliberation adopts Resolution 64/289 on System-wide coherence which leads to the establishment of UN Women with the combined mandate of UNIFEM, DAW, OSAGI and INSTRAW. The new entity would be responsible for both the normative as well as the operational agenda within the UN. Michelle Bachelet was made the first Executive Director of the body.

Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger: Halve the proportion of those living on less than a dollar a day and those who starve.
2. Achieve Universal Primary Education: All boys and girls complete primary school.
3. Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
 - Eliminate discrimination of girls in primary and secondary schools.
 - Increase the number of women in parliaments/power.
4. Reduce Child Mortality: Reduce by two-thirds the mortality of children under five.
5. Improve Maternal Health: Reduce by three-quarters the number of women dying in childbirth.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases.
7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability
 - Integrate the principle of sustainability into policies and programmes,
 - Double the number of people with access to safe drinking water.
8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development and Sharing of Resources.
 - An open trading and financial system with commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction;
 - Decent solutions for developing country debt problems;
 - Increase net commitments of rich countries to 0,7 % GNP annually for aid;
 - Access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries;
 - and other goals.

Representation of women in the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies

Human rights treaty body	Number of women (as of 2011)
Human Rights Committee (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights)	4 of 18
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights)	3 of 18
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination)	3 of 18
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.)	23 of 23
Committee against Torture (Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment)	3 of 10
Committee on the Rights of the Child (Convention on the Rights of the Child)	10 of 18
Committee on Migrant Workers (International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families)	4 of 14
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Convention on the Right of Person with Disabilities)	8 of 18

Committee on Enforced Disappearance
(Convention on Enforced Disappearances)

1 of 10

*Latest figures from the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights.
URL:<http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx>)

Selected Conventions of Concern to Women

Adopted in	Convention	Ratifications as in 2012
1949	Convention for Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others	81
1951	Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (ILO No. 100)	168
1952	Convention on the Political Rights of Women	121
1958	Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation	169
1960	International Convention against Discrimination in Education	98
1962	Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage, and Registration of Marriages	54
1979	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	187
1981	Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities	41
1984	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	150
2006	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons and Enforced Disappearance	33

*Latest figures from the websites of the ILO (<https://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm>) and the UN (<http://treaties.un.org/>).

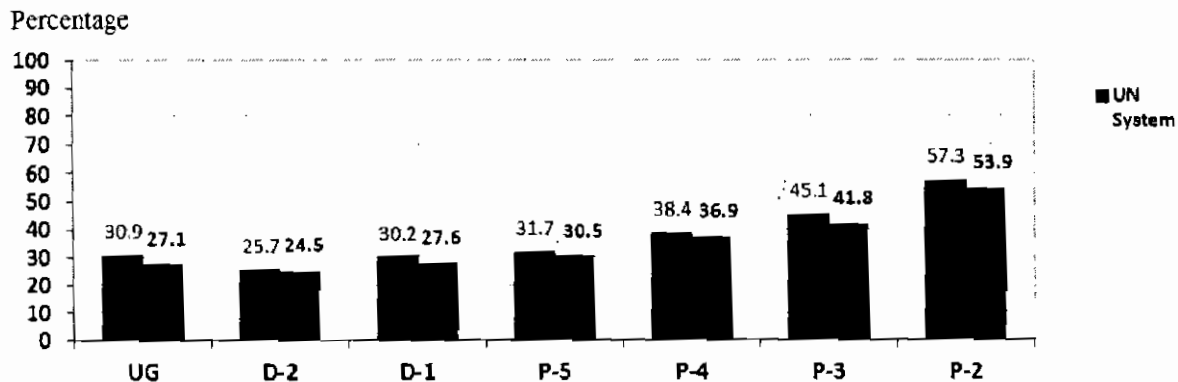
The Status of Women in the United Nations System and UN Secretariat
(from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2010)

THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

UN SECRETARIAT

Gender distribution of staff in the Professional and higher categories

Percentage comparison of women in the professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more in the United Nations system and UN Secretariat
December 2010



* Source: CEB Table 11 –31 December 2010

*30 of 31 entities submitted data

**UG stands for "Ungraded" and combines the ranks of Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, Director-General, Deputy Director-General and Assistant Director-General

As of 31 December 2010, women in the UN system constituted:

- 40.3% (12,005 out of 29,763) of all staff in the professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more (UG-P2)
- 29.3% (784 out of 2,674) of all staff at the D-1 level and above(UG-D1)
- 41.4% (11,221 out of 27,089) of all staff at the P level(P5-P2)

Gender balance has only been achieved at the P-2 level(57.3%).

