



MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS

# Gender Charter for the Aid Coordination Structure in Palestine

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**February 2014**

This Charter was developed under the auspices of a steering committee consisting of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development, UN Women and LACS, with support from UN Women and in full consultation with local and international partners. The charter is firmly rooted in international and national commitments on aid/development effectiveness and gender equality/women's empowerment.

## INTRODUCTION

The Palestinian government has consistently displayed a strong commitment towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite a wide range of concrete efforts, however, gender discrepancies in Palestine remain substantial.

International development partners, based on their global and regional commitments related to aid/development effectiveness and gender equality/women's empowerment, hold a responsibility to support the Palestinian government in implementing its national and international commitments on gender equality/women's empowerment.

The integration of gender issues into the Palestinian aid coordination structure has been weak so far. There are no formal structures or mechanisms to ensure donor coordination on gender equality/women's empowerment. As a result gender issues have largely been confined to the sidelines.

In order to address this systemic weakness, UN Women, in cooperation with the Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development (MoPAD), the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) and the Local Aid Coordination Secretariat (LACS), has launched two studies in 2012: one on gender and aid/development effectiveness in the oPt<sup>1</sup>, and one on *Gender in the Local Aid Coordination*. Both studies reconfirm that gender equality is not being systematically addressed and mainstreamed and suggest concrete steps to lift gender equality/women's empowerment to the center stage of aid coordination.

Defining a Gender Charter was one of the recommendations of the study on *Gender in the Local Aid Coordination*. This Gender Charter was accordingly developed based on the recommendations of the study and the successive MoWA Action Plan for mainstreaming gender in the aid coordination structure. The Charter was developed by adopting a participatory approach. Consultations on the Gender Charter involved the Palestinian government, international development partners, as well as local Civil Society Organizations.

Drafted under the auspices of a steering committee consisting of MoWA, MoPAD, UN Women and LACS, the Gender Charter is firmly rooted in international and national commitments on aid/development effectiveness and gender equality/women's empowerment.

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<sup>1</sup>The exact title of the study is: “*From Aid Effectiveness to Development Effectiveness: Is Gender Equality Missing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Paris Declaration Agenda?*”

## PREAMBLE

We, the Government of the State of Palestine, donors and international organizations, and representatives of Palestinian civil society, are committed to forge a strong partnership for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment based on respective national strategies and international commitments.

We recognize that achieving gender equality and women's rights is a development imperative, as well as a mean towards overall development effectiveness. Empowering women means strengthening Palestinian society as a whole and is thus instrumental in realizing the aspiration of establishing a sovereign State of Palestine in which all citizens can live in freedom and dignity.

We commit ourselves to realizing gender equality and women's empowerment based on the Palestinian national priorities outlined in the national and sector strategies and by addressing both topics proactively within and through the Palestinian local aid coordination structure, namely the LDF, the Strategy Groups (SGs) and Sector Working Groups (SWGs).

Being aware that progress in implementing our commitments requires mutual accountability we recognize the need to conduct regular reviews on development effectiveness in general, and on progress towards gender equality/women's empowerment in particular.

Ramallah, February 2014

## **A. REFERENCE FRAMEWORK**

The following international commitments, national strategies and ongoing initiatives will establish the framework for our engagement to systematically advance gender equality/women's empowerment within and through the Palestinian aid coordination structure. Details on each one of these documents are included in *Annex 1* below.

### **Commitments on Aid/Development Effectiveness**

- Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005.
- Accra Agenda for Action, 2008.
- Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, 2011.
- Busan Joint Action Plan for Gender Equality and Development, 2011.

### **International Frame of Reference for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2000.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995.
- UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (particularly UNSC Res. 1325), 2000 onwards.

### **National Framework for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

- The Palestinian Basic Law.
- The National Strategy to Achieve the MDGs by 2015.
- Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy: Promoting Gender Equality and Equity, 2011-2013.
- Draft Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy 2014-2016.
- National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2011-19.

### **Relevant Donor Initiatives Aimed at Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming**

- EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015.
- EU Cross-cutting Strategy Fiche on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 2013.
- EU Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EU Development Cooperation, 2004.

## **B. PRINCIPLES**

The gender charter is guided by the following principles:

### **Ownership**

The Government of the State of Palestine has the primary responsibility to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The Government is thus responsible for taking a lead on gender equality and women's empowerment by defining strategies, priorities and implementation modalities.

