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PARTICIPATORY GENDER AUDIT

Participatory gender audit facilitation team:

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The Participatory Gender Audit has been commissioned by the UN Country Team in Azerbaijan/Gender Theme Group to provide internal guidance as regards improved gender mainstreaming in organizational policies and programming. This report has been produced by the independent consultant for the exclusive use of the UNCT Azerbaijan as well as individual UN agencies operating in the country. The information contained herein is strictly confidential. Under no circumstances should this report or any of its parts be distributed, reproduced or communicated in any form without prior written consent of the UNCT Azerbaijan.

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List of acronyms

ASAN	Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GBV	Gender based violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MLSPP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population
PGA	Participatory Gender Audit
OHCHR	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SCFWCA	State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs
SDG's	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SSC	State Statistical Committee
UNAPF	United Nations-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework (2016-20)
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2011-15)
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSWAP	United Nations System Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

Acknowledgements

A participatory exercise can only succeed with the active contribution of all involved. During the Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) with the UNCT Azerbaijan many employees of the UN agencies contributed valuable views and insights. This report attempts to capture these and the helpful suggestions that were put forward during the audit activities.

The PGA facilitator would like to thank the UN resident coordinator, Mr. Ghulam M. Isaczai and the UN heads of agencies for their interest, commitment and leadership in conducting this PGA.

For her guidance, support, as well as her personal involvement and sense of hospitality, special gratitude goes to Ms. Bahija Aliyeva who managed and coordinated the PGA exercise. Ms. Irada Ahmedova's overall support and logistical arrangements from the UNRC's office was highly appreciated.

The PGA facilitator wishes to record her appreciation for the men and women of the 10 participating UN agencies who made valuable contributions in sharing documents as well as their insights and recommendations during interviews and the workshops. Appreciation also goes to the 67 staff members across the agencies who responded to the gender equality survey¹ thus enhancing the participatory approach of the audit.

Special thanks goes to the gender focal points of the UN agencies in providing orientation and information on the various gender policy approaches and initiatives in place.

The contributions of a number of UNCT partners also provided essential inputs for this PGA report.

The PGA facilitator is particularly grateful for the opportunity provided by the UNCT in Azerbaijan to simultaneously conduct a PGA across 10 UN agencies. Useful lessons were learned about applying the PGA methodology in such a context.

¹ See Annex III for responses

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Good practices, main areas for improvement and major recommendations

A Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) was conducted with the UNCT Azerbaijan from 25 May to 31 July 2017. The on-site phase of the PGA was conducted in Baku from 5 June to 16 June 2017. The PGA was based on the PGA methodology of the International Labour Organization (ILO). It has been used for gender audits with many UN organizations around the world. This was the first such PGA for the UNCT in Azerbaijan and was organized through a collaborative effort by the UNRC office, the UNFPA and the UNDP.

The main objective was to assess the extent of gender mainstreaming in 10 UN agencies in Azerbaijan in accordance with the UN strategy for advancing gender equality in the policies, objectives, and implementation activities, as well as to document good practices, identify gaps and formulate recommendations for improvement.

The PGA covered 10 UN agencies resident in Azerbaijan. However, given the limited time frame, a full participatory gender audit could not be facilitated for each individual agency. Therefore, participation of staff of the different agencies in the PGA activities was of a representative nature. A primary focus of the UNCT PGA, was the collaboration among the agencies on gender equality promotion in the country and on advancing gender mainstreaming in the work of the respective agencies. Particular attention was given to the UN-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework 2016-2020, which includes gender equality as a cross cutting issue. Nevertheless, it was agreed that each agency would receive a brief individual feedback concerning their own agency from the PGA facilitator.

Methodology

A participatory self-assessment methodology was employed throughout with interviews, focus groups and workshops with staff of the 10 UN agencies, as well as with UNCT external partners in Azerbaijan. In addition, 67 staff members of the agencies responded to a gender quality survey.

This was accompanied by a desk review by the PGA facilitator of key documents provided by the 10 UN agencies. Recommendations were generated to the extent possible from the UN employees and their external partners.

Findings

There are a host of gender initiatives taking place across the UN agencies and with the government partners in Azerbaijan through a number of projects. Many of these can be found in the UNCT Gender Theme Group's work plan. There is a high level of awareness and enthusiasm of staff with regard to the importance of gender equality for successful implementation of the different UN mandates. As well, the government partners expressed their interest and willingness to work with the UN to promote gender equality. Some of the UNCT gender interventions and actions are strategic and of high quality. And there are good examples of project and country programme documents where gender is mainstreamed throughout.

However, despite policies and tools being available, the quality of gender mainstreaming is inconsistent across agencies and within each agency. There is an impression that good quality gender work is linked to those staff members particularly committed to gender equality, while other areas of work represent missed opportunities to promote gender equality. This implies that gender mainstreaming as the main strategy for promoting gender equality is not yet institutionalized despite all the policy announcements and directives.

There is an impressive list of gender specific actions and documents produced by the agencies or their headquarters. However, the main challenge is to build capacity on fully mainstreaming gender into all other technical documents, research and projects of the UNCT agencies in Azerbaijan. This is also a challenge for the UN in many countries.

Good practices identified by the PGA

Numerous good practices were found in all areas of analysis and in all agencies:

- ✓ All agencies have clear gender policies developed by their headquarters. Many also offer or require some form of basic gender training on line or otherwise. Many also have monitoring mechanisms or checking systems to push gender mainstreaming, especially in relation to projects. Some include requirements for gender mainstreaming in staff performance appraisals;
- ✓ Most staff are highly aware of the importance of gender equality and human rights principles in general for their agencies' objectives and they are personally committed;
- ✓ The UNCT in Azerbaijan has an active and productive Gender Theme Group;
- ✓ The UN Azerbaijan Partnership Framework (UNAPF) for 2016-2020 provides for gender equality to be cross cutting and gender indicators and targets are in place;
- ✓ There are also a good number of gender sensitive employee policies in place such as on sexual harassment and work life balance measures;
- ✓ There is a positive organizational culture across all the agencies reflecting inclusiveness and respect among staff and between women and men.

Main areas for improvement

The PGA identified a number of areas where challenges need to be addressed to ensure that systems and practices are in place for gender mainstreaming to be fully taken on board in the operations of the different agencies.

Three main areas of concern that emerged were:

- ❖ Enhancing staff capacity on gender mainstreaming, in particular programme, project and professional staff;
- ❖ Addressing the inconsistency across projects, programmes and research studies with respect to the integration of gender analysis and planning in order to enhance the

organizational and technical capacity of the UNCT to adequately address national priorities for gender equality;

- ❖ Improving monitoring and evaluation on gender mainstreaming.

Major recommendations

The PGA has put forward many recommendations. Major ones include the following:

1. Develop as an immediate priority a UNCT joint capacity building strategy on gender mainstreaming;
2. Implement a joint and integrated gender mainstreaming strategy and work plan for the UNCT Azerbaijan in 2018 with pooled resources and to be supported by the Gender Theme Group and linked to the UNAPF and the national indicator development efforts for the SDGs;
3. Design a joint UNCT advocacy and communication strategy and work plan adapted to the Azerbaijan context to promote gender equality with partners;
4. Develop a UNCT strategy to build capacities of government and CSO partners on gender equality;
5. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems and capacity on gender mainstreaming, including budget tracking on allocations and expenditure on gender equality;
6. In accordance with the UN-SWAP accountability framework, include performance on gender mainstreaming as a core competency for staff and in the appraisal of all professional, programme, and managerial staff, including those staff working in projects, as well as for consultants.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF THE UNCT ON GENDER EQUALITY

In 2006, the government adopted an overarching gender equality law. This was viewed as an important initiative to give impetus to the promotion of gender equality in the country. However, no action plan or budget was developed to implement the law. Moreover, certain provisions referring, for example, to the age of marriage, pensions and labour law have since been superseded by new legal provisions adopted in those areas. A new law on the prevention of domestic violence was adopted in 2010 and amendments were made to the Criminal Code criminalizing trafficking, including a provision on forced and child marriages. Also, in 2010 Azerbaijan ratified ILO Convention 183 on maternity protection and Convention 156 on Workers with Family Responsibilities. These legal provisions adopted by the country in recent years to further the attainment of gender equality provide a positive and fundamental basis for UNCT programmes to support their application in practice.

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is among the 172 international treaties, protocols and other instruments ratified by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan has also adopted the second National Human Rights Action Plan.

CEDAW was ratified in 1995. Five periodic state reports have been submitted by the government to the CEDAW Committee, the last one being in 2013. In 2014, the UNCT Azerbaijan Gender Theme Group prepared a confidential submission to the UN CEDAW Committee. This report was comprehensive and contained a good number of recommendations with reference to different articles of the Convention. In 2015, the UN CEDAW Committee produced concluding observations and a set of recommendations. These two sets of information, analysis and recommendations provide substantive guidance for a framework of actions for the UNCT and therefore should be considered in conjunction with the recommendations of this PGA report.

The UNCT has been successful in advocating on a number of important gender issues in Azerbaijan. These include the skewed sex ratio at birth, gender based violence, sex trafficking, removing some of the occupational prohibitions for women in the labour market, and the economic empowerment of women in rural areas, etc. Working with the State Statistical Committee has also been strategic for generating data disaggregated by sex in different sectors.

The UN Azerbaijan Partnership Framework 2016-2020 (UNAPF) clearly recognizes the importance of attaining gender equality in order to address the various economic and social challenges facing Azerbaijan. The UNAPF has three strategic priority areas. The first is promoting sustained and inclusive economic development underpinned by increased diversification and decent work. The second is strengthening institutional capacities and effective public and social services. The third is improving environmental management and resilience to natural and human-induced disasters. Gender equality, along with human rights-based approach, youth, specific capacity development for monitoring and evaluation and improving the overall evidence base are listed as “cross-cutting” these three priorities.

The second UNAPF priority area contains a good number of gender indicators and baseline data and targets disaggregated by sex. The first priority area includes unemployment rates disaggregated by sex and age. The third priority area, however, does not include any gender indicators or reference, nor baseline or target data disaggregated by sex. It appears that this

third and important priority is not part of the overall “cross-cutting” objective and that gender mainstreaming has not been applied.

In parallel with and complementary to the implementation of the UNAPF, is the ongoing coordination work with the governmental partners on the promotion and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) coordinated under the National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development with its secretariat in the Ministry of the Economy. Three thematic working groups (TWGs) were established – 1) Economic Growth and Decent Jobs, 2) Social Development, 3) Environmental Issues. These are similar to the priority areas of the UNAPF. The Council also established a monitoring and evaluation thematic group. In all, 82 representatives of different government agencies are represented in these four groups. The members of the SDG Coordination Council are also represented in the 2020 Vision group, a national development concept.

Alignment of the country’s agenda with the SDG indicators is ongoing and placed under the auspices of the State Statistics Committee where a department on sustainable development statistics was established by presidential decree. Some of the UN agencies are already engaged with this Committee (UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF). UNICEF has reached an agreement to carry out a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) to generate data on key indicators on the well-being of children and women in 2018.

Apart from the SDG 5 on gender equality, there is a challenge to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the thematic groups of the National Coordination Council, as well as to ensure that gender indicators and data disaggregated by sex for baselines and targets are included in the work of the monitoring thematic group.

The UNCT in Azerbaijan has an active Gender Theme Group (GTG) chaired by UNFPA since 2012 in which gender focal points of the different agencies are represented. The GTG meets regularly, has an annual work plan and successfully collaborates on critical gender issues for the country. For 2016, the work plan included three areas: awareness raising and advocacy for improved legal and policy framework; capacity development; data and research. Most of the activities were carried out by individual agencies (25) and a few were done jointly (5). All the activities were directed to working with national partners. Provision for activities for the enhancement of the gender mainstreaming capability and monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in the UNCT itself is perhaps being developed through this PGA exercise. Given limited resources, a challenge for the GTG is to design a joint and more coherent and coordinated programme of work.

