

Amman Principles

of National Mechanisms for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women and Girls

Draft



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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to develop the vision for an effective and independent national mechanism that can address women's rights and gender equality issues as well as the empowerment of women and girls. Ultimately this vision would serve as an international frame of reference for all national mechanisms concerned with women's rights globally.

Despite international and national efforts to develop international human rights standards and create national gender equality structures and institutions, there continues to be considerable gaps and challenges that stand in the way of achieving the desired objectives. Women worldwide, continue to suffer from violations to their rights and insufficient uptake of human rights international standards and conventions especially in the adoption of women's rights provisions within national policies.

This document is intended to provide a practical proposal for all stakeholders including policymakers at the level of governments, United Nations organizations and civil society institutions. It is hoped that they would adopt this proposal, develop it further and approve the final format as the key reference for national mechanisms for women whether those exist already or need to be yet created.

This document has been prepared after a comprehensive assessment of existing international and national efforts. The

assessment included a review of all relevant international documents that set global standards, principles and approaches to women's empowerment and gender equality and studies analyzing achievements and challenges facing national mechanisms. A series of consultations with experts and team members of women's national mechanisms in the Middle East and North Africa region were held in the form of round table discussions organized for this purpose. The ultimate aim was to validate findings of the research and expand the horizons of this document in order to identify the best and most relevant markers.

We call on all stakeholders to read the document, analyze it and work on completing this effort by presenting proposals for further developing the document in order to collaboratively work together to have it approved and implemented by the concerned entities within the United Nations or governments.



Background

The Mexico Declaration and Plan of Action issued at the conclusion of the first United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico was the first declaration to contain a reference to the concept of national mechanisms for the advancement of women. The Plan of Action called for the creation of national mechanisms as an expression of interest in the advancement of the status of women in the different countries. It also called for mandating those nascent mechanisms with leading public policies on women's issues, conducting studies and research on the status of women and building relevant coalitions and networks to that end (United Nations, 1975).

In the 1970's and 1980's, and especially in the period during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985), at least 127 UN member states followed the recommendations put forward by the Plan of Action and created national mechanisms for the advancement of women in their countries. Among the newly formed mechanisms was the General Women's Union in the United Arab Emirates, founded in 1975 as the state's national mechanism (UN General Assembly, 1976-1985). From the early 1990's until today, the creation of national mechanisms continued globally and national mechanisms in most Arab countries have been created.

The international UN conferences on women, held in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) called on states that already

have national mechanisms to further develop those national gender equality entities and to support and strengthen them. They have also called on countries that have not yet created these mechanisms to do so.

Many of these mechanisms have faced challenges, hindrances and gaps and some were constrained due to the lack of serious political will and weak commitment at the more senior levels of government. Other mechanisms suffered as a result of the limited knowledge of gender equality principles or misinterpretation of the concept's objectives and purpose. Mechanisms also suffered from unclear and undefined mandates or lines of authority and poor communication with the different government institutions. Other challenges included the insufficiency of financial and human resources (especially of gender experts), the marginalization of women's issues and therefore the national mechanism that represents them. These factors collectively contributed to the deepening of challenges facing the work of national mechanisms and increased the gaps and obstacles (UN Commission on the Status of Women, 2005) that hinder their progress and growth.

A national mechanism for the advancement of women is usually a mechanism created by the state to strengthen and support gender equality in the country with the aim of implementing international obligations, to

which they are signatory and as spelt out in the final documents of the UN international conferences on women. Mechanisms created by countries may differ in terms of their legal reference, powers, functions, responsibilities, and scope. In some countries, there are ministries for women while others could have departments or governmental women's sections, committees or unions.

The Commission on the Status of Women at its sessions No. 32 (1988), 35 (1991) and 49 (2005) prioritized the roles and structures of national mechanisms. The report of the UN Secretary General, presented to the Commission at its session No. 32 has defined the status of the national mechanism as "the body recognized by the government as the institution dealing with the promotion of the status of women" (CSW, 2013). The functions of this mechanism are to support the effective participation of women in development, enhance women's education and participation in political decision-making and in the economy, ensure the highest level of government support, combat negative attitudes and stereotypes towards women in the media, facilitate research on the status of women and collect gender disaggregated data.