### **Responsibility**

Recognizing that the Palestinian population continues to be subjected to a regime of Israeli military occupation, the principle of Palestinian ownership does not relieve the occupying force as well as the international community from their responsibility of protecting Palestinian women according to the provisions of international human rights treaties and international humanitarian law.

### **Focus on Results**

All investments and efforts within the framework of this Gender Charter are geared towards having sustainable results on gender equality and women's empowerment.

### **Partnerships for Development**

Progress on gender equality and women's empowerment depends on the cooperation and joint active participation of all involved partners, primarily the Government of the State of Palestine, donors and international organizations, and civil society. Furthermore, the implementation of gender related goals and commitments, particularly those related to economic empowerment, will also require cooperation with the private sector. Donors providing support directly to the private sector must ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are being addressed in projects implemented directly by the private sector. The local aid coordination structure provides the proper forum for the partners to jointly advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

### **Transparency and Shared Responsibility**

Development co-operation in general, and initiatives related to gender equality and women's empowerment in particular, must be guided by the principles of transparency and mutual accountability, as well as by being accountable to all citizens.

## **Geographic Reach**

Irrespective of their geographic location Palestinian women have a right to benefit from our joint efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. This Gender Charter accordingly applies to the whole of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Particular efforts will be required in reaching out to East Jerusalem and the parts of the West Bank currently designated as "Area C".

## **C. OUR APPROACH AND COMMITMENTS**

Our approach towards gender equality and women's empowerment within and through the local aid coordination structure is characterized by the following complementary six work streams, which we will pursue jointly, cooperatively, and systematically. The following work streams were identified as local priorities through consultations with local and international stakeholders - including LDF members, PNA ministries and agencies, UN agencies and local civil society organizations and based on the international commitments/agreements, national and sector strategies and ongoing initiatives on gender equality/women's empowerment and aid/development effectiveness.

Above and beyond these work streams and specific commitments, we recommend that the co-chairs of the SGs and SWGs draw-up annual work plans and regularly monitor their implementation in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of development cooperation and transform the Gender Charter into concrete and tangible results.

### **1. Data for Analysis:**

The identification of gender gaps requires gender-disaggregated data and data analysis. Wherever we address gender equality and women's empowerment we need to identify drivers of gender inequality through the collection of gender-relevant data and stakeholder dialogue. Only based on solid evidence can we design effective and appropriate policies, target our programmatic investments, and thereby advance overall progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. To that end, we:

- Will jointly support the provision of gender-disaggregated data for national and sectoral planning, for analyses and assessments, and for the design of programs and projects. We recognize that the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in collaboration with other academic and research institutions, is a prime provider for such data and will strive to support the PCBS in producing the relevant gender-disaggregated data.

- Recognize that national and sectoral plans, as well as development programs and projects require gender sensitive progress indicators for monitoring progress. Such indicators will guide the process of data acquisition.
- Donors and international organizations commit ourselves to support developing the capacities of governmental institutions and national civil society organizations to analyze data and interpret results. Particular emphasis will be accorded to MoWA and the associated Gender Units embedded into line ministries.
- Will increase efforts to coordinate research on gender equality and women's empowerment and aim for joint analysis wherever feasible. We commit ourselves to disseminate relevant research and analysis within Strategy Groups (SGs) and Sector Working Groups (SWGs) and share relevant information with the MoWA.

An analysis of donor flows towards gender equality and women's empowerment goals is crucial in order to allow for a focused approach along the work streams outlined in the previous section. Acquiring this specific analytical capacity necessitates the introduction of a gender marker into the Palestinian aid information management system, DARP. As donors and international organizations we recognize that the gender marker cannot be viewed in isolation from overall compliance with MoPAD requests for data provision into DARP. The quality of gender data is tightly linked to the overall quality of aid data in DARP.