It needs to be borne in mind that for each of the 10 UN agencies resident in Azerbaijan, their individual headquarters provide policies and guidelines on gender equality specific to their technical mandates. Gender issues specific to their mandates are identified. They also often provide the relevant tools and sample indicators. In some cases, the agencies indicate monitoring mechanisms to be followed as well as offer gender training (regional and HQ offices). The common denominators across the agencies are the basic gender concepts and the gender mainstreaming strategy. The UN agencies in Azerbaijan also share the knowledge of the key gender issues specific to the country. Some agencies benefit from the support of regional gender specialists in Istanbul, Bangkok, Copenhagen, Vienna, Budapest and Moscow, for example FAO, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA and IOM.

The extent to which gender is mainstreamed in all the programmes and projects of the UNCT in Azerbaijan largely depends on the capability of individual staff members and the leadership

of their agency heads and the resident coordinator. Enhancing the gender mainstreaming capability to be able to apply the various agency gender policies at the country level can thus be regarded as a common endeavor as reflected in the effort to undertake this PGA.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTICIPATORY GENDER AUDIT

1. To assess the extent of integration of a gender perspective in the policies, strategies and initiatives, documents, budgets and decisions of the UNCT agencies;
2. To document good practices on and identify gaps in gender mainstreaming of the UNCT agencies and build organizational ownership on gender responsiveness;
3. To contribute to building a baseline on gender mainstreaming in the UNCT;
4. To identify the existence of UNCT internal practices, policies and related support systems for gender mainstreaming and their effectiveness.

THE PGA METHODOLOGY

The ILO PGA methodology was used as the main tool for analysis. The PGA is a tool and a process based on a **participatory methodology** to promote **organizational learning**

- at the individual
- work unit and
- organizational levels

on how to practically and effectively mainstream gender in all programmes and projects of an institution. For agencies of the United Nations formal gender equality policies and strategies have been established and against which the PGA assesses performance.

While the desk review document was an essential part of the audit, the participation of UNCT employees in interviews and workshops captured the perceptions, knowledge and practice across the different areas and mandates of the UN agencies.

The PGA consultant's main role was to facilitate the self-assessment by the staff themselves on their progress on gender mainstreaming and to seek their own recommendations to address gaps. UNCT external partners were also asked to contribute their perceptions and recommendations.

By examining various dimensions of the functioning of the UNCT in different spheres and at different levels, the PGA can also be considered an institutional audit. Thus, the PGA results also reflect the nature of institutional arrangements such as management and budget systems, information management, communications, monitoring and evaluation systems or organizational culture that may advance or hinder the promotion of gender equality. While not the main aim, the PGA promoted learning and self-assessment about gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a consequence of the participatory approach.

Structure of the Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) report

The good practices and areas for improvement identified together with the recommendations of the PGA with the UNCT agencies are clustered in five key areas of analysis as outlined

below. They are based on the desk review, individual interviews and focus groups, participatory staff workshops and interviews and focus groups with staff and partners. The structure of the report follows these five areas as follows:

- I. Gender issues in the context of UNCT Azerbaijan and existing gender expertise, competence and capacity building of employees of the UNCT agencies;
- II. Gender in the objectives, programming, budget, implementation and evaluation cycles, and partners of the UN agencies in Azerbaijan;
- III. Information and knowledge management on gender issues in UNCT agencies and gender equality policy as reflected in their products and public image;
- IV. Staffing and human resources, decision-making, and organizational culture of the UN agencies;
- V. UNCT's perception of achievement on gender equality.

PGA Benchmarks

Benchmarks to assist the UNCT to go forward with the recommendations are suggested in Annex I of this report. Following up on these can also assist in the required reporting for the UN-SWAP.

Scope of the PGA

Given the number of UN agencies (10) as well as the diverse mandates and programmes of the different agencies the scope of the PGA needed to be broad, with various levels of emphasis, and covering the overall mandate of the UNCT. It is important to note that a detailed analysis and impact evaluation of the programmes and initiatives of the UNCT agencies do not fall within the scope of this type of this gender assessment.

The main areas for assessment of gender mainstreaming included design and implementation of technical projects and programmes, research activities, advocacy, partnerships, employee data and statistics, capability development and staff policies.

Particular emphasis was given to gender dimensions of interagency collaboration and the UN-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework 2016-2020.

Constraints and limitations

Given the time and resources available, it was not possible to conduct an exhaustive analysis of all UN agency documents. Also, budget documents were not available for tracking and identifying allocations and expenditure on gender. Nevertheless, certain expenditures on gender by agency was available in the GTG work plan documents.

In the time available, it was not possible to travel to the regions or the capital to interview project staff and beneficiaries. Neither could women CSOs, trade unions or the employers' organization be interviewed due to time constraints.

Calendar of the PGA

The PGA with the UNCT Azerbaijan was conducted from 15 May to 31 July 2017. The on-site phase of the PGA was conducted in Baku from 5 June to 16 June 2017 (See Annex I for the PGA schedule). Documents were provided by all the UN agencies and these were the subject of a desk review mainly conducted prior to the on-site phase. During the first week in Baku, the UNCT management team and gender focal points were briefed on the PGA process, the desk review continued and interviews and focus groups were conducted. In addition, there was a preliminary analysis of the responses of the gender equality survey.² During the second week, further interviews were conducted with partners. A workshop was held with management and professional staff and another with the general service staff. On Friday, 16 June 2017 a debriefing and feedback session was carried out with UNCT management and gender focal points to share the preliminary findings, good practices and recommendations. Initial clarifications and corrections of factual errors were received and subsequently, the PGA report was prepared for submission to the UNCT for its comments and further corrections.

The desk review

This was carried out prior and during the first week of the PGA and continued throughout the exercise as additional documents were provided. In all, around 80 documents were examined (see Annex II for the range of documents reviewed). They included documents of an administrative nature, technical and research products, project and programme documents and reports, advocacy material, as well as gender specific material. Broader governance and strategic documents of the UN agencies as well as those related to their gender policies were reviewed.

Gender equality survey of staff of the UNCT agencies

The above survey³ was prepared and launched prior to the PGA period from 29 May- 2 June 2017. Further responses were received during the first week of the on-site phase. There were 67 responses out of around 180 staff of UN agencies in Azerbaijan. This represents a response rate of 37 per cent. Considering that many questions were fairly technical in terms of applying gender mainstreaming in their work, a good number of staff not involved in technical work would likely not have attempted the survey. If one considers that around 140 of the 180 staff could have appropriately responded, then the response rate would be higher at around 48 per cent. Annex III provides information on the responses to this survey.

Introductory Briefing Session

A session was conducted for the UNCT heads of agencies in Baku on Monday 5 June 2017. The objectives, methodology and calendar for the PGA were presented, followed by a discussion for clarifications (see Annex IV for list of participants).

Similarly, a meeting was held with the UN gender focal points on Monday 5 June 2017 (see Annex V for list of participants).

Interviews

Interviews constitute the backbone of the PGA methodology. They serve to check information gleaned from the desk review and explore staff perceptions, as well as verify facts. The PGA facilitator conducted interviews and focus group discussions with management, professional and general service employees in all 10 UN agencies. Interviews were also conducted with partners of the UNCT. The PGA facilitator was assisted by Gunel Mehdiyeva and Naila

² See Annex III for responses

³ See Annex III for the responses

Jafarova (UNFPA project staff) for the UN agencies' interviews and by Bahija Aliyeva (UNFPA gender specialist) for the focus group meetings and the interviews with government partners.

The interviews were scheduled over a period of 8 working days from Wednesday 7 June to Friday 16 June 2017. In all 29 persons from the UN agencies, including most heads of agencies, were interviewed together with an additional 19 UN employees in focus groups for gender focal points, administrative staff, communications staff and services staff (drivers and cleaners). Some eight government partners accompanied by several of their own staff were interviewed. This brings the total to 56 persons participating in individual interviews or in focus groups (see Annex V for the full list of UN interviewees and Annex VI for partner interviewees).

Workshops

The desk review and the interviews provided a great deal of insight into the dynamics of the UN agencies, and issues for further probing were identified. The PGA workshops served to go further in exploring common views on issues raised, probe collective institutional memory and to observe interactions among the participants. A one-day workshop for management and professional staff of the UN agencies was conducted on Tuesday 13 June 2017. It was attended by 23 staff members. Participatory exercises were conducted on gender differences and stereotypes; key gender concepts and definitions; drawing up an historical timeline on gender in Azerbaijan and the UN; a stakeholder analysis (Venn Diagram on the interactions between internal UN partners and external partners as regards the promotion of gender equality (see diagram by staff at end of the report showing red lines with those partners where there is gender content) There was also an exercise to facilitate reflection on the organizational culture in the UN agencies. At the end of the workshop participants came up with recommendations for improved implementation of the UN gender policies and practice.

A second half-day workshop was held on Wednesday 14 June 2015 for support staff of the UN agencies. It was attended by 10 employees. Participatory exercises were conducted on gender roles and stereotypes, key gender concepts and definitions and on the organizational culture in the UN agencies. The participants contributed a rich reflection on gender equality concerns within the UN.

The two workshops provided a unique opportunity for employees across the UN agencies to come together to exchange ideas and discuss gender issues (see Annex VI for further information about the workshops). Participants indicated that it was rare to experience such an in depth gender dialogue among colleagues and expressed the wish that more such dialogues, including on an informal basis, be organized.

Managerial debriefing and feedback session

The PGA facilitator provided preliminary findings, examples of good practices of the UN agencies and recommendations at a debriefing session for the UNCT heads of agencies and gender focal points on 16 June 2017. The presentation was made with power point slides. Comments and clarifications were made by participants during the presentation. Annex VII provides the list of participants.

Submission of the final report

A summary briefing report on the good practices, areas for improvement and recommendations was prepared by the PGA facilitator and provided to the UNCT on 7 August 2017 for clarifications and revision of factual errors and gaps. A final report was submitted on 31 August 2017

The PGA facilitator

The PGA facilitator was Linda Wirth. She was assisted by Gunel Mehdiyeva and Naila Jafarova for the interviews and the workshops.

Bahija Aliyeva served as the PGA focal point, ensuring the flow of documents and information as well as orienting the PGA facilitator on gender issues in the Azerbaijan context. She was assisted by Irada Ahmedova in the facilitation of logistical and internal arrangements.

GOOD PRACTICES, AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE PGA FIVE KEY AREAS OF ANALYSIS

Across the 10 residential UN agencies in Azerbaijan, many good practices illustrating gender sensitivity and knowledge could be identified in most of the areas of the PGA analysis. These are visible in certain documents, projects and advocacy materials.

There have been important initiatives undertaken by various UN agencies on critical gender issues of particular relevance to Azerbaijan. These include trafficking of women, skewed sex ratio at birth (as a result of a preference for sons and thus abortion of female foetuses), gender based violence and early marriage of girls.

Some UN agencies have specific gender projects for example, UNDP has four projects on women's empowerment and UNICEF has a project on girls' sports. FAO is implementing a project on improving the capacity of rural advisory services to provide better and focused services to rural women. The UNHCR has a project on the "Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Communities". For some agencies, the nature of their mandates and their programmes and projects, implies that their outputs have strong gender dimensions, for example UNFPA (sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and women's empowerment and population dynamics) and IOM (trafficking).

At a one UN level, particular efforts to include gender equality concerns in the UN-Azerbaijan Partnership Framework agreement for 2016-2020. Furthermore, through the UN gender theme group, there have been additional initiatives for the UN agencies to collaborate on certain gender issues such as 16 days of activism against gender based violence and the Confidential Submission to the UN CEDAW Committee. In addition, there is a joint UNDP, UNFPA and RC Office project on "Gender Assessment: Analyzing Barriers to Economic and Social Participation of Women and Girls".

The above-mentioned initiatives are important contributions to advancing gender equality in Azerbaijan. Some can be attributed to gender mainstreaming efforts while others are the fruit of agency specific mandates and gender knowledge. Nevertheless, gender mainstreaming is still a challenge for the UN staff in Azerbaijan especially those working on the design and implementation of mainstream projects (i.e. not gender specific projects or activities). While there are some examples of adequate gender mainstreaming, the application of this UN strategy to achieve gender equality, as endorsed by the member states, needs to be more systematic and comprehensive across all the UN programmes and projects in Azerbaijan.