The report of the UN Secretary-General to the Commission at its 35 session stressed the importance of information systems and access to information relating to the advancement of the status of women. It also stressed the importance of analyzing information, disseminating it as well as improving access of workers to modern technologies as well as communications and networking with non-governmental and UN organizations and agencies considering them

as essential factors to the success of national mechanisms. The report of the Commission on the Status of Women at its 49th session also referred to holding a high-level meeting to discuss the strengthening and expanding of national mechanisms concerned with the advancement of women, promoting gender equality and reviewing obstacles and challenges they face, lessons learned and exchanging experiences between countries (Economic and Social Council, 2005).

The Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 had given special attention to national mechanisms for the advancement of women. In paragraph (201) of the "Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action" document, it is stated that "a national mechanism for the advancement of women is the central policy coordinating unit inside government. Its main task is to support government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective in all policy areas." It also stated that "the necessary conditions for an effective functioning of such national mechanisms include: its location at the highest possible level in the Government, falling under the responsibility of a Cabinet minister; institutional mechanisms or processes that facilitate, as appropriate, decentralized planning, implementation and monitoring; sufficient resources in terms of budget and professional capacity; opportunity to influence development of all government policies" (United Nations, 1995).

The document stressed that strategic objectives are to develop or strengthen national mechanisms and other governmental bodies and integrate perspectives that take

into account gender differences in legislation and public policies, programs and projects, and to provide and disseminate gender disaggregated data and information for the purposes of planning and evaluation.

There were also discussions on the role of national mechanisms at the regional level. In 1996 the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) jointly with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) organized a sub-regional conference on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Central and Eastern Europe and made recommendations on strengthening national mechanisms in the region. In the same year, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held a regional meeting on the strengthening of national mechanisms for the advancement of women (ESCAP, 2010). The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) issued guidelines for mainstreaming gender issues and enhancing the effectiveness of mechanisms for the advancement of women (Kamal, 2007). The United Nations Economic Commission in Africa (ECA) issued a study on "Recent Trends in National Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Africa" covering 53 countries.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed by the Economic and Social Council 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming focused attention on the important role of national mechanisms. Gender mainstreaming was defined as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in

all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (ECOSOC 1997).

The conclusions ratified by the Council also stressed that gender mainstreaming is not the responsibility of specialized individuals or entities, but that of the management and staff of all bodies. They stressed the need to enhance interaction between UN entities and the national mechanisms for the advancement of women. In July 2004, the Economic and Social Council passed its resolution E/2004/4, which consolidated and confirmed the role of national mechanisms as key actors in promoting gender mainstreaming.

Conclusions 1999/2 adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1999 with regards to the institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women stated that "the effectiveness and sustainability of national mechanisms depend to a large extent on their integration into the national, political and social contexts, the economic system, the needs of women, and the accountability towards them". The Commission recommended that national mechanisms are located at the highest possible level in government and that they be given the power and resources needed to fulfill their mandates. It also recommended the appropriate structuring of the functions of national mechanisms at all levels in order to

ensure effectiveness in gender mainstreaming (Commission on the Status of Women, 1999).

The results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" pointed out that national mechanisms in many countries have been established or strengthened and have been recognized as institutional bases acting as "catalysts" in the promotion of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and monitoring of the implementation. It was also noted that "progress has been made in terms of clear activities, awareness-raising, and coordination of activities of these bodies (ESCWA, 2000).

Obstacles impeding the effectiveness of national mechanisms in many countries were also revealed. These included: insufficient financial and human resources, lack of political will and commitment at the highest level, insufficient understanding of gender equality and mainstreaming among government structures, unclear mandates, and structural problems and means of communication within government institutions and among themselves (ESCWA, 2000).

Over the past few decades, the role of national mechanisms in many countries has evolved as they tried to act as catalysts in facilitating gender mainstreaming as described in the methods of work. Some national mechanisms have achieved great successes, while others did not, most often due to the lack of clear mandates, political support and limited financial and human resources. Many of these mechanisms were also constrained due to restrictions

imposed on their mandate and independence, lack of financial resources brought on by crises, wars, health emergencies, and decreased external/international support (Al-Najjar, 1998). Limited technical expertise and insufficient human resources were also identified as challenges which were especially evident in specialized women/gender equality units which were created within ministries and not given sufficient authority or scope for work. Those units became vulnerable to marginalization of the issues they are working on.