## **2. Eliminating all Forms of Violence against Women and Girls in Palestine:**

Palestinian women are affected by two main forms of violence: violence against women and girls within Palestinian society and violence stemming from Israel's prolonged military occupation. The National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2011-19 addresses both dimensions and their linkages. Our approach towards gender equality and women's empowerment needs to adequately reflect the special protection of women required in conflict and should not reduce its focus to the domestic dimension only. To that end, we:

- Reiterate the need to invite MoWA to participate in the SGs and SWGs it considers most relevant for the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2011-19.
- Reiterate the need to invite MoWA to participate in the preparation process of SG and SWG meetings to allow for the effective integration of relevant issues into meeting agendas and follow-up processes.
- The SG and SWG co-chairs commit to draw up annual work plans for the respective groups and, jointly with MoWA, integrate the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in Palestine into the work plans.
- Commit to invite representatives of relevant civil society organizations to SG and SWG meetings to address the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in Palestine.

- Donors and international organizations commit ourselves to support the development of programs and projects that contribute to elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in Palestine and make available funding towards the implementation of such programs and projects.

### **3. Mainstreaming Gender within Planning, Budgeting and Policy Making:**

Systematically promoting gender equality and women's empowerment requires a gender sensitive approach to planning, budgeting and policy making on a cross-sectoral basis. To that end, we:

- Recognize that the prime governmental partners for mainstreaming gender within planning, budgeting and policy making are MoWA, MoPAD, MoF, the Cabinet Secretariat, and the National Committee on Gender Responsive Budgeting and commit to support efforts to engender planning manuals, to introduce gender sensitive budgeting into program based budgeting and to establish mechanisms for the systematic analysis of the impact of policies on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Recognize that the Fiscal SWG and the Public Administration and Civil Service SWG are the primary vehicles for mainstreaming gender within planning, budgeting and policy making. Accordingly we invite the MoWA to actively participate in these SWGs.
- Will draw on the research experience and capacity of academia and civil society in mainstreaming gender within planning, budgeting and policy making.

### **4. Political, Economic and Social Participation:**

Gender equality and women's empowerment cannot be realized unless women can fully partake in all realms of society, particularly in the political, economic and social life of the State of Palestine. Promoting equal participation of Palestinian women can be achieved through a focused approach based on selected priority issues and pilot sectors. These include women's participation in the labor market, as well as involving women in decision making at the political and private level, and within civil society organizations. To that end, we:

- Task the Steering Committee of the Gender Charter, comprising MoWA, MoPAD, UN Women and LACS, to select priority issues and pilot sectors, in close collaboration with the SGs and SWGs co-chairs, for strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment in the political, economic and social realm.
- Reiterate the need to invite MoWA to participate in the SGs and SWGs it considers most relevant for the implementation of the selected priority issues and pilot sectors.
- Reiterate the importance of inviting the MoWA to participate in the preparation process of SG and SWG meetings to allow for the effective integration of women's political, economic and social participation into meeting agendas and follow-up processes.



- The SG and SWG co-chairs commit to draw up annual work plans for the respective groups and, jointly with MoWA, integrate women's participation in the political, economic and social realm into the work plans for priority issues and pilot sectors.
- Commit to invite representatives of relevant national committees and civil society organizations to SG and SWG meetings and take into account civil society recommendations to address the political, economic and social participation of women in Palestine.
- Donors and international organizations commit ourselves to support the development of programs and projects to strengthen the political, economic and social participation of women in Palestine and make available funding towards the implementation of such programs and projects.

New and, wherever feasible, existing projects within selected priority issues and pilot sectors will be reviewed by the donor, MoWA and the Gender Unit of the respective line ministry in order to streamline gender equality and women's empowerment targets throughout the projects.

We, donors and international organizations, commit ourselves to provide resources to strengthen the capacity of the MoWA and relevant partners to help increase the participation of women in the political, economic and social life of the State of Palestine.

## **5. Closing Gender Gaps in Service Provision:**

In full accordance with the Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy and the Millennium Development Goals we will focus on closing gender gaps in the provision of governmental services in all sectors. To that end, we:

- Will cooperate to close all gender gaps in the provision of public services.
- Reiterate the need to invite MoWA to participate in the SGs and SWGs it considers most relevant for the implementation of the selected priority issues and pilot sectors.
- Reiterate the importance of inviting MoWA to participate in the preparation process of SG and SWG meetings to allow for the effective integration of equal access to public services into meeting agendas and follow-up processes.
- The SG and SWG co-chairs commit to draw up annual work plans for the respective groups and, jointly with MoWA, strive towards closing gender gaps in the provision of services.
- Commit to invite representatives of relevant civil society organizations to meetings of relevant SGs and SWGs in order to address gender gaps in the provision of services in Palestine.
- Donors and international organizations commit ourselves to support the development of programs and projects to close gender gaps in the provision of services in Palestine and make available funding towards the implementation of such programs and projects.