Most of the agencies in Azerbaijan have gender policies, tools and monitoring systems spearheaded by their head offices. While there is a good awareness by UN staff in Azerbaijan of these instruments, as demonstrated by the results of the gender equality survey⁴, applying them in practice to their daily work activities remains a challenge.

Most of the UN gender initiatives are launched and implemented by interested individuals. However, this is not always sustainable and does not guarantee systematic gender mainstreaming across all programmes and projects. A greater institutional commitment is needed to support and replicate individual endeavours.

⁴ See Annex III for the responses

I. Gender issues in the context of Azerbaijan and existing gender expertise, competence and capacity building of UN employees

A. Gender issues in the context of Azerbaijan

Through the historical timeline exercise during the workshops, UNCT staff demonstrated a good knowledge of historical events related to gender equality and women's empowerment in Azerbaijan and internationally. These included the UN Decade for Women; the 1979 adoption of CEDAW and ratified by Azerbaijan in 1995; the third wave of feminism; the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action; the 1994 ICPD Conference; post-modernist feminism; women elected as presidents in Europe; 1998 State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs established; men's role in reproductive health; UNFPA International Conference in 1998 in Baku, Azerbaijan; Malala Yousafzai becoming the youngest Nobel Peace prize winner at 17 years old; the Istanbul Convention; UN Women established; appointment of Helen Clark as UNDP Administrator; anti-human trafficking legislation 2005; Law on Gender Equality adopted in 2006; Appointment of Mehriban Aliyeva as UNESCO goodwill ambassador; Law on Prevention of Domestic violence adopted in 2010; celebration of 16 days of activism campaign (GBV); and SDG Equality goal 5.

It was noted that there is still no woman as UN Secretary-General to celebrate.

Staff also shared personal life events that opened their eyes to gender issues. These included getting married; getting divorced; having a son or daughter; experiences of discrimination in employment; gender training workshops; academic gender studies; studying abroad; attending international conferences; becoming a gender focal point; and being involved in gender projects or projects with a gender component. Some staff pointed out that they had never personally encountered discrimination or inequality as they were raised in families and communities where girls and boys were treated equally.

The UN Gender Theme Group has identified and worked together with government partners on a number of key gender issues for the country, such as the skewed sex ratio at birth and gender based violence.

The lack of data disaggregated by sex needed for the formulation of indicators when designing projects and activities was among the challenges identified. Data and indicators on gender issues are also needed for research studies and for UN advocacy.

It was reported by staff that it is hard to find consultants who are both technical and gender specialists. It is an either/or situation. In addition, sometimes the government would prioritize the technical rather than the gender specialist and there may be insufficient funds for hiring two specialists. Staff also reported that there are a limited number of experts on gender issues available in Azerbaijan. Therefore, it is important to work with the universities so that in turn they can provide orientation to government officials on the respective gender subjects.

Staff report that cultural attitudes are the biggest challenge to be tackled in regard to gender equality. On the one hand, traditional roles have reinforced for the last 20 years since independence, rolling back some of women's empowerment gains under Soviet influence. On the other hand, there are changing attitudes on gender relations, especially with the younger generation. Some government partners referred to this as "globalization" influences. There is

also a coexistence of different ways of thinking and behaving. And these depend on the family, the location, education, literacy, and different perceptions. Some women think men have to take care of them. But there are also many women who want to study, get a good education, work and be independent or contribute to the family. While most Azerbaijani girls want to get married, in some regions, for example in the Southern part, girls are given into marriage early by their families. The gender concerns of the different UN agencies in Azerbaijan stem from the key issue of the lower value assigned to the girl child in society, manifested in the skewed sex ratio at birth, gender based violence, child marriage and the low participation of women in decision-making in economic and political life.

Quotes from staff:

"Families want their children to be happy, so they want their children to get married at a certain age, as they think this will bring happiness."

"Ten years ago, you could hardly see fathers walking with their kids in the street, but now there are many, illustrating how men are taking up a greater role in family life and child care."

Good practices

- ✓ **UNFPA**: research on the sex skewed ratio at birth in Azerbaijan and survey on men and gender equality (IMAGES), as well as strategic support to generating and publishing national sex disaggregated statistics;
- ✓ **UNICEF**: a major survey (MICS) for generating sex disaggregated data on the situation of children and women, is under discussion with the government; Advancing the notion of an inclusive society facilitates the promotion of the importance of investing in the girl child. The inclusive sports programme (which includes efforts to increase access to safe sports activities for girls is highly visible and promotes girls to be seen as active in their communities and so encourages families to value girls;
- ✓ **IOM**: *Handbook on European Non-discrimination Law and its Update including the Manual on the Anti-Discrimination Legal Framework and Referral Mechanism in Azerbaijan and Needs Assessment: Counter-trafficking Response in the Republic of Azerbaijan*
- ✓ **ILO**: advocacy on repealing laws that restrict women's access to many occupations in the labour market;
- ✓ **UNDP**: developed and published a number of booklets, guides and brochures within its four gender projects. Gender Assessments of four regions of Azerbaijan were conducted in addition to the ongoing assessment in six regions.
- ✓ **UNCT** collaboration: Confidential Submission to the UN CEDAW Committee by the UNCT Gender Theme Group, 2014.

Areas for Improvement

- ❖ Many gender issues that the UNCT works on are of a social nature and involve working with vulnerable groups and those who are the poorest in the regions. As the government is keen to modernize the country, perhaps more could be done to promote

women's empowerment in other arenas, especially with respect to the younger generation.

- ❖ The UNCT needs to reflect more on how to address the weakness of academic institutions on gender and the low capacity of women's CSOs which is of concern for advancing the gender equality agenda in Azerbaijan.

Recommendations

1. Work with government partners, universities and CSOs to broaden research areas to economic and political spheres such as training, labour markets and representative political structures such as parliaments and municipalities, especially as regards women in decision-making;
2. Continue to work with the State Statistical Committee and assist in linking them with gender indicators work in a range of fields;
3. Develop joint UNCT activities on men and gender equality on the basis of the UNFPA survey, *Gender Equality and Gender Relations in Azerbaijan: Current Trends and Opportunities, Findings from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES)*
4. Explore ways that the universities' programmes can be strengthened in relation to gender studies;
5. Explore ways that UNCT could work more to strengthen the capacity and role of women's CSOs;
6. Consider internships in the UNCT for university students with relevant academic background to learn about gender issues as a contribution to increasing capacity in the country.

B. Gender expertise

The gender equality survey⁵ indicated that there is high awareness of staff on the importance of gender equality for their agency, of their agency's gender policy, of importance of gender mainstreaming for achieving agency objectives. The great majority of staff are also confident of their ability to promote gender equality. NO staff were the most positive out of all staff categories on most of the questions.

The exercise in the workshops on gender concepts demonstrated a good understanding by some of the staff on concepts such as women in development/gender and development, practical gender needs/strategic gender needs and gender analysis and planning. However, for a good number of the staff, this was the first time they were exposed to the definition of these concepts. Similarly, with the exercise in the workshops on gender stereotypes, this represented new learning for many of the staff.

⁵ See Annex III for the responses

According to open ended comments in the gender equality survey, staff interviews and the workshops, as well as the document review, staff appear to face practical difficulties in mainstreaming gender into their work, particularly in certain narrow technical areas. The workshops reflected limitations of the staff in their grasp of gender mainstreaming in practice. During the interviews, some staff indicated that they found it difficult to respond to the online gender equality survey questions as they have had little exposure to the gender programmes in their respective organizations. It can be concluded that without adequate mandatory training, and institutional mechanisms in place for gender mainstreaming, a high awareness of the importance of gender equality to their agency does not necessarily translate into gender knowledge or technical capacity to mainstream gender into projects and programmes.

The nature, extent and coverage of gender training across the UN agencies in Azerbaijan is uneven. Some staff have had opportunities for training while others have not. Much of the training that has been delivered is at an elementary level and is not usually tailored to the areas of work staff are involved in. It would appear few staff have had the opportunity to access more in depth training on the “how to” of effective gender mainstreaming, i.e. on gender analysis, planning and evaluation, design of indicators, projects, programmes and advocacy materials that are gender sensitive. Within the same agency there are staff who have had opportunities for more intensive training, often at regional or HQ offices, and other staff have not. For example, the GFP of the WB has no training in gender analysis. On the other hand, the Bank’s environment specialist had in depth gender training at the WB Brussels office). During the PGA, little mention was made of specialized gender training. One staff member mentioned having received training on gender budgeting.

Even if not all staff have the chance for training, it was considered important that there is a person in the agency with a high level of expertise that could advise other staff. This represents a kind of on-the-job tailored training over time which can also be very effective. This arrangement however, is difficult for the agencies with few staff in Azerbaijan.

There were many requests for training, both formal and informal and a certain thirst to have spaces where discussions and dialogues on gender could take place in the UN family with a view to deepening understanding of the essential components involved in gender mainstreaming.

This reflects the fact that understanding and addressing gender issues is much more than a matter of technical knowledge. They are deeply personal given the socially assigned gender roles all staff have lived and the individual gender biases that are to be overcome from within for UN programmes to be truly gender sensitive. Informal conversations, dialogues and storytelling are therefore critical and complementary to technical training. They can also assist in defining ways and means to talk with government partners on gender equality.

In order to support the staff in their agencies, the gender focal points of the UNCT can also benefit from specific training related to their role as catalysts within the UN and with the partners.

Moreover, in conversations with the government partners, there is an interest to collaborate with the UNCT on gender training of their gender focal points and staff. In particular, the Chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Affairs, Ms. Hijran Huseynova, endorsed the participation of GFPs of the government ministries and the private sector together with GFPs of the UN in a specialized training.

Good practices

- ✓ Gender capacity, tools and mechanisms are increasingly in place, for example, FAO “Gender equality objectives and minimum standards for gender mainstreaming⁶ and FAO “Guidance note on how to mainstream gender in the formulation of Country Priority Frameworks”⁷.
- ✓
- ✓ Many staff have completed online basic and introductory mandatory and voluntary training on gender across the different agencies;
- ✓ New staff members are being exposed to aspects of gender equality as a part of some of general online modules, demonstrating that gender is being mainstreamed into other training materials;
- ✓ **UNHCR**: “UN Programme on the Prevention of Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority” and “Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” are among mandatory courses for staff to take online. Also, gender disaggregated data on refugees and asylum/seekers enrolled in primary and secondary education, as well as the participants in UNHCR trainings, is collected and available. In addition UNHCR has “Prevention and Response to Sexual, and Gender-based Violence” Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document, which provides guidance on how to approach this issue among refugees;
- ✓ **UNDP**: Regional gender advisor provided gender training for programme staff;
- ✓ **UNFPA**: Has a certified on-line course over several months on gender mainstreaming, as well UNFPA in Azerbaijan has provided gender training attended by other UN agency staff;
- ✓ **UNDP and IOM**: the UN Women course on “I know gender” is mandatory for all new staff;
- ✓ **IOM**: **There is** mandatory Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse training for staff. As well IOM provides gender sensitivity training for staff, project implementers and beneficiaries;
- ✓ **FAO**: Structured gender trainings are provided to both technical and programme staff. In addition, there are online gender training courses and manuals in various technical areas such as “gender and forestry”, “mainstreaming gender in fisheries”, “building on gender, agrobiodiversity and local knowledge”, and others.
- ✓ **WB**: mandatory gender training for staff;
- ✓ **OHCHR** requires its staff to complete online mandatory course on “Gender Equality, Human rights and me”.

⁶ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1913e/i1913e00.pdf>

- ✓ UNICEF: Online gender training courses and self-study are available to staff.

Areas for improvement

- ❖ The large majority of responses to the gender equality survey⁸ indicated that staff are quite confident in their knowledge of the UN gender policies and had the know-how to apply gender mainstreaming. However, as shown in the next section, in practice gender mainstreaming in research, programmes and projects is not consistent and systematic across the UN agencies;
- ❖ From the gender equality survey:
 - 48 per cent of staff do not know if their agency has a gender implementation plan versus 40 per cent saying there was one and 12 per cent saying there was not one;
 - 38 per cent of staff felt they had sufficient knowledge on gender mainstreaming to advise others, but not enough, while 55 per cent said just enough;
 - 33 per cent felt they do not know enough about the available tools and methods for gender mainstreaming in their work;
 - 56 per cent of staff indicate they seldom or never discuss gender issues with their director in relation to the selection of and working with partner organizations
- ❖ Many staff indicated they had received little or no face-to-face or intensive gender training;
- ❖ Staff from several agencies are requesting gender tools and training specific to their technical areas and yet seem not aware of such tools already in existence, many of which are available on the internet.