Many national mechanisms have relied on international and regional instruments, agreements and bodies to enhance their national efforts. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is considered as a powerful tool which facilitated the reform of legislation and policies in many countries.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is also considered as an important instrument that national mechanisms can rely on in the acceleration of progress towards achieving gender equality. Periodic reports submitted by states to the various UN bodies are seen as monitoring tools that can measure progress made towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals, especially the fifth goal related to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Moreover, regional bodies and UN agencies have also contributed to the development of standards and guidelines for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. Several countries reported on actions taken to meet these regional standards and guidelines. These developments were accompanied by

international and regional efforts to support national mechanisms for the advancement of women, including, but not limited to:

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN):

With the aim of consolidating international efforts in the field of women's rights, the United Nations General Assembly agreed on July 2, 2010, to establish a single UN body with a mandate to accelerate progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The creation process included four agencies and offices concerned with women: The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (United Nations, 2018). UNWomen works closely and collaboratively to provide support to all national mechanisms for women in various countries of the world.

The Arab Women Organization:

On 10 September 2001, the Arab League Council approved the establishment of the Arab Women Organization as an expression of the official Arab position in support of the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, which called for the creation of national mechanisms for the advancement of women. The organization works mainly through its regional mechanism on supporting the national mechanisms' efforts to achieve Arab women's solidarity as a cornerstone of Arab unity, coordinating joint Arab positions on women's issues, raising awareness of their issues in various sectors, supporting joint cooperation and exchange of expertise, improving health and education services, integrating women's issues within the priorities of comprehensive development plans and policies as well as developing and building women's capabilities (Arab International Women's Forum, 2005).



Progress made

A review of the responses sent by 134 member states to the Division for the Advancement of Women indicates that the majority of countries have taken action recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action to achieve the three strategic objectives set out for institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Member states have created and strengthened national mechanisms, as

well as other governmental bodies (strategic objective 1), gender perspective has been mainstreamed into legislation, public policies and programs and projects (strategic objective 2), and gender disaggregated data and information were produced and published for planning and evaluation (strategic objective 3), (UN, 2009).

Table (1) shows a list of national mechanisms concerned with women in the ESCWA region.

Country	National mechanism concerned with women	Type
Jordan	The Jordanian National Commission for Women	Government agency
Arab United Emirates	General Women's Union	Government agency
Bahrain	Supreme Council for Women	Government agency
Tunisia	Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors	Ministry
Arab Syrian Republic	Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs	Government agency
Sudan	Ministry of Welfare and Social Security	Ministry
Iraq	The Higher Committee for the Advancement of Women	Government agency
Oman	Ministry of Social Development	Ministry
State of Palestine	Ministry of Women's Affairs	Ministry
Qatar	Qatar Foundation for Social Work	Government agency
Kuwait	Supreme Council for Family Affairs	A government agency affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development
Lebanon	Ministry of State for Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth	Ministry of State
	The National Commission for Lebanese Women	Government agency

Country	National mechanism concerned with women	Type
Libya	The Women's Support and Empowerment Unit, Council of Ministers	Government department
Egypt	The National Council for Women	Government agency
Morocco	Ministry of Solidarity, Women, the Family and Social Development	Ministry
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Family Affairs Council	A government agency affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development and Labor
Mauritania	Ministry of Women, Children and the Family	Ministry
Yemen	Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour	Ministry

Source: Data from the ESCWA list of National Mechanisms on Women

The creation and strengthening of national mechanisms has witnessed global progress since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, as follows:

- National mechanisms were created for the first time in many countries.
- Existing National mechanisms have been strengthened in terms of financial and human resources, expertise, and the expansion of powers and mandate (ESCWA, 2019).