* Source: CEB Table 11 –31 December 2010

As of 31 December 2010, women in UN Secretariat constituted:

- 39.1% (3918 out of 10,011) of all staff in the professional and higher categories with appointments of one year or more(UG-P2)
- 26.9% (207 out of 769) of all staff at the D-1 level and above(UG-D1)
- 40.2% (3711 out of 9242) of all staff at the P level (P5-P2)

Gender balance has only been achieved or exceeded at the P-2 level(53.9%).

* Source: CEB Table 11 –31 December 2010

Trends in the representation of women in the Professional and higher categories – 2001 to 2010

Largest increase: UG (15.2 percentage points from 15.6% in Dec 2001 to 30.9% in Dec 2010).
Smallest increase: P-2 (4.0 percentage points from 53.3% in Dec 2001 to 57.3% in Dec 2010)

Largest increase: UG (17.1 percentage points from 10.0% in Dec. 2001 to 27.1% in Dec. 2010).
Smallest increase: D-1 (1.7 percentage points from 25.9% in Dec 2001 to 27.6% in Dec 2010)

Level	% of women as of 31 Dec 2001	% of women as of 31 Dec 2010	Total change 2001-2010 (percentage points)	Average annual change 2001-2010 (percentage points)
UG	15.6	30.9	15.2	1.5
D-2	20.8	25.7	4.8	0.5
D-1	21.3	30.2	8.9	0.9
P-5	24.1	31.7	7.6	0.8
P-4	31.3	38.4	7.1	0.7
P-3	40.3	45.1	4.8	0.5
P-2	53.3	57.3	4.0	0.0
P-1	-	-	-	-

Level	% of women as of 31 Dec 2001	% of women as of 31 Dec 2010	Total change 2001-2010 (percentage points)	Average annual change 2001-2010 (percentage points)
UG	10.0	27.1	17.1	1.7
D-2	21.2	24.5	3.3	0.3
D-1	25.9	27.6	1.7	0.2
P-5	26.4	30.5	4.2	0.4
P-4	30.6	36.9	6.3	0.6
P-3	37.6	41.8	4.2	0.4
P-2	48.0	53.9	5.9	0.6
P-1	-	-	-	-

* Source: CEB Table 11 – 31 December 2001 and 31 December 2010

**TRENDS and PROJECTIONS – Representation of women in the UN Secretariat with appointments of one year or more
UN HABITAT 30 June 2001 – 30 June 2011**

Representation of women (Percentage – Trends 10 year period 30 June 2001 - 30 June 2011)																
	P2		P3		P4		P5		D1		D2		ASG		USG	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Total %	66.7	60.0	26.7	50.0	27.8	37.5	22.2	24.0	40.0	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total change %	-6.7		23.3		9.7		1.8		-28.9		0.0		0.0		0.0	

Average annual increment (Percentage)								
	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	ASG	USG
June 2001 – June 2011	-0.7	2.3	1.0	0.2	-2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0

Year at which gender parity will be reached at current average annual increment								
	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	ASG	USG
At June 2001 – June 2011 average annual increment	Reached	Reached	2024	2157	Never	Never	Never	Never

Year at which gender parity will be reached at 2% annual increase							
P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	ASG	USG
Reached	Reached	2017	2024	2030	2036	2036	2036

Required average annual increase to achieve 50% gender balance in all categories by 2015 (percentage)							
P2	P3	P4	P5	D1	D2	ASG	USG
Reached	Reached	3.1	6.5	9.7	12.5	12.5	12.5