New and, wherever feasible, existing projects in various sectors will be reviewed by the donor, MoWA and the Gender Unit of the relevant ministry/agency in order to help closing gender gaps in service provision.

We, donors and international organizations, commit ourselves to provide resources to strengthen the capacity of the MoWA and relevant partners to help close gender gaps in service provision.

## **6. Mutual Accountability:**

Within the aid coordination structure we are committed to mutual accountability and accountability towards all citizens on progress against the above work streams. We recognize the need to conduct regular reviews of our engagement towards development effectiveness in general and our progress towards gender equality/women's empowerment in particular.

Mutual accountability in the context of gender equality and women's empowerment within the Palestinian local aid coordination structure refers primarily to commitments towards:

- The Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which explicitly envisages mutual accountability and calls for periodic reviews of commitments towards effective development cooperation, including gender goals.
- The National Cross-Sectoral Gender Strategies;
- The National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women 2011-19;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and
- The UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace, and security.

In our assessment, mutual accountability related to gender equality and women's empowerment should be based on existing processes, predominantly the periodic review of commitments towards effective development cooperation under the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.

We recognize that mutual accountability extends beyond periodic reviews within the SGs and SWGs and includes accountability towards citizens; it is closely interlinked with transparency and citizen's access to information.

We recognize that an effective accountability framework requires data and a functional monitoring and evaluation scheme. We are accordingly committed to jointly strengthen sectoral monitoring and evaluation schemes, based on national best practices (e.g. the education sector), and mainstream the gender perspective into such processes.

## ANNEX 1: DETAILED REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

The following international commitments, national strategies and ongoing initiatives will establish the framework for our engagement to systematically advance gender equality/women's empowerment within and through the Palestinian aid coordination structure.

### I. Aid/Development Effectiveness and Gender Equality/Women Empowerment

In 2005 the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness adopted the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness [2005], which set out five principles for aid effectiveness<sup>2</sup> and specified twelve specific targets to be achieved by 2010. In 2008 the Paris Declaration was complemented by the Accra Agenda for Action [2008].

Within the principle of "harmonization" the Paris Declaration calls for the development of analytical tools to systematically assess the impact on donor-financed programs and projects on gender (similar to Environmental Impact Assessments).

The Accra Agenda for Action defines gender equality as a cornerstone for enduring development impact and calls on developing countries and donors to *ensure that their respective development policies and programs are designed and implemented in ways consistent with their agreed international commitments on gender equality, human rights, disability and environmental sustainability.*

In the context of aid to fragile states the Accra Agenda for Action calls on donors and developing countries to *work and agree on a set of realistic peace- and state-building objectives that address the root causes of conflict and fragility and help ensure the protection and participation of women.*

The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, convened in late 2011 in Busan, adopted a new framework, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation [2011]. This new framework is more specific on gender issues and sets out the following principles:

- Ownership of development priorities by developing countries: Countries should define the development model that they want to implement.
- A focus on results: Having a sustainable impact should be the driving force behind investments and efforts in development policy making

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<sup>2</sup> The Paris Declaration principles are: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability;

- Partnerships for development: Development depends on the participation of all actors, and recognizes the diversity and complementarity of their functions.
- Transparency and shared responsibility: Development co-operation must be transparent and accountable to all citizens.

Article 21 of the Global Partnership on Effective Development Co-operation summarizes the required efforts towards aligning gender equality and women's empowerment with development effectiveness:

*We must accelerate our efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women through development programs grounded in country priorities, recognizing that gender equality and women's empowerment are critical to achieving development. Reducing gender inequality is both an end in its own right and a prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive growth. As we redouble our efforts to implement existing commitments we will:*

- *Accelerate and deepen efforts to collect, disseminate, harmonize and make full use of data disaggregated by sex to inform policy decisions and guide investments, ensuring in turn that public expenditures are targeted appropriately to benefit both women and men.*
- *Integrate targets for gender equality and women's empowerment in accountability mechanisms, grounded in international and regional commitments.*
- *Address gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of our development efforts, including peace building and state building.*

More specifically a Busan Joint Action Plan for Gender Equality and Development (promoted by DAC Network on Gender Equality as a global gender equality indicator in the monitoring the framework of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation) captures commitments to gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights made at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in Busan, in order to build momentum for implementing the above commitments in a timely and effective manner.