However, there is limited reliable and updated data on national mechanisms and there is a clear need for the creation of an independent global electronic database on these mechanisms in order to assess progress and track their activities more systematically, although it is noted that there are lists held by UN Women, which include the names of existing national mechanisms and their contact details (UN WOMEN, 2020).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. More mechanisms within a single country to promote gender equality

Among the positive developments of the past few decades is the creation of new mechanisms to promote gender equality, in addition to mechanisms within the structures of government (such as the creation of independent gender units in a number of Jordanian ministries). In many countries, permanent committees concerned with equal opportunities, gender equality and women's committees, coalitions or parliamentary committees for women affairs have been created. Other countries have created independent gender equality committees, women's committees or other legal bodies. In a few countries, gender equality ombudsmen were appointed but there was a dearth in research and studies on the roles of these bodies and their achievements or on their relationship with existing national mechanisms.

In any one country, there could be a ministry for women, women ministerial committees, a gender equality committee, gatherings, parliamentary committees, gender units in the various ministries and an ombudsman. There could also be a gender equality committee, women's committees in political parties or professional and labor unions, human rights committees giving attention to the human rights of women and statistics units with focus on gender equality within the national statistic centers. These are all examples of the multiple mechanisms that exist in some countries. Temporary committees for specific goals can also be created such as committees for the preparation of reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women or other committees on women in which all relevant parties such as institutions and government bodies participate. However, the success of these committees remains largely dependant on the coordination and cooperation mechanisms between them and between the national mechanisms for women.

2. Numerous legislative reforms and monitoring and evaluation tools

Many countries have succeeded in improving legislation and in the elimination of discrimination contained therein, such as family laws, penal and labor and social security laws. Some have enacted gender equality laws and domestic violence, violence and harassment in the workplace protection laws. A big number of countries have passed policies, action plans and national strategies for gender equality with the national mechanisms playing a prominent and pivotal role in this regard.

Many countries have reported the presence of mechanisms and tools to monitor progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action (+5, +10, +15, +20, and +25 in 2020). Mechanisms included units or special committees, missions, monitoring tools and tools to assess the impact of programs, projects, policies and legislation from a gender perspective.

Several national mechanisms have taken steps to build the capacities of their male and female workers and the capacities of decision makers in the ministries. Advanced technical methods and technology such as gender-based analysis, impact assessments from a gender perspective and gender sensitive budgets, which are all necessary for gender mainstreaming and for the development of training, advocacy and lobbying, were used (Economic and Social Council, 2005).

3. The development of statistical indicators for the promotion of gender equality

Several national mechanisms have taken initiatives to improve data collection and analysis, develop indicators, especially SDG indicators, and support gender related surveys and qualitative studies and research. Research and studies on women's issues and gender equality increased in number and there was growing support in many countries for the establishment of women's studies departments/ institutions such as the centers for women's studies in Jordan.

National mechanisms in many countries have launched national campaigns to raise public awareness of gender equality issues and

the empowerment of all women and girls. Technology was used to provide information and data and to participate in discussions with civil society and other stakeholders. Many national mechanisms have developed gender equality strategies.

4. Collaboration and coordination with civil society

Collaboration with NGOs, civil society and women's organizations has increased in many countries. National mechanisms have created committees with joint membership to bring government and civil society together and has also entered into partnerships with a variety of relevant bodies and organizations including professional associations and labor unions.

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

National mechanisms, in their majority, elaborate on their achievements and positive progress, but to a large extent, they reveal less about the challenges and obstacles they face or plans for future action to meet those challenges.

1. Lack of clarity and allocation of tasks and powers

Many national mechanisms continue to operate under unclear and unspecific mandates, lines of authority and tasks which is hindering their operations and limiting their impact and ability to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

2. The absence or weakness of the political will

One of the main obstacles faced by many national mechanisms is the absence of the political will and/or support from the political leadership, that would have consolidated the role of national mechanisms and how seriously their work is considered. Fluctuations in government commitment may also lead to repeated restructuring and rapid turnover in personnel. In some countries, national mechanisms were downgraded from central and strategic national-level positions to lower-level largely administrative executive departments.

3. Disparities in cooperation between feminist institutions and national mechanisms

Some countries have successfully mobilized political support for a wide range of target groups. However, the strength of feminist movements with which national mechanisms interact and cooperate varies between countries. In some countries, the feminist movement succeeded in mobilizing wide popular support while in other countries the feminist movement become weaker. Thus, the mobilization of sufficient political will and then preserving that will and maintaining the consistency of the support it provides for national mechanisms continues to be an ongoing challenge.