*Source: Prepared on the basis of data provided by the Office of Human Resources Management

Prepared by the Focal Point for Women, Coordination Division, UN Women, 17 February 2012; see also Report on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the United Nations System (A/65/334). Website: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/fp.ht>

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 July 2010

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 114

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/64/L.56)]

64/289. System-wide coherence

The General Assembly,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹

Recalling also its resolution 62/277 of 15 September 2008, setting out five areas for consideration by Member States with a view to enhancing United Nations system-wide coherence,

Recalling further its resolution 63/311 of 14 September 2009,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,² the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,³ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁴ and international law, in particular international human rights and humanitarian law,

Reaffirming also its resolution 62/208 of 19 December 2007 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,

Reaffirming further its resolution 2 (I) of 1 February 1946,

Reaffirming that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism,

Reaffirming also the key importance of national ownership and national leadership, and underscoring the fact that there is no “one size fits all” approach to development and that development assistance by the United Nations development system should be able to respond to the varying demands of programme countries

* Reissued for technical reasons on 13 September 2010.

¹ See resolution 60/1.

² *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution I, annexes I and II.

³ Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

⁴ United Nations. *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.



and should be in alignment with their national development plans and strategies in accordance with established mandates,

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Comprehensive proposal for the composite entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women"⁵ and "Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 63/311 on system-wide coherence related to operational activities for development",⁶

Strengthening governance of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for enhanced system-wide coherence

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General, starting at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and as background material for the comprehensive policy review, to make available a compilation of all relevant legislation on the roles and responsibilities of the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, including its subsidiary bodies, the executive boards of funds and programmes of the United Nations and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies in the governance of United Nations operational activities for development;

2. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to circulate information on the coherence of the calendars, agendas and programmes of work of the governing bodies responsible for United Nations operational activities for development, with a view to enabling them to consider measures to enhance coherence when setting their agendas and programmes of work;

3. *Invites* the President and the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council to convene informal coordination meetings with the bureaux of the governing bodies responsible for United Nations operational activities for development, in accordance with their mandates, in order to discuss ways and means to enhance the coherence of their work, and to provide a summary of such informal coordination meetings to Member States;

4. *Reaffirms* the need for enhancing the transparency of the activities of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, in particular to ensure its effective interaction with Member States, while respecting the mandates and working methods of the Chief Executives Board and its member organizations, and in this regard requests:

(a) The Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to further enhance the quality and quantity of information on the Board's website and to publish and make available to Member States the Board's inter-agency agreements and decisions;

(b) The Secretary-General, in his capacity as the Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to ensure a transparent and balanced approach in its priority-setting, to implement and report on the decisions of relevant intergovernmental bodies and to include appropriate information on the work of the Board in its annual overview report to the Economic and Social Council, which is also studied by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, in order to promote more effective dialogue;

⁵ A/64/588.

⁶ A/64/589.

(c) The President of the Economic and Social Council to continue to convene periodic briefings for Member States with the Secretariat following the biannual sessions of the Chief Executives Board, taking into account the need to schedule the briefings within a time frame that permits the full utilization of such opportunities by Member States for an effective dialogue with the Board regarding its activities;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, in consultation with the secretariats of the governing bodies responsible for United Nations operational activities for development, as appropriate and in accordance with its statute, and in line with paragraph 3 of section I of General Assembly resolution 64/260 of 29 March 2010, to prepare and carry out orientation and training courses for representatives of Member States, in particular the delegates of the permanent missions of Member States, on the functioning of United Nations operational activities for development, including on the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies;

6. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council and the executive boards of United Nations funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies to consider measures to facilitate the effective participation of national policymakers of developing countries in the operational activities segment of the substantive session of the Council and the regular sessions of the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, giving priority to national policymakers of programme countries, in particular the least developed countries. Such measures could include the establishment of new trust funds or the use of existing mechanisms, as appropriate, taking into account the financial situation and arrangements of each organization;