Some quotes from staff:

“Programme staff need in depth training on the techniques for mainstreaming gender such as designing indicators, conducting gender analysis, as from the beginning of a project idea or proposal. Operations and administrative staff need general awareness.”

“Male staff tend to be gender blind as regards mainstreaming gender in the projects. They need support and much depends on personal relations when it comes to men accepting some ideas or approaches from women.”

“There is a tendency to avoid mainstreaming gender in programmes due to a lack of capacity and incentives”.

“There is a real need to go through some examples of how gender mainstreaming should work in projects in practice for (mainstream) projects that are not directly focussed on gender issues”

“Today, I learned that our staff members need much more capacity development on gender equality and mainstreaming”.

⁸ See Annex III for responses

Recommendations

For synergies, sharing of existing expertise and resource maximization, the UNCT could consider designing and implementing a gender capacity building strategy for all the UN agencies as a joint UNCT effort. The GTG could coordinate this. This could provide for the following:

Components for a comprehensive capacity building strategy on gender equality and gender mainstreaming

<i>Needs assessment and tools availability and development</i>
1. Assess the training needs of all staff of the UN agencies to identify how many need which level and type of training.
2. GTG to make an inventory of existing tools and on line courses in different technical areas and share the information with all staff via the UNCT website.
3. Produce and/or share training videos on gender equality relevant to Azerbaijan.
4. Provide more case scenarios from real life case studies in the trainings.
<i>Awareness raising</i>
1. Use meetings, staff retreats and other informal events to raise awareness on gender equality through games, interactions, discussions in order to be more effective.
2. In addition to formal training workshops, arrange regular periodic (monthly, bimonthly, etc.) sharing, dialogue and learning, informal lunch time chats, seminars, thematic discussions, knowledge sharing sessions and link these to the GTG work plan.
<i>Capacity building (basic level)</i>
1. Provide an annual general introductory course and sensitization on basic concepts on gender for all staff. The gender trainer could be a regional or HQ gender specialist of any agency, who could be available and willing to contribute to all the agencies as a means of cost sharing and cost saving.
2. For projects, ensure gender sensitization for project staff, government partners and participants when starting a project.
3. Use meetings, staff retreats and other informal events to raise awareness on gender through games, interactions, discussions in order to be more effective.
<i>Capacity building (in depth)</i>
1. Organize more hands on, face to face training for staff in order to go deeper than the on-

line tools and check lists.
2. Organize an annual training on gender mainstreaming (including gender analysis and design of gender indicators and targets) for programme, project and P staff from all the UN agencies.
3. Provide an annual training to enhance the capacity of UN gender focal points on gender mainstreaming and on their catalytic role. The GFPs of government GFPs, CSOs, universities and private sector can be invited to join such a training.
4. In addition to formal training workshops, arrange regular periodic (monthly, bimonthly, etc.) sharing, dialogue and learning, informal lunch time chats, seminars, thematic discussions, knowledge sharing sessions and link these to the GTG work plan.
<i>Specific or tailored training</i>
1. Organize gender mainstreaming training specific to those technical areas where the UN outputs are gender blind.
2. Ensure training and activities on gender awareness, concepts and issues for communications staff and invite selected journalists.
3. Organize specific staff training and discussions on how best to advocate for gender equality with partners in the context of Azerbaijani gender issues and culture.
4. Organize training and discussions for the UN GTG on mainstreaming gender indicators across the SDGs and on how to align with UN agency programmes and partners.
<i>Capacity building TOT</i>
1. Consider conducting a TOT for a few staff/GFPs who can then replicate and train other staff.
<i>Accountability</i>
1. Require all staff to undertake a basic gender equality course. Conducting such a course as an agency group can also help team building.
2. Managers to promote all relevant staff to undertake gender mainstreaming online training and include in individual development plans and performance appraisals
3. Provide access for all staff, including SC staff to on-line gender courses.
4. Managers to identify those staff in certain challenging technical areas to include gender mainstreaming training and identify tools tailored to their area of work in their development plans and performance appraisals.
5. Invite consultants regularly hired by the UNCT as technical specialists to participate in any gender training being offered.

Some quotes from staff:

“Rather than denying and criticizing local culture, using some aspects of the culture for awareness raising and training would help obtain better results”.

“Staff capacity building is important as otherwise gender mainstreaming in project design cannot be properly done”.

“We need dialogue on gender more than check lists”.

II. Gender in the objectives, programming, budget, implementation and evaluation cycles, and partners of the UN agencies in Azerbaijan

Staff noted difficulties, whether it is clearly mandated or not by their agency, to incorporate gender considerations in the design and implementation of certain types of projects, such as infrastructure, environment and information technology. Also, the prevailing gender norms and traditions in the regions made it a challenge to ensure the participation of women for example in road building projects as compared to livelihood or community driven projects. Nevertheless, many staff felt that there was definitely room for gender mainstreaming in such projects, as long as there was the motivation and tools for doing so. Conducting economic and social assessments is key for this. Even though the gender dimension lacks in the design of certain projects, during the implementation phase changes can be made, as for example in conducting user satisfaction surveys involving both men and women and following up on the results, which may vary according to the gender of the respondents.

Staff also experience time pressures and so perceive the need to prioritize. They see gender mainstreaming as additional time they do not have and so a question of making a choice between gender and the project substantive areas, an either/or situation. Most of these staff do not appear to have had intensive training on gender mainstreaming and are not familiar with the available tools in their respective areas. These would make gender mainstreaming easier as with practice it would become more of a reflex, an ingrained skill or mind set as they put on their gender lens, rather than an additional task.

Staff indicated in the gender equality survey⁹ and in interviews that the UN mechanism for gender mainstreaming is there, but that implementation is difficult.

Sometimes donors require gender mainstreaming, as for example in the UNDP global environment project. For the EU, usually only a quantitative indicator is sufficient (e.g. the number of women beneficiaries). Sometimes, gender has to be reflected in the TORs of evaluations.

In some agencies, there is a mechanism for appraising project documents to ensure gender is mainstreamed. Nevertheless, difficulties still arise in implementation. Some types of projects have such a narrow scope that does not allow for the inclusion of beneficiaries and users in terms of analysis by gender of needs and the consequent design of different interventions to meet such needs. On some occasions the government does not accept the need for gender specific interventions in a project or programme arguing that it is not necessary. Also at times the government does not sign off on a whole project if there is one thing in it they do not agree with. For some projects, gender is included as lip service, not only by the government but also by the UN.

Staff of several UN agencies referred to the need for improved monitoring and evaluation systems. In reference to the gender markers that exist in a number of agencies, it was mentioned that they tend to be subjective as the staff person alone assesses the adequacy of gender mainstreaming in the programme or project and at the design stage only. Staff also indicated that the inclusion of gender in TORs for project design and evaluations is not systematic.

⁹ See Annex III for the responses

TORs for thematic evaluations often require a gender assessment, but individual projects at the local level may not always be evaluated. This can make it difficult to monitor and assess whether the local project is gender mainstreamed or not.

A. Programming, research and project design

A key criterion for determining if a UN agency is mainstreaming gender in its work is the visibility or invisibility in documents of the following elements:

- ✓ Sex disaggregated data;
- ✓ Analysis of gender differences;
- ✓ Gender indicators and targets;
- ✓ Specific interventions for women and men according to the findings of the gender analysis;
- ✓ Provision for the participation of both women and men in activities (management committees, training, study tours, etc.)

Country programme documents, programming documents and project documents need to reflect these elements to be fully mainstreamed. A document is not gender mainstreamed if it only uses words and statements such as “cross-cutting”, “including gender equality”, “including women”, “especially women”, “gender-sensitive”, “gender responsive”, “gender parity”, “gender disparities” and “will be gender-mainstreamed” unless it also includes the above-mentioned elements which are the evidence of gender mainstreaming. These are known as the gender word, phrase or paragraph, included in documents to demonstrate that there is an awareness of gender inequality as an agency concern. For instance, there could be references to “gender disparities” without explaining what they are and illustrating these with statistics or saying how these disparities will be addressed.

The UN agency country programme documents are critical instruments guiding the work of the agency in Azerbaijan over a two or four-year period and usually agreed with the relevant government counterparts. For the UN agencies undertaking the PGA, some of these documents are more detailed than others. Generally, the more detailed the document, the more potential there is to include gender analysis as well as gender related indicators and targets.

The design of technical cooperation projects is also a critical means for an agency to deliver on gender mainstreaming. Projects represent important sources of funding for policy and assistance interventions that at the very least prevent the reinforcement of inequalities and can go further to actively promote gender equality achievements in tandem with delivering the agreed interventions. The above-mentioned gender mainstreaming elements need to be reflected in all project “prodocs” and progress reports need to also provide information on the gender equality situation. At the beginning of the project, a gender mainstreaming strategy would need to be established and project staff, partners and beneficiaries need to be sensitized initially and throughout the life of the projects. A gender expert may be needed to assist in this process.

Often UN agencies carry out socio-economic research on different themes, including directly on certain gender issues. The latter are important for identifying key gender issues in Azerbaijan, such as the skewed sex ratio, as data and analysis are key for crafting advocacy messages to government partners, CSOs, the private sector and the media. They may also

inform the design of specific gender projects. On the other hand, research on other topics should to the extent possible, mainstream gender by including data disaggregated by sex, gender analysis of how men and women may be affected in the same way or differently and the consequences as well as including gender considerations in conclusions and recommendations. Some research is participatory in nature (surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.) and it is important that both men and women participate. If the scope of research is too narrow, it may be challenging to connect “people” (women and men, boys and girls) directly to the topic. Nevertheless, it is likely to be men and women, boys and girls that are the “users” or “beneficiaries” of policies and norms, and the different types of infrastructure that may be under investigation. Therefore, all genders need to be involved at the design phase and to provide feedback on their needs and the functionality of interventions, as well as to participate in any training programmes. Because of gendered relations in society, research needs to make a point of assessing the differential needs of and impacts on men and women, boy and girls.

If a programme or project concerns interventions where the generic term “people” is specifically mentioned as being targeted (training, services, participation in committees, institutions, organizations) – workers, farmers, rural communities, government officials, local officials, children, disabled – one can reflect on these terms and whether they can be broken down into men and women, boys and girls (male and female) and if targets can be expressed as percentage or number of men and women or boys and girls to be involved.

If the activity concerns policy development or technical standards development, consideration can be given to what are the processes involved? Are training, consultations and knowledge sharing part of this? Who is involved in these processes? Normally policies and standards development cannot be designed without “people” being involved. Can both men and women or their representative organizations give inputs? reviews? Can they participate in the eventual implementation of these? Who are the beneficiaries? Do we know their needs? Are these different for men and women?

If consideration is not given to this kind of reflection at the design stage, then the UN risks contributing to either reinforcing existing gender inequalities in certain domains or at least not having made a difference when there was an opportunity to do so.

If the gender differences and disparities are not made visible and explicit at the design stage, it is unlikely the interventions or policy and standards development work will be gender mainstreamed. Invisibility also hampers accountability and reinforces existing constraints to gender mainstreaming such as capacity weaknesses and cultural challenges.

Including specific gender indicators or indicators with base line data and targets disaggregated by sex makes gender mainstreaming explicit and visible. It provides indications for programme and project evaluation such that gender cannot be overlooked. One or more outcomes on gender issues specific to the country in an agency’s country programme can also mobilise more attention and resources.

Good practices

Below are examples of the inclusion of certain of the above-mentioned elements of gender mainstreaming found to varying degrees in the UN agency *country programme documents* for Azerbaijan.

UNFPA: There are three outcomes specified in the country programme document for Azerbaijan (2016-2020). One of these is specifically on gender equality and women's empowerment. In addition, the other two outcomes have gender indicators, as well as gender sensitive baseline data and targets. Gender is included in the outcome indicators.