4. The weakness and lack of qualified and experienced human resources

Although there were reports of an increase in the number of staff employed

by national mechanisms in a few countries, in general there was a decrease in the number of dedicated employees in this sector. Apart from the low numbers, another issue reported by some countries was the limited capacity and expertise of both males and females employed in the national apparatuses as well as within the various ministries and governmental institutions. In addition, apparatuses in many countries are responsible for tasks that could be difficult or inappropriate for them to implement. Moreover, gender liaison officers assigned to units or entities within ministries are often found unable to focus on their gender mainstreaming assignments because they are required to undertake other routine duties within the Ministry and therefore find themselves overburdened (United Nations, 1998).

5. Insufficient financial resources

Restrictions on funding became an obstacle for the work of the mechanisms not only at the national level but also at the regional and local levels. Budget cuts in many countries have also affected gender mainstreaming in sectoral ministries such as health and education. The reliance on donors is a major obstacle as they may impose their own priorities and their own national agendas, which has long-lasting impact on the sustainability of efforts.

6. Limited statistics and gender disaggregated data

There are gaps in gender-disaggregated data in specific areas, such as violence against women, wage disparities, health indicators, decision-making and returns on investment in

human development. This lack of information prevents the construction of appropriate tools for planning and programming, and it hinders the development of effective monitoring systems (United Nations, 1998).

7. Weak regular monitoring

Monitoring progress in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is a major challenge. National mechanisms generally tend to monitor the progress in procedures, but this monitoring does not provide information on the impact of its different activities. There is also a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on gender mainstreaming efforts in all institutions and in multiple fields. Finally, there is also a weakness in the definition and understanding of results indicators, follow-up on data against these indicators and in the creation of linkages and relationships between policies/ programs and results.

8. Lack of accountability between the various bodies concerned with gender equality

Accountability among the various stakeholders concerned with gender equality is not clear or available as there is an absence of tools, mechanisms, and monitoring and measuring methodologies to assess whether there were fluctuations in commitment, seriousness in implementation and sustainability of efforts.

The presence of a number of gender or women's units/liaison offices vertically at state level within multiple sectors and regions, and at the same time horizontally at the different ministries and agencies, come together

to provide a critical opportunity to achieve stated goals. However, within its folds remain challenges that restrict national mechanisms in terms of providing appropriate support and ensuring coordination and cooperation. The added challenge of scarcity in resources – human and financial – also limits the national mechanisms' ability to play the role required of it.

Cooperation with other mechanisms such as parliamentary assemblies/ committees and independent legislative bodies can be difficult at times as the relationship and demarcation lines between these different mechanisms are not well defined. In some countries, these mechanisms work collaboratively and support each other, while in some other countries they each work in isolation and fail to create an effective synergy.

9. Challenges facing cooperation and networking relations between national mechanisms and civil society institutions

National mechanisms have established alliances with civil society and women's movements in some countries. Together, they developed successful internal and external lobbying and advocacy strategies to promote gender equality and feminist empowerment. However, in many countries it remains difficult to achieve real cooperation between national mechanisms and civil society, especially when there is competition over a pool of limited or scarce resources. This competition and the lack of cooperation generally, negatively impact the work of both national mechanisms and civil society. Therefore, it is very crucial to pay more attention to the need to develop effective partnerships with NGOs and civil society institutions.



Justifications for the development of national mechanisms

The success of national mechanisms in promoting and developing policies and programs, and in implementing relevant activities in key areas such as combating violence against women, human trafficking, women's participation in public life and politics, and gender mainstreaming in all sectors is largely dependent on having multiple components most importantly of which are clear vision and political will. It also depends on developing plans, work strategies, effective policies and amending and improving legislation impacting women and girls. Moreover, it is also contingent on conducting studies and research on women's issues and gender equality as well as the collection and compilation of gender disaggregated data and analyzing it. Finally, it requires the national mechanism to build partnerships and alliances with various government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the media.

In order to guarantee achievement of what can be described as success stories of national mechanisms, it is necessary to work on the following:

1. The amendment and improvement of legislation, and gender mainstreaming at the level of policies and programs in all sectors.
2. The training of human resources and ensuring sufficiency.
3. Ensuring adequate (financial) resources.
4. Incentivizing parties which are cooperating and collaborating with national mechanisms to promote gender equality and mainstream gender perspective within their structures, strategies and policies.
5. Conducting studies, developing gender disaggregated data and indicators, and recognizing the importance of monitoring and evaluation.
6. Building partnerships and alliances with all stakeholders.
7. Mobilizing political will through public awareness programs and the dissemination of information on a wide scale.