7. *Invites* the United Nations funds and programmes, as appropriate, based on their analysis of good practices, to improve the preparations for and discussions during meetings of their executive boards, taking into account the views expressed by Member States and, in that regard, to include their findings and adopted measures in their annual reports to the Economic and Social Council;

8. *Takes note* of the progress in the creation of a central repository of information on operational activities for development, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that an update on the advances in the establishment of that mechanism is presented at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in 2011 in the context of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development;

9. *Encourages* the governing bodies of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system to include in their strategic plans, as appropriate, specific provisions for the full implementation of policy guidance provided in the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the General Assembly, and requests the secretariats of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations development system to report on the implementation of those provisions in their regular reporting to the Assembly through the Economic and Social Council;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and in cooperation with United Nations resident coordinators, to prepare and put in place a periodic survey, directed to Governments, on the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the support of the United Nations system in order to provide feedback on the strengths and main challenges encountered in

their interactions with the United Nations development system, with a view to enabling intergovernmental bodies to address them, and also requests that the results of such surveys be published and made available to Member States;

Independent system-wide evaluation mechanism

11. *Recognizes* that the current multi-tiered evaluation system of operational activities for development within the United Nations consists of a number of entities with distinct roles and responsibilities, including the United Nations Evaluation Group, the evaluation offices of individual United Nations organizations, the Office of Internal Oversight Services, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the Joint Inspection Unit;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations Evaluation Group and the Joint Inspection Unit, to commission a comprehensive review of the existing institutional framework for the system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and to submit a report, with recommendations, to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session;

13. *Affirms*, in this regard, that the establishment of an independent system-wide evaluation mechanism within the United Nations system should be aimed at fully utilizing and strengthening the existing institutional framework and capacities;

Approval of common country programmes

14. *Emphasizes* the principle of national ownership and leadership, supports the initiative of some countries to use, on a voluntary basis, common country programme documents, and emphasizes its support for all countries that wish to continue using the existing frameworks and processes for country-level programming;

15. *Recognizes* that local consultative processes could strengthen the principle of national ownership and facilitate the effective participation of national policymakers in setting the priority areas of common country programmes;

16. *Invites* those countries presenting a common country programme document on a voluntary basis to prepare it consistent with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, where it exists, and to present in the common country programme the critical actions that will be taken to achieve the agreed results with available or indicative resources, as well as actions to ensure coherence of the assistance provided by the United Nations system at the country level, attaching, as an annex, a brief description of the agreed results and indicative resources for each of the relevant United Nations agencies;

17. *Invites* the governing body of each fund, programme and specialized agency, where relevant, and in accordance with its mandate, to consider and approve its role and the resources it will require for the implementation of the common country programme on the basis of the agency-specific annex;

18. *Notes* that the approval of the contribution of each fund, programme and specialized agency, where relevant, will be based on an assessment of whether the elements in the agency-specific annex reflect the priorities of its strategic plan and overall mandate, as well as their alignment with national priorities and strategies;

19. *Recognizes* that informal discussions during the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations

Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme on cross-cutting issues, synergies, gaps and duplication, including those related to common country programmes, could provide a useful context for the work of the individual funds and programmes at the country level;

“Delivering as one”

20. *Welcomes* the intergovernmental meetings of programme country pilots held in Kigali, from 19 to 21 October 2009, and in Hanoi, from 14 to 16 June 2010, takes note with appreciation of the Kigali and Hanoi declarations, and in this regard also takes note of the progress made by “delivering as one” countries in their own country-led evaluations, with the participation of relevant stakeholders and with the technical support of the United Nations Evaluation Group, to be completed by 1 July 2010;

21. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to proceed with the modality for the independent evaluation of lessons learned from the “delivering as one” pilots, as outlined by the Secretariat, after consultation, covering all aspects of the initiative, and looks forward to receiving the outcome at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly;

Improving the funding system of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for enhanced system-wide coherence

General principles

22. *Acknowledges* efforts by developed countries to increase resources for development, including commitments by some developed countries to increase official development assistance, calls for the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance by 2015 and to reach at least 0.5 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance by 2010, as well as the target of 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent for least developed countries, and urges those developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts in this regard in accordance with their commitments;