FAO: Gender analysis is well integrated into the description of all six priority areas Country Programming Framework for Azerbaijan 2016-2020.

ILO: Gender analysis is integrated into the situation analysis of the Decent Work Country Programme for 2016-20. There are three priorities. For the first priority, there are three outcomes and 10 indicators, one of which is gender responsive and three of which refers to sex disaggregated data. For the third priority with four outcomes (two referring to gender) there are a total of 19 indicators of which three are directly concerning gender equality.

UNICEF: In the Country Program Document 2016-20 there are two outcomes out of five including reference to women or gender. Collaborative work on sex-disaggregated data generation is emphasized. There are a number of baselines and targets disaggregated by sex and some specific targets such as *Percentage of females aged 15-19 entering marriage before the age of 18*.

WB: In the Country Partnership Framework for Azerbaijan for the Period 2016-2020 June 3, 2015 there are two focus areas. The first one includes 4 objectives and out of 12 indicators, three specify the percentage of women in the targets. Out of 13 milestones, one is specifically on gender and two include women as 50 percent of the targets.

UNDP: The programme rationale of the country programme document for the Republic of Azerbaijan (2016-2020) uses terminology such as "Gender sensitive", "gender disparities", "gender specific needs" and "gender results". Gender based violence is specifically mentioned as an issue. There are three national priorities or national goals. The first one concerns a UNAPF outcome, with three indicators, one of which is disaggregated by sex and with targets for men and women. There is one country programme outcome with five indicators, one of which is disaggregated by sex and with a target for women. The second priority also has a UNAPF outcome with five indicators, one with sex disaggregated indicators

As concerns **technical cooperation projects**, there were some good examples of both project documents that are specifically on gender and those where there is a significant component on gender or where gender is mainstreamed throughout the project cycle.

UNDP has four stand-alone gender projects mainly on women's economic empowerment (WEE) and participation in the economy. National Resource Centres established within the WEE project are the base for activities, especially for women in the rural areas. Another project Enabling Civil Society to play a greater role in promoting socio-economic rights of vulnerable populations has significant gender components including enhancing the capacity of government departments, the national women's machinery and governmental gender focal points.

ILO: Women are half of the beneficiaries of a self-employment project started in the Goychay region. It now covers all regions including Nakchivan and resulted in a presidential decree on self-employment. Gender equality is promoted throughout the project;

UNFPA: There are a number of gender specific projects such as “Combatting gender based violence (GBV) activity in Azerbaijan” and “Preventing sex selection abortions: Men are here too for Gender Equality!” As well, there are projects on sexual and reproductive health and with the State Statistics Committee on the development of sex disaggregated data.

UNHCR: There is project on gender based violence and women and youth centres for refugees.

WHO: The national strategy on reproductive health (in cooperation with UNFPA) has a gender component as does the non-communicable diseases strategy, immunization programmes and HPV vaccination programmes;

FAO: Hiring of a gender consultant to help ensure gender mainstreaming in a land consolidation project.

Areas for improvement

- ❖ Gender mainstreaming is not systematic in the documents reviewed across the UN agencies. Often gender mainstreaming is partial. Gender or women may be mentioned in introductory sections or analysis, there may be some data disaggregated by sex, but there is a tendency for gender to evaporate when it comes to fully completing log frames with the setting of indicators, targets and activities. The country programme documents vary from gender being mentioned only in passing to gender being mainstreamed solely in the situation analysis or programme rationale to full inclusion of gender throughout the document, i.e. analysis, data, outcomes, indicators and targets. Even where gender concerns are sprinkled throughout a log frame or in parts of it, there is much scope for a more comprehensive coverage by improving many of the indicators and targets so that they are gender sensitive.
- ❖ In programme and other documents gender is often interpreted as “women”. Thus, targets more often than not address women or girls, whereas the goal of gender mainstreaming is to address both sexes albeit in different ways in accordance with socio-economic analysis and needs assessments;
- ❖ There are statements in some documents such as gender being cross cutting or women being a vulnerable group. These tend to be catch gender phrases or gender paragraphs unless they are followed up throughout the document with disaggregated data, gender analysis and suggested actions or approaches to tackle gender inequality;
- ❖ Some documents are completely gender blind, i.e. no disaggregated data, no gender analysis, no gender indicators, no actions to address practical and strategic gender needs, no targets for participation of both women and men in project management and implementation);
- ❖ Many staff seem to understand work on gender as stand alone gender projects rather than all projects in general incorporating gender dimensions. Gender specific projects are an important contribution to empowering the targeted beneficiaries, but the objective of the UN gender mainstreaming strategy in all projects is to enhance and expand the impact of the UN’s effort to promote gender equality;

- ❖ The outcome of limited or no gender mainstreaming in projects and programmes represents missed opportunities to work with partners and beneficiaries on the promotion of gender equality.

Recommendations

1. Given a number of serious gender equality challenges in Azerbaijan and the recognition that gender equality is a critical building block for the country to advance economically and socially, the UNCT could consider supporting a joint gender equality initiative;
2. Enhance collaboration between agencies on gender equality for coherence on common subjects of concern to the country partners as well as to achieve a more systematic approach to gender mainstreaming;
3. Heads of agencies to provide leadership for staff and national partners on gender equality;
4. Explore with academic institutions the setting up of gender studies courses to enhance the academic capacity of the country on gender equality and the training of gender experts to work with the UN and partners;
5. Consider designing a forward looking common interagency programme with a strong gender dimension, on the “future for youth” for example and related to the desire of the country to move from a traditional economy to a knowledge economy. Given that the majority of the population are young people and families are started at a young age, women’s reproductive health can be an entry point. Another can be the skills and training for young women and men related to the jobs of the future. As contributors to economic and social development, women and men at the age of 14-20, when their worldview is being shaped, can be targeted.

B. Budgets, evaluation and monitoring

Funds may be allocated for gender activities and specific gender projects or gender components in projects and programmes. Funds to support UN staff to implement gender mainstreaming in all programmes and projects usually take various forms:

- Human resources (gender focal points, gender specialists, gender capacity building);
- Financial allocations to gender specific projects, gender specific activities within projects, production of advocacy material (publications, videos) and organization of events;
- Contracting gender specialists to assist in the design and implementation of programmes and projects, conduct training and to carry out research on gender topics.
- Allocations for gender specific evaluations and gender audits.

During the PGA, it was not possible to identify and quantify comprehensively the allocations and expenditure of all the UN agencies on gender equality or to make any calculation of the percentage of overall funds dedicated to gender. It could be observed that all the agencies had gender focal points, although for most of them, the function was in addition to their usual position. There were some examples of gender specialists being hired for research and to assist on project design. As mentioned above, capacity building on gender has occurred in

varying degrees, levels and modalities across the agencies. Quantifying these in financial terms was not possible. Nevertheless, the 2017 work plan of the Gender Theme Group \$US indicates US\$ 1,640,038 in resources committed by the different agencies to 2020 for: advocacy and awareness; capacity building; and data and research. Of this, US\$ 214,500 are allocated for joint activities, mainly on data and research. It could be interesting to identify the percentage of the total agency budgets that this “gender budget” represents.

Monitoring through progress reports and field visits together with evaluation exercises are means to verify the implementation of gender mainstreaming in programmes and projects. Various UN agencies in Azerbaijan have systems for monitoring gender mainstreaming in programmes and projects, including on resource allocation.

Concerning evaluation, a few evaluation reports were available but these were not from all agencies. Evaluation is a key instrument for determining whether projects have indeed implemented gender mainstreaming or not. If gender equality is a criterion in the TOR for an evaluation, then if a project lacked gender mainstreaming from the outset, this would then be picked up. Evaluations, especially mid-term, can help correct and improve gender mainstreaming for the rest of the project or the next phase.

Good practices

- ✓ Most UN agencies in Azerbaijan have strong gender policies, tools and accountability mechanisms coming from their respective headquarters and some have electronic management systems with check boxes and gender markers. Some also have regional and/or international screening by gender specialists of their projects;
- ✓ **IOM:** In the Gender Policy implementation plan for 2015-2019 for IOM global, gender mainstreaming is mandatory. Gender is included in project development and project management training. Project proposals are sent to the Regional Office in Vienna for endorsement. Thematic specialists in the regional office review and comment on the project proposal including gender related indicators.
- ✓ **UNICEF:** There is gender marker for all staff, with actual “output” required rather than just internal reporting.
- ✓ **UNDP:** Some evaluation TORs provided included gender mainstreaming for projects. A gender tracking system with a gender market has been introduced corporately to monitor and promote gender mainstreaming in projects. Gender mainstreaming is a requirement of a newly introduced Quality Assurance system;
- ✓ **UNFPA:** There is a mandatory gender marker system (GPS -Global Programme System) for programme and project design and it is monitored on a monthly basis. Gender related outputs are part of staff TORs and performance appraisal system.
- ✓ **UNHCR:** Gender is a corporate requirement and is laid down in contracts and reports.
- ✓ **WB:** Gender and good governance have been cross cutting issues in the WB projects and programmes for some time and were reinforced as from 2015. Gender is part of the bank’s core indicators for every project. Gender integration is ensured by various

review levels, such as the concept note review and whole country review where the WB Gender Group is available for inputs. The Implementation Status Reports (ISRs) – check implementation and raises issues for concern. Gender is one of the aspects looked at in ISRs. A mandatory Gender Box is the checking tool for the ISRs. The team is required to tag or check the gender box. When it is checked, the system captures and produces a report to measure whether it is gender sensitive and to what extent it is sensitive. If the result is of concern, the team has to provide clarification and justification.

Areas for Improvement

- ❖ A number of the UN project evaluation reports reviewed illustrate that sometimes the lack of sufficient gender mainstreaming can be corrected in projects to some extent in the implementation phase and as a result of a mid-term evaluation;
- ❖ There is a belief among staff that lack of budget and lack of time prevents or limits gender mainstreaming in their programmes. This could reflect a lack of gender expertise on the part of staff as well as resistance of some staff;
- ❖ There is a concern that inter-agency collaboration on gender entails resources over and above the already limited resources available for gender as opposed to pooling those limited resources for greater and more visible impact on critical gender issues for the country;

Recommendations

Introduce more accountability mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in the design of projects and programmes as indicated below;

1. Include relevant gender indicators in the design of all projects and programmes;
2. In designing projects, ensure provision for gender sensitization for project staff, implementing partners and participants when starting projects;
3. Strengthen attention to gender during the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of projects;
4. Develop and share among agencies a roster of gender experts for project design and evaluation;
5. Managers to ensure that work plans and objectives/KPIs for staff, including senior management, mainstream gender, especially staff involved in the design and implementation of projects, activities, research reports and surveys;
6. Ensure that all TORS for the evaluation of project and programmes include evaluation of gender mainstreaming;
7. Consider implementing a joint project of the GTG on the design and monitoring of gender indicators in relation to UNAPF, but more particularly with government

partners for the SDGs, with assistance of expertise within UNCT and the various regional/HQ offices of the UNCT agencies;

C. Partners

One of the challenges for the UNCT is the collaboration with and advocacy of UN norms on gender to governmental partners. This is related to cultural and political sensitivities on the one hand and expectations of the UN on the other. In addition, collaboration between government departments can also be a challenge.

UN staff pointed out that gender is not mainstreamed in government policies. This makes it challenging for the UN to work in this direction as there is limited space and opportunities. Also, government partners tend to nominate people for the activities and not the ones requested as relevant for the purpose of the particular activities. When asked to send more women, government agencies do not always take this into consideration. In addition, often the government counterparts for sensitive services related to migrants, IDPs and refugees, etc. are mainly men.

Nevertheless, the interviews with eight government entities during the PGA exercise, demonstrated their strong interest to work together with the UN on gender equality. They were particularly interested in good practices from other countries or regions, but also to be assisted by the UN to generate and share their own good practices with other countries.