## **II. International Frame of Reference for Gender Equality**

### **a. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [2000]:**

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Target 1.B: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.

Target 2.A: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

Target 3A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health.

Target 5.A: Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.

Target 5.B: Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.

- b. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) [1979], which defines discrimination as:

*Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.<sup>3</sup>*

- c. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action [1995]

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as adopted at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, commits state parties to promote gender equality across all fields of social life, including political decision making, economic life and the social sphere. In particular the document calls for the protection of women's rights, the elimination of violence against women, decisive steps against female poverty and closing gender gaps in education and health.

The Beijing Declaration stresses that:

*It is essential to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programs, including development policies and programs, at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women;<sup>4</sup>*

*The implementation of the Platform for Action requires commitment from Governments and the international community. By making national and international commitments for action, including those made at the Conference, Governments and*

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<sup>3</sup> CEDAW, Article 1

<sup>4</sup> Beijing Declaration, paragraph 19

*the international community recognizes the need to take priority action for the empowerment and advancement of women.*<sup>5</sup>

The Platform for Action identifies "*insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women*" as a critical area of concern.

d. UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (particularly UNSC Res. 1325) - [2000 onwards]

CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action already stress the exposed risks of conflict-related violence on women, as well as the underrepresentation of women in peace-building efforts.

A series of UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security address those issues. The most prominent among these resolutions is UNSC resolution 1325, which calls for:

- Increased participation and representation of women at all levels of peace-building;
- Attention to specific protection needs of women and girls in conflict;
- A gender perspective on post-conflict processes.

### **III. National Framework for Gender Equality**

a. The National Strategy to Achieve the MDGs by 2015 [2012]

Based on its 2010 MDG Progress Report the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) adopted in 2012 a National Strategy to Achieve the MDGs by 2015. This strategy, inter alia, translates the gender related MDG goals and targets listed in the section above into national objectives, policies and interventions.

b. Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy: Promoting Gender Equality and Equity

The National Gender Strategy defines nine strategic objectives, which can broadly be classified along the following lines:

Objectives related to occupation-induced violations of women's rights, which include:

- Preserving the rights of Palestinian women in Jerusalem;
- Improving the status of Palestinian female prisoners;

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<sup>5</sup> Beijing Declaration, paragraph 21

Cross-cutting objectives related to political and economic participation, as well as non-discrimination:

- Ensuring equality and equity within the family law and civil rights;
- Reducing violence against women at the national level\*;
- Facilitating women's active role in political life and decision making;
- Improving women's participation in the labor market and in economic decision-making;
- Mainstreaming gender issues across Palestinian government functions;

\*Note: in spring 2012 the PNA adopted the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women 2011-19, with the aim of implementing the objective to reduce violence against women and girls in the oPt.

Sectoral objectives directly targeting gender gaps in the provision of essential services:

- Improving the quantity and quality of educational services in the oPt from a gender perspective;
- Improving the provision of health services to women;

The above objectives directly correspond with gender specific goals and targets set out in the MDGs, as well as with the provisions of CEDAW and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They also partially relate to UNSC resolutions on women, peace and security.

#### **IV. Relevant Donor Initiatives Aimed at Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming**

##### **a. EU Initiatives aimed at Gender Equality and Women Empowerment**

In June 2010 the EU Council adopted the "EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015". At the local level, in 2012, the EU has identified a pilot sector, the justice sector, for mainstreaming gender equality in EU support. In September 2013 the EU and its Member States adopted the EU "Cross-cutting Strategy Fiche on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment" (Gender Fiche), which focuses on Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender-Based Violence. Subsequently, in October 2013, an EU Gender Technical Working Group was established to put into actions the Gender Fiche and to monitor its implementation.

Furthermore, in 2004 the EU adopted the “EU Toolkit on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in EU Development Cooperation, 2004” as part of a larger effort to build capacity for gender mainstreaming in development cooperation for EU staff in Headquarters and in EU Delegations. The Toolkit is being made available for Member States, other donors, third country officials, and other gender experts. A new revised version of the Toolkit is expected to be available in 2014.