23. *Welcomes* the growing number of countries making financial contributions to the operational activities of the United Nations development system, as well as the diversification of funding sources and mechanisms within the system, and also welcomes, in this regard, the significant growth in funds contributed to United Nations development operations, from 13 billion United States dollars in 2003 to 22 billion dollars in 2008, the highest level ever;

24. *Stresses* that core resources, because of their untied nature, continue to be the bedrock of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, notes with concern, in that regard, the long-term decline in the share of core contributions to the United Nations development system, which, since 2005, has levelled off at about 34 per cent, and recognizes the need for organizations to attain, on a continuous basis, an adequate balance between core and non-core resources, taking into account the unique mandate structure and programmes of individual entities, while noting that non-core resources represent an important supplement to the regular resource base of the United Nations development system to support operational activities for development;

25. *Emphasizes* that increasing the financial contributions to the United Nations development system is key to achieving the internationally agreed

development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and in this regard recognizes the mutually reinforcing links between increased effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the United Nations development system, achieving concrete results in assisting developing countries in eradicating poverty and achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development through operational activities for development and the overall resourcing of the United Nations development system;

26. *Stresses* the need for adequate quantity and quality of funding for operational activities as well as the need to make funding more predictable, effective and efficient;

27. *Affirms*, in this context, the importance of accountability, transparency and improved results-based management and further harmonized results-based reporting on the work of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies for increased quantity and quality of funding for operational activities;

Ensuring adequate funding

28. *Stresses* that funding for operational activities should be aligned with the national priorities and plans of the programme countries as well as the strategic plans, mandates, resource frameworks and priorities of the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and underscores, in that regard, the need to further strengthen the results-based frameworks of funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations development system and for the agencies, funds and programmes to improve their reporting on outputs and nationally owned outcomes;

29. *Emphasizes* the importance of taking measures to broaden the donor base and increase the number of donor countries and other partners making financial contributions to the United Nations development system in order to reduce the reliance of the system on a limited number of donors;

30. *Recognizes* the potential positive impact of determining the level of “critical mass” of core funding for United Nations development agencies, and notes, in that regard, that the concept of critical mass may include the level of resources adequate to respond to the needs of the programme countries and to produce the results expected in strategic plans, including administrative, management and programme costs;

31. *Invites* the governing bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes to initiate further discussion with a view to exploring the most appropriate definition of, and a process towards arriving at, a critical mass of core funding for each fund and programme, according to their individual mandates;

32. *Invites* the governing bodies of the relevant specialized agencies, within the context of their 2012–2013 budgets, to consider exploring the most appropriate concept of and process for arriving at a critical mass of core funding, according to their individual mandates;

33. *Requests* the funds and programmes to report on their efforts and conclusions on critical mass in their annual or biennial reports to the Economic and Social Council, beginning in 2011, and in that regard encourages the specialized agencies, where relevant, to report on their efforts and conclusions on critical mass to the Council;

Improving the quality of funding

34. *Urges* Member States, when legislative and budgetary provisions allow, to make financial contributions to development-related activities of the United Nations system in the form of multi-year commitments in order to improve the predictability of resources;

35. *Urges* all Member States making non-core contributions to operational activities, as well as the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, to ensure that these resources are fully aligned with strategic plans and mandates and are in accordance with the priorities of the programme countries within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

36. *Urges* the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies to take measures to improve their governance and oversight of programme and project-specific non-core funding by including in their annual reports an assessment of how such funding is aligned with the strategic plans of the respective organizations;

37. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include information on all existing multi-donor trust funds and thematic trust funds, including information on their mandates, performance and governance structures, in the annual report on financial statistics to the Economic and Social Council, with a view to further improving the participation of Member States in their governance;

38. *Requests* United Nations agencies administering multi-donor trust funds to report on the administration of those funds to their respective governing bodies on an annual basis in order to ensure better complementarity between funds provided through multi-donor trust funds and other funding sources;