The Ministry of Education, for example, stated that gender equality is a priority for the Ministry and has become especially important in the context of the process of SDGs implementation. The Ministry was very much aware and working hard to address the range of gender concerns to be tackled from preschool through to university and the impact on the labour market in terms of gender parity. The Ministry was also concerned with curriculum content, as well as gender parity at different educational levels of the teaching personnel, including the problem of the lack of male models as teachers at the preschool and primary levels and the dominance of men as school principals. The Ministry looks mainly to guidance from UNESCO and following internationally established standards.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population (MLSPP) indicated that the Ministry is very much aware that increased women's participation in the labour market contributes to GDP growth and for this reason they are in the process of examining how to remove the legal obstacles to women's entry into hundreds of occupations. The Ministry also indicated that "the removal of the glass ceiling (i.e. women's participation in decision-making) does not depend on laws only, it requires work to change behaviours".

The Chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's noted that the issue of women's rights is given particular attention by the president of the country. This has led to greater participation of women in municipal bodies and a network of local resource centers has been established throughout the country to raise awareness of women on their rights.

In 2016, the Tripartite Committee on Economic and Social Affairs was established with the secretariat being in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population (MLSPP). Non-state actors are members: employers and trade unions. A new employment strategy for the next 30 years is being developed in cooperation with ILO and the strategy is fully aligned with the SDGs. The role of the committee at the national level has recently increased as the

participation of different government departments plus the trade unions and employer's organizations has increased. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs participates in the Committee. The MLSPP minister, who is gender sensitive, currently chairs this Committee. Gender is integrated into the work of the committee – there is a planned agenda and protocols are in place. The ILO conventions on gender equality are discussed, and there is a potential space for UN agencies to contribute. The national 2006 law on Gender Equality has not yet been raised in the Committee. But the Committee could be open to this and the law and its application and eventual revision could be on its agenda if proposed.

It was observed in conversations with the government partners that generally there was more awareness and involvement with the SDGs process than in regard to the UNAPF as such.

According to the State Statistical Committee (SSC), at present there are 70 out of 232 SDG indicators that can be measured given available statistical indicators in Azerbaijan. It was stated that the national capacities in this field are limited. Efforts are being applied to ensure that the methodology for measuring more indicators is developed using new approaches and new resources. Some of the information will be gathered through the household surveys (MICS, etc.) The SSC is also trying to ensure the participation of the civil society agencies. In terms of the environment and climate change related SDGs as well as the third priority of the UNAPF there is little awareness of gender related indicators. Gender is mainly reflected in the goals on education, health, and labour.

The UN traditionally works with civil society as well as government partners in promoting global norms and standards. National and local organizations representing women in social, economic and political life are key partners for the implementation of a variety of development projects. However, there have been increasing governmental restrictions funding partnerships with CSOs, thus limiting the UN advocacy role.

From the gender equality survey¹⁰ 10 per cent of staff indicated that they always engage in dialogue on gender policy and gender mainstreaming issues with partner, while 46 percent said they did so often. There were 25% indicating that it was seldom they did so while 19 per cent never did. More than half the staff (53 per cent) said they seldom or never discussed gender issues with their managers in relation to the selection on and working with partner organizations. On the other hand, 44 per cent said their agency often gives orientation on gender issues to its partners on gender equality while 27 per cent said that this was always given.

Good practices

- ✓ The Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network (ASAN) under the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations was established in 2012 to ensure equal access of the population to the public services. The agency's work is based on the principles of equality, rights based approach and good governance. UNDP supported training on gender awareness for the human resources staff. Recruitment of ASAN's personnel is through a 2-step merit process with written exams and interviews. There are some positions where women are specifically encouraged to apply. There are also quotas for persons with disabilities. Today, 40 per cent decision-making positions are women. Gender stereotypes are also being challenged with women being appointed to security guard positions and being sent on rotation to the regional offices. In 2015, ASAN was a

¹⁰ See Annex III for the responses

recipient of a UN public service award. ASAN will also participate at the 31st session of the UN Human Rights Council on SDGs to share its good practice.

- ✓ It is important to assist implementation by monitoring the SDG indicators. The State Statistical Committee (SSC) now has adequate capacities to do this. A specific section on SDGs has been established which has been highly praised by EUROSTAT. The SSC also has a specific section in SSC on gender statistics that has been set up in close cooperation with the support from UNFPA. In partnership with many international development agencies, statistics in the fields of education, health and the labour market were further refined. To ensure that the government is on track with its SDG commitments, efforts are underway to improve national capacities. In addition, activities are being carried out to develop indicators that are not available, for example agreement has been reached with UNICEF to do a MICS (multiple indicator cluster survey) and ILO will help with the economically active population survey, etc. Gender will be reflected in all these studies.
- ✓ State Statistical Committee recognition: *“The UN has played an enormous role in the field of data production and statistics in the country. UNFPA is leading as regards support to the SSC with the development of gender statistics.”*
- ✓ ILO: Partnership with MLSPP to remove the prohibition for women to work in 800 occupations in the Azerbaijan labour market;
- ✓ UNDP: Plays an active role in contributing to the UNAPF concerning gender equality and was the only agency who funded this.

Areas for improvement

- ❖ At times, the UN seems hesitant and perhaps self-censoring to push too much on the gender equality agenda in light of the perceived sensitivities of the government. On the other hand, the message from the government entities is that they wish to make progress on the gender issues facing the country, as long as there are culturally sensitive strategies employed. This implies perhaps the need for more focused work on advocacy strategies involving adapting gender language and concepts with local examples and storytelling as compared to using the usual UN terminology or jargon.
- ❖ A challenge for the UNCT in Azerbaijan can arise from the fact that all heads of agencies except for one are men. While no individual agency or the UNCT as a whole is responsible for this situation, it nevertheless contributes to an image or credibility gap for promoting gender equality vis a vis national partners. Just the same, the male UN leaders are in a position to project themselves as male champions and active promoters of gender equality. The IOM Chief of Mission who is a man is currently in the process of being appointed as the GFP and will be the only male Head of UN Agency to be the GFP. He has successfully completed the IOM Gender Marker Training and is personally in charge of ensuring Gender Marking in all of IOM's projects since 1 July 2017.

- ❖ Strong and proactive UNCT leadership and appropriate communications strategies are needed to enhance the potential that appears to be there for increased collaboration with government partners on gender equality;
- ❖ The stakeholder analysis of UNCT partners in the PGA professional staff workshop showed that there were numerous diverse partners, implying many opportunities to advocate for gender equality. However, gender equality was not much taken into account in the relations between the UNCT and many of the partners. To address this there needs to be more internal cohesion among UN partners on gender equality, common messages formulated and a concerted effort to build capacity within the partner organizations.

Recommendations

Advocacy

1. Increase the visibility of the gender equality issues in joint work with the UN and actively promote gender equality in external communications;
2. Consider strategies to work with government partners on gender equality as the awareness and discourse of key ministries indicates openness, knowledge and interest, keeping the cultural context in mind, to explore the positive links between economic growth and women's increased levels of education, participation in the labour market and even in decision-making and avoid self-censorship due to the cultural context;
3. Advocate on the important role women's organizations can play in attaining gender equality and support the development of women's organizations, especially in the regions. Consider working more with the trade unions on gender issues;
4. GTG could advocate to and sensitize government partners more effectively on gender than the individual agencies;

Capacity building

5. Offer a capacity building project for indicator development with the State Statistical Committee;
6. Support TOT and leadership training for women in the regions;
7. Support the capacity building of government GFPs together with UN GFPs by building on the UNDP project with the Women's Association for Rational Development (WARD) that is implementing activities to develop the national women's machinery and strengthen the capacity of national gender focal points.
8. Provide more information on good practice examples from around the world;
9. Support the formulation of good practices and right messages adapted to the local context;
10. Share more on mechanisms and laws to promote women's participation in the society;

Technical Cooperation

11. Prioritize research and follow up advocacy on a limited number of gender equality issues given limited resources;
12. Review the third UNAPF strategic priority area on “improving environmental management and resilience to natural and human-induced disasters” to mainstream the gender dimension including relevant indicators and baseline data and targets (these UNEP website materials can provide some guidance in this respect: web.unep.org/gender web.unep.org/ggeo);
13. Provide sustained support to the State Statistical Committee and academic institutions to generate data disaggregated by sex and to design relevant gender indicators so as to provide a sound basis for research and gender analysis across the different areas of the UN agency mandates;
14. Promote more projects and networking for women in the regions;
15. Ensure sustainability of projects for example, UNFPA’s survey on gender based violence was postponed due to lack of funding;
16. Provide guidelines on the integration of international conventions into national frameworks;

Coordination and partnerships

17. UN managers and staff to work with the GTG to ensure opportunities and entry points for promoting gender equality with the national partners are fully utilized, i.e. going beyond “women’s issues” partners, for example to partner with the MoLSP and the Tripartite Committee for Social and Economic Affairs;
18. Strengthen coordination between UN agencies on statistical work on gender and statistics generally, especially in relation to the SDGs;
19. Engage more with the private sector and provide guidance on indicators for corporate social responsibility in the private sector;
20. Broaden the interaction with the National Coordination Council on Sustainable Development and its three working committees to the GTG to enable cooperation on the gender issues and gender sensitive indicators not only for SDG 5 but also the other SDGs;
21. Take advantage of the opportunity to promote gender equality through the Tripartite Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, and in particular to facilitate a discussion of the 2006 Law on Gender Equality in relation to its revision and implementation through a national action plan;
22. On the skewed sex ratio at birth, use the UN role to bridge the gaps regarding the lack of cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Health and the State Committee on Women and Children in this regard;

23. Explore the potential for the First lady and the First Vice president to take the lead and support the establishment of an inter-ministerial group on gender issues involving government agencies and civil society.

III. Information and knowledge management on gender issues in the UN agencies of Azerbaijan and gender equality policy as reflected in their products and public image

Most of the UN agencies have produced specific studies on gender equality in Azerbaijan and as related to their mandate. The UNCT has a rich repository of gender material that is mostly available on the agency websites.

In terms of mainstream documents, many of these are publically available on the agency websites and examples of a variety of documents and studies can be downloaded reflecting some that are fully gender mainstreamed or partially mainstreamed, others that mention gender in passing and others that are gender blind. There is a similar situation with internal documents such as pro docs, project progress reports and evaluation reports.

It is fairly common to see terminology such as “vulnerable women” in UN agency documents. This is understandable in referring to particular population groups such as refugees, migrant or displaced persons where women in these groups may be more vulnerable than men in these groups. However, at times the impression is given that all women are vulnerable when they appear in a list along with other groups as illustrated in this sentence: “Beyond material support, vulnerable groups like women, rural population, IDPs, migrants, youth, and the disabled...” Women are half the population and when listing them along with other groups, it somehow reinforces an image of women being weak and vulnerable as opposed to empowered and a source of the nation’s talent and creativity. Women, like men, are not a homogenous group even among more vulnerable segments of the populations. Therefore, care needs to be taken with such labels or catch phrases (“cross-cutting” is another) and efforts need to be made to be as precise as possible in analysis and texts so as not to reinforce gender stereotypes. The same applies in photos and images that can inadvertently transmit the notion of women as weak and dominated as opposed to being strong and on the road to empowerment.

Most of the UN agencies produce gender sensitive materials and images in publications and on their websites and face book accounts. Some have gender sensitive communication strategies for the implementation of their projects. Gender sensitive language is usually employed.

However, some staff indicated that it is difficult to ensure gender balance in the images captured in the framework of the rural projects. There is also a challenge with regard to implementing partners’ communications focal persons as they often lack communications skills such as writing press releases and success stories, and creating gender-aware visual content. And these implementing partners may work directly with vulnerable groups where gender sensitivity it vitally needed.