39. *Acknowledges* the ongoing efforts being undertaken by the United Nations Development Group with a view to avoiding the subsidization of non-core resources by core resources, in that regard requests the United Nations funds and programmes, and urges the specialized agencies, to avoid using core/regular resources to cover costs related to the management of extrabudgetary funds and their programme activities, and urges Member States making non-core contributions to reduce transaction costs and streamline reporting requirements, where possible;

Improving information to monitor funding trends

40. *Takes note* of the improved reporting on funding for operational activities of the United Nations development system, and requests that further improvements be made in order to more accurately reflect the diversity in non-core funding streams, such as multi-donor trust funds, including funds pooled at the global, regional and country levels;

41. *Requests*, in this regard, that future reporting on funding for the United Nations development system more clearly distinguish between funding for development and funding for humanitarian activities, and better differentiate self-supporting contributions from other non-core funding flows;

42. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report on the predictability of funding for the United Nations development system, including the impact of rapid growth in non-core contributions compared to core funding, significant exchange rate fluctuations and the limited use of multi-year pledges, in the annual report to the Economic and Social Council on the results achieved and measures and processes implemented in follow-up to resolution 62/208, to be considered by Member States

in the context of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

Harmonization of business practices

43. *Notes* the submission of the information provided by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination regarding the progress made in the area of simplification and harmonization of business practices within the United Nations development system;

44. *Reiterates* that the objective of the simplification and harmonization of business practices within the United Nations development system is to harmonize and simplify rules and procedures wherever this can lead to significant cost savings and/or a reduction in the administrative and procedural burden on the organizations of the United Nations development system and national partners, bearing in mind the special circumstances of programme countries, and to enhance the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the United Nations development system;

45. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes to identify additional efficiency savings, including at their headquarters, through common strategies and common operations, for example in the fields of human resources management, information technology and administration, while ensuring that such common strategies and operations are consistent with relevant intergovernmentally agreed policies, including those related to the United Nations common system, and to take into account the ongoing reforms on administrative and budgetary matters, and recommends, in that regard, that they submit annual reports on progress to their respective governing bodies and, as appropriate, keep the General Assembly abreast of such progress through their respective processes for reporting to the Economic and Social Council;

46. *Reiterates its call upon* the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to ensure, to the extent possible, that savings resulting from reductions in transaction and overhead costs accrue to development programmes in the same countries;

47. *Stresses* that simplification and harmonization of business practices within the United Nations development system, including in the field of procurement, shall be in compliance with relevant intergovernmental mandates, including those established by the General Assembly;

48. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination to brief the Economic and Social Council regularly on progress made and challenges encountered in the simplification and harmonization of business practices and to refer any matter requiring an intergovernmental decision to the relevant intergovernmental bodies;

Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women

Establishment of the Entity

49. *Decides* to establish, by the present resolution, as a composite entity, to be operational by 1 January 2011, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to be known as UN-Women, by consolidating and transferring to the Entity the existing mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat, as well as those of the United

Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, to function as a secretariat and also to carry out operational activities at the country level;

50. *Also decides* to establish an Executive Board as the governing body of the Entity to provide intergovernmental support to and supervision of its operational activities;

General principles

51. *Decides* that:

(a) The Charter of the United Nations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,² including its twelve critical areas of concern, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly³ and applicable United Nations instruments, standards and resolutions that support, address and contribute to gender equality and the empowerment and the advancement of women will provide a framework for the work of the Entity;

(b) Based on the principle of universality, the Entity shall provide, through its normative support functions and operational activities, guidance and technical support to all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions, at their request, on gender equality, the empowerment and rights of women and gender mainstreaming;

(c) The Entity shall operate on the basis of principles agreed to through the process of the comprehensive policy review of its operational activities, in particular by responding to the needs of and priorities determined by Member States, upon their request;

(d) The Entity shall work in consultation with the respective national machineries for women and/or the focal points designated by the Member States;

(e) Data used by the Entity, including information provided by national official sources, must be verifiable, accurate, reliable and disaggregated by age and sex;

52. *Also decides* that the establishment of the Entity and the conduct of its work should lead to more effective coordination, coherence and gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system;

53. *Further decides* that the mandate and functions of the Entity shall consist of the consolidated mandates and functions of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, with the additional role of leading, coordinating and promoting the accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and that any new mandates shall be subject to approval by intergovernmental process;

54. *Recognizes* that civil society organizations, in particular women's organizations, play a vital role in promoting women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

55. *Requests* the head of the Entity to continue the existing practice of effective consultation with civil society organizations, and encourages their meaningful contribution to the work of the Entity;

56. *Notes* that the Entity will operate as part of the resident coordinator system, within the United Nations country team, leading and coordinating the work of the country team on gender equality and the empowerment of women, under the overall leadership of the resident coordinator;

Governance of the Entity

57. *Decides*:

(a) That the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women shall constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the normative support functions and shall provide normative policy guidance to the Entity;

(b) That the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Board of the Entity shall constitute the multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure for the operational activities and shall provide operational policy guidance to the Entity;

58. *Emphasizes* that support of gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system will be an integral part of the work of the Entity;

59. *Decides* that the Executive Board shall carry out functions as outlined in annex I to General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993, taking into account the provisions of the present resolution;

60. *Also decides* that the Executive Board shall consist of forty-one members, as follows:

- (a) Ten from the Group of African States;
- (b) Ten from the Group of Asian States;
- (c) Four from the Group of Eastern European States;
- (d) Six from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States;
- (e) Five from the Group of Western European and Other States;
- (f) Six from contributing countries;

61. *Further decides* that the six seats allocated to contributing countries shall be distributed as follows:

(a) Four seats to be allocated to four of the largest providers of voluntary core contributions to the Entity, to be selected by and from among the top ten such providers;

(b) Two seats to be allocated to two developing countries not members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which provide voluntary core contributions to the Entity, to be selected from among the top ten of such providers by the developing countries not members of the Development Assistance Committee, with due consideration to be given to geographical balance;

62. *Decides* that the above allocations should be in accordance with the list provided by the Secretary-General of the average annual voluntary contributions of Member States, in the previous three calendar years, to the core budget of the Entity or, for the interim period, to the United Nations Development Fund for Women, for which statistical data are available;

63. *Also decides* that a Member State can be selected from only one category at any one time;

64. *Further decides* that the Economic and Social Council shall elect members to the Executive Board for a term of three years, in accordance with established practice, and requests the Council to conduct the first elections not later than 31 December 2010;

65. *Decides* that the Executive Board shall report annually on its programme and activities to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session;

66. *Also decides* to include the Executive Board of the Entity in the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme in order to promote effective coordination and coherence among operational activities on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women;

67. *Emphasizes* the need to establish concrete results-based reporting mechanisms, as well as the need for coherence, consistency and coordination between the normative and operational aspects of the work of the Entity and in that regard requests:

(a) The Commission on the Status of Women and the Executive Board of the Entity to work closely together to provide coherent guidance and direction in their respective areas;

(b) The Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2010 to establish appropriate and concrete linkages between the Commission and the Executive Board to ensure consistency between the overall policy guidance set by the Commission and the operational strategies and operational activities approved by the Executive Board;

(c) The head of the Entity to submit to the Commission an annual report on the normative aspects of the Entity's work and on its implementation of the policy guidance provided by the Commission;

(d) The head of the Entity to submit an annual report on operational activities for the consideration of the Executive Board, and to report on those activities to the Economic and Social Council during its operational activities segment;

(e) That the Economic and Social Council in turn submit its report to the General Assembly;

Administration and human resources

68. *Decides* that the Entity shall provide support to intergovernmental policy and normative processes and programmes of operational activities to support Member States, upon their request;

69. *Also decides:*

(a) That the Entity shall be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, to be appointed by the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, for a term of four years, with the possibility of renewal for one term, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Article 101 of the Charter, the position to be financed from the regular budget;