Good practices

- ✓ Gender is strongly reflected in the communications on the joint UN campaign on 16 days of activism against GBV (UNFPA-led). Most agencies have websites and FB pages that have gender sensitive images and material. Some also have Twitter accounts, Youtube channel, etc. ;
- ✓ **OHCHR**: developed a communications strategy aligned with the organization’s gender strategy. The mandatory course for new staff on the gender integration course has

components on gender sensitive language and visuals and this approach is used in all publications. The face book page is used extensively to disseminate information on progress of projects;

- ✓ **UNDP:** There are several gender projects which have strong communications components (women's empowerment, youth participation in decision-making/model UN project). Communication products are revised by the regional office and senior management to ensure that they are in line with organizational standards and requirements, of which gender sensitivity is an integral component;
- ✓ **UNHCR:** A communications strategy was recently developed and a participatory approach is promoted in the framework of projects on gender based violence organized with the Ombudsman's Office. Gender sensitive language and images are covered in the courses for new staff members;
- ✓ **UNFPA:** there is a project based communications strategy as well as the website, FB and Twitter pages. Communication materials produced are gender sensitive. There is a specific requirement on gender sensitive language and images in the TORs of all subcontractors. Prior to each implementation stage of projects, communications orientation with partners is undertaken to guarantee gender sensitive materials and to avoid portraying beneficiaries in an inappropriate way.
- ✓ **UNICEF:** website images are gender sensitive with photos of empowered Azeri girls.

Areas for improvement

- ❖ There is a lack of specialized gender sensitization training for staff responsible for communications;
- ❖ Some of the agencies do not have communication focal points/officers;
- ❖ The media in Azerbaijan do not appear to be that interested in gender equality issues. This could be a critical domain in which the UNCT could invest advocacy efforts, identifying specialized media groups and journalists with whom to collaborate

Recommendations

1. Craft culturally sensitive gender equality messages systematically in advocacy material, communications and contacts with national partners and the media;
2. Develop an interagency work plan (not just a strategy) on gender sensitive communication products for the UNAPF using the SDG platform;
3. Ensure staff responsible for communications receive gender training, in particular on how to ensure gender sensitive messages and images and how to advocate on gender equality;
4. Involve communications staff in project development and design;

5. Work with national media in both formal and informal networks to advocate the inclusion of gender equality issues;
6. Provide training to journalists on relevant gender equality issues in Azerbaijan and on countering the projection of stereotypic images of men and women;
7. Improve collaboration among UN agencies on external communications on gender to ensure consistent messages and information;
8. Share and assemble information across the UN agencies on human rights and gender (reports prepared in-country and in regional and HQ offices, etc.) and develop an Azerbaijani specific gender policy document reflecting practical issues on gender mainstreaming couched in everyday language (not typical UNese). On this basis prepare unified UN messages on gender equality for the government and CSOs which can also be applicable for capacity building. These messages can also be transmitted informally.

IV. Staffing and human resources, decision-making and organizational culture of the UNCT agencies

A. Staffing and human resources

The overall sex ratio of staff in terms of numbers is fairly balanced, although there are more women overall than men. Out of 180 staff across the agencies, 99 are women and 81 are men. With respect to the level of positions, these are fairly evenly spread between men and men except for the highest positions and the lowest, where men predominate. Of the 10 heads of agency in Azerbaijan only one is a woman. For most agencies, there are more men in the lowest grades. Women tend to be clustered in the upper G grades. For international professional positions, there are more women than men, with six and two respectively. There is one man at P5, one woman at P4, a man and a woman at P3 and 4 women at P2 level. For the NOC level there are more men than women with five and three respectively. On the other hand, there are more women than men at NOB and NOA level. For the NOB level, there are six women and one man and at the NOA level there are three women and one man. For G5 and G4 there are twice as many women as men. For further details, see table in Annex X on UNCT staff.

This clustering mirrors occupational segregation by sex of the labour market, not only in Azerbaijan but around the globe. The existence of UN equality norms together with being gender aware, can enable a review of recruitment and promotion processes to change this. Promoting gender equality also means challenging stereotypes for UN jobs.

Gender parity and balance

Most of the UN agencies strive to achieve gender balance in the numbers of men and women in jobs at different levels.

Good practices

- ✓ Most UN organizations indicate in their job announcements that women are encouraged to apply;
- ✓ **UNDP:** Out of the three candidates shortlisted for jobs, one must be a woman. Women are represented on selection committees;
- ✓ **UNICEF:** Staff is gender balanced and the staff selection policy requires that the selection panel be gender balanced;
- ✓ **IOM:** Gender balance among interview panellists is required. Interview questions include a mandatory question on 'how can you help IOM promote gender sensitivity?' to be asked of each applicant;
- ✓ Challenging gender stereotypes for jobs: IOM: the IT specialist is a woman (which is unusual as men dominate this occupation) and IOM authorizes women to drive the office car. UNICEF has a man as a gender focal point;

- ✓ In the case of GFPs, even though not their main job, their work on gender is acknowledged in most agencies.

Areas for improvement

- ❖ Jobs in the UN are often perceived as more suitable either for men or women. For example, generally drivers are men and cleaners are women. Though Azeri society is changing with a lot of women driving, a job as driving is still seen as a man's job. For a man to be a cleaner, this is viewed as demeaning, yet men will work cleaning in hotels and restaurants out of necessity. Similarly, administrative assistants are often seen as women's jobs and programme positions more as men's jobs. The UN at times reinforces these **job stereotypes**;
- ❖ Gender mainstreaming is not usually included in the performance appraisals of staff in most agencies.
- ❖ The striking lack of gender balance at the level of heads of agencies in Azerbaijan is of concern as it can detract from the credibility of the UN when promoting gender equality in a country where there are already a lot of challenges in this regard. No individual agency is responsible for this outcome, but it reflects a problem of coordination at the headquarter level of the different agencies.

Recommendations

1. Review recruitment and promotion procedures with a view to giving opportunities to men and women to work in non-traditional job functions;
2. Include gender sensitivity requirements in the job descriptions/work plans of all staff;
3. Include a requirement for gender mainstreaming in the job descriptions/work plans of all programming, project management, professional and managerial staff;
4. Include gender mainstreaming as a criterion in performance appraisals of all programming, project management, professional and managerial staff;
5. Include a requirement for gender mainstreaming in the TORs of all technical experts hired as consultants, including those conducting evaluations. If needed, provide a briefing by the GFP or a gender expert to these consultants;
6. Care needs to be taken in staff restructuring exercises not to inadvertently diminish staff gender expertise or reduce gender balance, especially in higher level positions.
7. Explore ways to feed back to UN agency headquarters (and maybe UN Women) on the gender imbalance of heads of agencies at the country level and to enquire whether there are any mechanisms to redress this for future appointments.

Gender architecture

Most of the UN agencies have a gender focal point. In most cases this is a responsibility in addition to their main job. Only the UNFPA has a full time dedicated gender expert. Agreement of the GFPs with their managers on the time to be allocated to gender work and formal reflection of their work in their performance appraisal in most cases is not practised.

The UN Gender Theme Group (GTG) is active and undertakes many activities, including those as a common endeavour. Despite limitations in human and financial resources much has been achieved through the hard work and commitment of the individual members.

Good practices

- ✓ Most agencies and their GFPs have good support from their regional gender specialists located in different countries (Bangkok, Istanbul, Copenhagen, Budapest, Vienna, Moscow, etc.);
- ✓ **WB**: under the policy of monthly time reporting of work done, the time sheet of the GFP reflects the percentage of time allocated for the work related to this role;
- ✓ GFP roles reflected in their job performance in **UNDP** and **UNICEF**;
- ✓ UN Gender Theme Group with its work plan and initiatives carried out jointly, such as 16 Days Activism, the Gender Assessment in regions, assistance to the government for the CEDAW report and capacity building of civil society, and a UNCT shadow report submitted to the CEDAW Committee.

Areas for Improvement

- ❖ While there is a system of GFPs in place and a shared work plan, further enabling the GFPs to carry out their role is instrumental for implementing a comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy;
- ❖ While some initiatives are carried out jointly, there is much scope to increase these, especially as concerns those gender related topics that several agencies work on.

Recommendations

1. Each agency needs to develop a clear TOR for their GFP and include their objectives and tasks in their job descriptions and performance appraisals;
2. Empower GFPs, especially if they are in G posts;
3. Define the role of GFPs to make it clear that they provide support to agency staff to effectively mainstream gender in their work;

4. Consider hiring more gender expertise (short term) to ensure that staff know how to mainstream gender. For the larger agencies, a dedicated person with gender expertise can be assigned to guide staff on a day to day basis;
5. For enhanced support and authority of the GFP function, create a minimum of a two-person gender team in each agency with one person from the management level;
6. Appoint men also as GFPs and consider rotating among staff the GFP function (providing additional training as needed) in order to spread gender expertise throughout the agency over time;
7. Build on the synergies already established for the GTG to go beyond an addition of individual agency activities and agree on a more integrated and coordinated implementation plan with joint activities and pooled resources for 2018 onwards. This can be linked to the UNAPF's three strategic objectives, the SDGs coordination committees (not just SDG 5) and the CEDAW concluding comments. UNCT to endorse the implementation plan and the GTG to provide periodic reports on progress to the UNCT.
8. Consider developing a GTG funding proposal for a joint project on key gender issues for Azerbaijan such as the valuing and nurturing of girls and women and counteracting the son preference that leads to a high level of abortion of female fetuses and the nefarious consequences this has in the longer term for the social and economic development of the country. All agencies could contribute to the implementation of such a project according to their different mandates and perhaps a joint gender project reflecting a one UN approach could be attractive to donors and to the government and CSO partners.

B. Organizational culture

Respectful working relations among staff and men and women and an inclusive organizational culture at the UN agencies was observed during the PGA.

Most staff reported there was a respectful culture in the UN agencies and men and women were treated equally. For example, women cleaners are invited to attend agency retreats, though they do not attend due to their husbands not giving permission for overnight stays.

Nearly all staff in all categories are aware that gender equality is one of the principles and values of the UN. They also confirm that the UN is promoting equality and respect among all staff and that women and men have equal opportunities in the UN workplace.

The PGA workshops demonstrated that UN staff have a strong sense of UN values citing gender equality and equal opportunities; women's empowerment; helping migrants and protecting refugees; reducing poverty; human rights; impartiality; integrity; empowerment; equality; respect; friendship; team building; education; health assistance; respect and professionalism; multiculturalism; dignity; respect for diversity; inclusive approaches; children's rights; trust; accountability; "no-one left behind" and the UN Charter.

UN staff also participate in collective events socially or for work such as trainings, staff meeting, webinars, corridor meetings, retreats, Staff Council events, lunches, birthday parties, secret Santa, bringing presents from abroad, end of month lunch, discovering new lunch

places, supporting staff in good and bad times, happy hours. Navruz party- dancing, new year celebration, movie days, weddings and farewell parties. Most of these activities are inclusive of women and men.

UN staff look up to a variety of gender champions in Azerbaijan, in the UNCT and internationally. These included: gender sensitive men (e.g. football teams red corral); rural women and young girls striving for their rights; Faviola Azizova (volleyball player representing Azerbaijan); Ganira Pashaeva (female member of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan); Mehriban Aliyeva, Vice-president and first lady of Azerbaijan; Helen Clark as first woman UNDP administrator; UNDP GFP Leyla Fathi, UNFPA GFP Bahija Aliyeva, and the UNRC, Ghulam M. Isaczai.

Good practices

- ✓ Many agencies have specific measures for internal gender equality;
- ✓ **WB:** Mandatory training on respectful workplaces is delivered to new staff, whether the person is male or female, regardless of the term (short term, long term, or open-ended);
- ✓ **OHCHR:** Code of Conduct for OHCHR staff includes requiring staff to respect, uphold and enforce the United Nations principle of non-discrimination with regard to race, colour, gender, language...., etc.;
- ✓ **WHO:** Gender Equality in Staffing Policy 15 January 2017;
- ✓ **UNHCR:** Its Policy and Procedures on Assignments and Promotions (PPAP) is designed to promote and encourage inter alia, diversity and gender equity;
- ✓ **UNHCR:** Policy on achieving Gender Equity in UNHCR Staffing, 8 March 2007;
- ✓ Most UN agencies' policies allow for flexible working arrangements and work-life for their staff;
- ✓ **UNHCR and UNICEF:** Have an arrangement for staff to take a reduced lunch period and be able to leave earlier;
- ✓ **FAO:** Administrative circular on teleworking arrangements - for occasional teleworking (no more than 10 days a year) and for longer periods, 20 March 2017;
- ✓ Most agencies also have policies on sexual harassment;
- ✓ **UNDP:** Sexual harassment training is mandatory;
- ✓ **UNHCR:** LGBT is also covered in the Code of Conduct based on nine principles including gender equality and sexual harassment;

- ✓ **FAO:** Policy on the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, 15 January 2015;
- ✓ **UNICEF:** Online training on prevention of sexual harassment is mandatory for staff;
- ✓ **UNHCR:** Training on the UNHCR Code of Ethics on Sexual Exploitation is mandatory for all staff;
- ✓ **UN/UNHCR:** Staff Rules and Staff Regulations of the United Nations, 2016, prohibits any form of discrimination or harassment, including sexual or gender harassment, as well as abuse in any form at the workplace or in connection with work;
- ✓ **UNICEF:** the office culture promotes and encourages openness and women speak up loudly on issues of concern. There are opportunities for staff to raise issues;
- ✓ **WB and UN House:** The kitchen is the unifying spot for staff to interact on issues even those related to work projects. The WB ensures that the kitchen is big enough when they move to new premises.