(b) That the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity shall report to the Secretary-General and shall be a full member of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination;

70. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to appoint the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity to the Policy Committee, the Senior Management Group and other relevant internal United Nations decision-making mechanisms;

71. *Decides* that the Entity should be accountable to Member States in accordance with applicable rules and standards;

72. *Also decides* that the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity shall appoint and administer the staff of the Entity, including for its operational activities, in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and that the Secretary-General shall delegate to the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity formal authority in personnel matters, while ensuring that the Entity shall be subject to the oversight bodies;

73. *Further decides* that the composition and selection of staff of the Entity shall be in accordance with the provisions of Article 101 of the Charter, with due regard to geographical representation and gender balance;

74. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity to establish appropriate mechanisms to assist and support the realization of all the strategic objectives and actions agreed upon in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the national and international commitments stipulated in the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;

Financing

75. *Decides* that the resources required to service the normative intergovernmental processes shall be funded from the regular budget and approved by the General Assembly; the resources required to service the operational intergovernmental processes and operational activities at all levels shall be funded from voluntary contributions and approved by the Executive Board;

76. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly for its approval during the main part of its sixty-fifth session a report containing a revised proposal for the use of regular budget resources approved for the biennium 2010–2011 for the normative support functions of the new Entity, in accordance with all relevant United Nations rules and procedures, including a detailed organizational chart of the Entity and options for administrative arrangements for its regular budget;

77. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity to submit a report to the Executive Board, including the organizational chart referred to in paragraph 76 above, together with a revised draft strategic plan and proposal for the use of voluntary resources for the support budget for the biennium 2010–2011;

78. *Decides* that the structure of the Entity as set out in the organizational chart shall reflect the universal coverage of the Entity;

79. *Also decides* that the operational activities of the Entity shall have financial regulations and rules similar to those of other operational United Nations funds and programmes, and consistent with the Financial Regulations and Rules of

the United Nations,⁷ and in that regard requests the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity to present a proposal for financial regulations, for consideration and adoption by the Executive Board, and to promulgate the financial rules;

80. *Stresses* the need to ensure adequate funding for the Entity, invites Member States, when legislative and budgetary provisions allow, to provide core, multi-year, predictable, stable and sustainable voluntary contributions to the Entity, and decides that reporting on funding should be transparent and easily accessible to Member States, including through the creation of an online registry that contains such financial information;

Transitional arrangements

81. *Decides*, with reference to paragraph 49 above, that a transitional period will start on the date of adoption of the present resolution and continue until 31 December 2010;

82. *Also decides* that all the activities, including training programmes and research, of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women shall continue in accordance with the operational arrangements established before the date of adoption of the present resolution until replaced by new arrangements;

83. *Further decides* to transfer the existing mandates, functions, assets, including facilities and infrastructure, and liabilities, including contractual obligations, of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to the Entity upon the adoption of the present resolution, and requests the Secretary-General to address all staffing issues in accordance with the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations;

84. *Decides* that the process of consolidation of the institutional and operational arrangements, partnerships and brands of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women shall start from the date of adoption of the present resolution and continue under the leadership and authority of the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity, once appointed;

85. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity by the beginning of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly in order to oversee the transitional arrangements of the Entity before its operationalization, and decides that the position of the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity shall be funded from existing temporary assistance funds pending the submission of the report on the revised regular budget required to be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session;

86. *Decides* to dissolve the United Nations Development Fund for Women as of the date of adoption of the present resolution;

⁷ S/SGB/2003/7.

87. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to dissolve the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women as of the date of adoption of the pertinent resolution;

88. *Decides* that any expansion of the capacity of the Entity should be orderly, based on a proposal by the Under-Secretary-General/head of the Entity to the Executive Board, building on the field presence and infrastructure of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women;

Review of implementation

89. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a progress report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions on the implementation of the part of the present resolution entitled “Strengthening the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women”;

90. *Decides* to review the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women at its sixty-eighth session, and requests the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a comprehensive report in that regard.

*104th plenary meeting
2 July 2010*