“Knowing each other physically (not only virtually) would contribute to further collaborate effectively, it is good to work with people you already know”.

Areas for improvement

- ❖ There are no breast feeding or breast pump rooms for nursing mothers in the UN offices. As an alternative, breastfeeding mothers tend to negotiate arrangements with their managers to reduce their working day by two hours until a child reaches 6 months and by one hour after 6 months old.
- “Provide in each WHO office adequate space for the expression and storage of breast milk or ensure that working hours are adapted for breast feeding mothers.”
WHO Gender Equality in Staffing Policy 15 January 2017*
- ❖ Though there are policies allowing staff to work from home this is not a feasible alternative, especially for administrative and finance staff given that documents are not processed electronically and the physical presence of the staff is needed.
 - ❖ According to staff, maternity leave provisions are too short at 16 weeks. Two agencies have extended the leave, WHO by 4 weeks and UNICEF by 8 weeks in accordance with the WHO recommendation that infants be breastfed exclusively for the first six months. The fact that maternity leave is not the same across the UN agencies causes staff to query why there is a difference.
 - ❖ Some staff indicated that due to little internal sharing about what their agency was doing, they learn more about what the UN is doing through media reports.

- ❖ Despite flexible work provisions for staff, at times they can be difficult to apply due to work loads, time differences with headquarters and the strict working hours of key stakeholders and partners such as government and other agencies.
- ❖ In the UN Staff Rules and Staff Regulations of the United Nations, justifying gender insensitive language in UN staff rules documents could be viewed as a lack of will to use gender sensitive language and thus reinforcing sexism, although the UNCT in Azerbaijan is not responsible in this regard, see below:
 - ❖ “Rule 12.2 Gender of terms
 - In the text of the Staff Rules, reference to staff members in the masculine gender shall apply to staff members of both sexes, unless it is clearly inappropriate from the context to do so.
 - In the text of the Staff Rules, reference to the Secretary-General in the masculine gender shall apply to Secretaries-General of both sexes, unless it is clearly inappropriate from the context to do so.”

Recommendations

1. Explore options to enable electronic processing of documents away from the office so in that staff can benefit from staff policies on working from home (telework);
2. Explore options for providing a place in the UN agencies buildings for mothers to express milk and/or breastfeed;
3. Promote inclusive behaviour among staff in regard to social gatherings and meetings.
4. Explore options for providing feedback to the UN secretariat and UN Women on the gender insensitive language used in the UN Staff Rules and Regulations.

UNCT'S PERCEPTION OF ACHIEVEMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY

This section does not have the three headings as the previous ones: good practices, areas for improvement and recommendations. This text attempts to reflect how agency staff perceive achievements on gender equality within their agencies and the work of their agencies in the country. A perception is a perception only, i.e. cannot be the subject of improvement or recommendations. By reflecting on to what extent gender equality has been achieved staff can point to certain gains which is encouraging for them and their agency. At the same time staff can realize and articulate what more needs to be done or done differently.

According to the staff who responded to the survey there is a perception that their agencies are actively promoting gender equality in Azerbaijan related to the fact that UN gender policies and accountability mechanisms in place and that projects are being implemented.

Staff positively acknowledge the gender friendly environment at UN workplaces. But they note that gender stereotypes are widespread across the country, especially in rural areas and that women are more disadvantaged overall.

The staff of the different UN agencies indicated some difficulties in working with partners on gender equality with regard to a certain resistance or lack of interest. This was considered related to the cultural beliefs and practices on gender roles by segments of the society, whereby boys are more valued than girls. Men are seen as the bread-winners and not to be burdened with housework. The latter is still perceived as a woman's major responsibility. Although the younger generation (both men and women) is more aware and open to gender equality at home and in the workplace, most of the economic and political decision-makers, including governmental authorities are still men of the older generation.

On the other hand, there are also success stories in empowering women through the UN work with communities in rural areas on livelihood projects, as well as with IDPs and refugees. The UN has also been successful in working with the government on generating gender disaggregated statistics and bringing to the fore sensitive gender issues such as the skewed sex ratio and gender based violence.

Some staff referred to "the numbers game", saying that just indicating the number of women participants or beneficiaries is not enough. There needs to be more targeted discussions on gender inequality in the community in order to better programme activities.

One of the challenges is to identify ways to strengthen joint UN work in approaching government partners and crafting a strategic UN communication and advocacy plan on gender equality to specifically respond to the Azerbaijan reality.

There is a perception by some women UN staff that equal rights for women can lead to more responsibilities, placing an additional burden on women's shoulders as men do not participate in household tasks.

There is need for dialogue within the UN on gender equality as some of the societal views mentioned above are held by UN staff themselves, resulting in sharp differences in thinking among UN staff on gender issues. Staff also acknowledged a lot of gaps in their gender

knowledge. Thus, staff expressed the need for a common understanding on gender equality and mainstreaming.

Here are some quotes by staff from the interviews and workshops:

“Unlike other themes, gender is very close to our personal life. Guided by our value system, it is very subjective”.

“I have become once again convinced that UN staff need to be sensitized first if we want to be good at what we do”.

“One needs to constantly work on himself or herself to avoid being gender biased on gender issues”.

“Some women can be opposed to gender equality, while male champions can be supportive.”

BEYOND GENDER RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender equality is an integral part of the diversity and inclusion agenda embraced by the United Nations. Therefore, it is important to provide physical access for disabled men and women to UN agency buildings in Azerbaijan. These include UN staff and potential UN staff, UN partners and the public.

ANNEX I Suggested PGA Benchmarks

Key areas	Questions	Baseline indicators
Staff capacity	Have the UNCT staff attended basic level capacity building training on gender?	# and category of staff who attended basic gender training
	Was this training on-line or face to face?	# and category of staff who attended basic gender training On-line Face to face Both
	Was this training mandatory?	Mandatory or not
	Have the UNCT staff attended training on gender analysis and planning?	# and category of staff who attended training on gender analysis and planning
GFPs capacity	Was this training on-line or face to face?	# and category of staff who attended training on gender analysis and planning On-line Face to face Both
	Was this training mandatory?	Mandatory or not
	Have UNCT staff participated in other capacity building events on gender equality such as conferences, courses, series of talks, etc.	# and category of staff who have attended: conferences courses talks series
GFPs capacity	Have UNCT GFPs attended basic level capacity building training on gender?	# of GFPs who attended basic gender training
	Was this training on-line or face to face?	# of GFPs who attended basic gender training On-line Face to face Both
	Was this training mandatory?	Mandatory or not
	Have UNCT GFPs attended training on gender analysis and planning?	# of GFPs who attended training on gender analysis and planning
GFPs capacity	Was this training on-line or face to face?	# of GFPs who attended training on gender analysis and planning On-line Face to face Both
	Have UNCT GFPs participated in other capacity building events on gender equality such as conferences, courses, series of talks, etc	# of GFPs who have attended: conferences courses talks series
	Have UNCT GFPs attended a specialised gender course for GFPs (role and functions)?	# of GFPs that have attended specialised gender course for GFPs

Gender mainstreaming	Have Country Programme Documents (CPDs) of UNCT been fully gender mainstreamed (including gender indicators and targets)?	# of CPDs fully gender mainstreamed
	Are UNCT technical cooperation projects fully gender mainstreamed (including gender indicators and targets)?	# of technical cooperation projects that are fully gender mainstreamed
	Are UNCT research documents gender mainstreamed (gender disaggregated data, gender analysis etc.)?	# of research studies gender mainstreamed
	Is advocacy material produced by the UNCT gender sensitive (images, language, websites, etc.)?	# gender sensitive websites # brochures, pamphlets, fliers etc. that are gender sensitive
Gender Budgets	Does the UNCT allocate financial and human resources to accelerate gender mainstreaming in programmes and projects?	Amount of human resources per agency and per RC office Amount of financial resources per agency and per RC office
	Does the UNCT allocate resources to work with partners on gender equality?	Amount of resources per agency, RC office and per partner
	Does the UNCT attract donors to contribute to the mainstreaming of projects?	Amount of resources allocated to gender within mainstream projects
	Does the UNCT attract donors to contribute to the gender specific projects	Amount of resources for gender specific projects
Monitoring	Does the UNCT have mechanisms in place to monitor gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the CPD?	# of mechanisms per agency
	Does the UNCT have mechanisms in place to monitor gender mainstreaming in the implementation of technical cooperation projects?	# of mechanisms per project and per agency
	Does the UNCT have a mechanism in place to monitor gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the UNAPF?	# reports produced under the mechanism
Evaluation	Do progress and implementation reports on the CPDs of the UNCT assess and report on gender mainstreaming?	# of progress and implementation reports that include gender
	Do UNCT evaluations of projects require assessment of gender mainstreaming?	# of project evaluation TORs that assess gender mainstreaming
Managerial and staff accountability	Is gender mainstreaming included in the TOR of the UNCT staff (excluding gender specialists)?	# and category of staff whose TORs include requirements on gender
	Is gender mainstreaming included in the performance appraisals of UNCT staff?	# and category of staff that have gender reflected in their performance appraisal

	Are responsibilities for promoting gender mainstreaming included in the TORs of the UNCT GFPs?	# of GFPs with gender responsibilities included in their TOR
	What is the percentage of work hours of the UNCT GFPs dedicated to gender?	# of GFPs with allocated percentage of work hours full-time 20 - 40% 41 - 60% 61- 80%
	Is work on gender equality included in the performance appraisals of the UNCT GFPs?	# of GFPs with gender reflected in their performance appraisal
	Do UNCT GFPs have sufficient grade status to carry out their function?	Grade level of GFPs per agency
	Are the UNCT GFPs gender balanced?	# GFPs who are women # GFP who are men
	Is gender mainstreaming included in the TORs of UNCT consultants including evaluators?	# of consultancy contracts that include requirements for gender mainstreaming
	Do the UNCT managers and staff display leadership on gender equality internally and externally?	# of occasions (staff meetings, retreats, etc.) at which Heads of Agencies address their staff on gender equality # of UNCT meetings where gender equality is on the agenda # of gender events that Heads of Agencies address # of events with partners at which UNCT Heads of Agencies or staff introduce gender concerns # of media communications by Heads of Agencies and staff on gender equality issues
Partners	Has UNCT implemented capacity building on gender mainstreaming with government departments?	# of capacity building events by government department
	Has UNCT implemented capacity building on gender mainstreaming with CSOs?	# of capacity building events by CSO
	Has UNCT implemented capacity building on gender equality with the private sector (businesses and business organizations)?	# of capacity building events by business and organization
	Has UNCT worked in partnership with government, CSOs and the public sector on specific gender issues (e.g. violence against women)	# of issues by sector
	Has UNCT worked in partnership with government, CSOs and the public sector on men's issues in relation to gender equality?	# of activities by sector
	Do UNCT progress reports of the implementation of the three priority areas	# of progress reports reflecting information on gender activities

	of UNAPF include reporting on gender equality activities and results?	and results
	Have gender sensitive indicators for SDGs other than SDG5 been developed by the UNCT together with the government and CSOs?	# of gender sensitive SDG indicators
	Has the UNCT developed a media strategy and activities to raise media awareness and increase reporting on gender equality?	# of activities UNCT undertaken to work with the media on gender # of reports on gender issues in the media as a result of UNCT efforts