FLUCTUATIONS IN THE NATIONAL CONTEXTS OF STATES HAVE VARYING EFFECTS ON THE WORK OF NATIONAL MECHANISMS

Since the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women (the Beijing Conference), many political, social and economic changes have taken place globally which have directly affected the work of national mechanisms, increased disparities among states, and exacerbated poverty. In addition, the transition to globalization and privatization has weakened services, especially social services, increased migration in search of job opportunities, and led to increased conflicts, wars and emergencies, including health emergencies, and natural disasters due to climate change leading to immigration, forced migration and displacement.

Reforms of the public sector, such as decentralization of services, the enforcement of accountability mechanisms and increased transparency in the administration of public spending, have been implemented in an uneven and insufficient manner. The result is that public sector reform has not promoted social equity and gender equality. The extent to which senior policymakers are able to enforce compliance is critical when a proposed policy is confronted with resistance, as is often the case with policies of gender equality.

An often-observed phenomena is the far reaching political implications of conservative political movements which either base their ideology on identity or religious movements in all parts of the world. While social conservatism in some contexts is associated with the weakening of feminist movements, in other contexts feminist movements have gained strength through new opportunities provided by international communications. Noting that it is important to highlight the participation of women in movements relating to world free trade, the rights of workers in the informal sector, and the global alliances of reproductive rights. Opportunities provided by the new information and communication technology in creating effective networks for cooperation towards gender equality should also be recognized and acknowledged.

At the international level, there was increasing acknowledgement of the important role that developed multilateral tools played in addressing human rights violations. On the other hand, these agreements were threatened in some contexts, including within the context of counterterrorism efforts. It is possible that

this problem can become exacerbated in weak and fragile states or in post war situations where the focus on addressing displacement, collective suffering and reconstruction may mean a marginalization of gender equality concerns. Armed conflicts have been characterized by the use of sexual violence as a weapon, thus creating new concerns in addressing human rights violations.

The 2030 sustainable development goals are seen as collectively presenting a joint program of common developmental goals to incentivize new and sustainable development partnerships. Gender equality is considered a fundamental and cross-cutting theme for the achievement of the 17 goals. UN member states pledged to achieve the sustainable development goals through new non-traditional approaches involving coordination and harmonization of goals with national plans and strategies. This should allow for a more feasible national interpretation and implementation of the sustainable development goals that takes into consideration differences between the sexes and the national context for gender mainstreaming and integration of gender equality principles.

CONFRONTING CHALLENGES AND SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES

Addressing gender equality challenges requires strong national mechanisms for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Challenges include the following:

- Guaranteeing that the achievement of gender equality and women's rights is at the core of efforts to achieve the 2030

sustainable development goals, and to ensure that states' national commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action are fully integrated into the national plans to implement the goals.

- Considering human rights of women a central component of political, economic and social reform.
- Mainstreaming gender equality standards in all reforms, especially of governance systems which will reshape formal and official accountability mechanisms (judicial reform, audit reform, parliamentary reforms, local government budgetary transparency, etc....).
- Inclusion of gender equality concerns in social and other public services.
- Activating the role of the feminist movement and increasing its effectiveness by creating more space for women's voices and direct access to official institutions.
- Activating the role of political parties to be more gender-sensitive and more focused on women's issues and gender equality.

To confront these challenges, it is important to consider and evaluate them in the broader context of the universal promotion and protection of human rights. Achieving gender equality and empowering women would require much more than just fair treatment of women in the context of economic and social change. It also goes beyond the concept of equity to the realization of the basic rights of women and men alike.

It is of utmost importance in this regard to fully acknowledge the role of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women (CEDAW) as the key global legal instrument that addresses women's human rights. Attention should be drawn to the responsibility of states to fully implement the provisions of the convention, which require that women's human rights and gender equality become central components of state reforms and social organization. Promoting and monitoring this dimension of gender equality and women's empowerment is a core task of the national mechanisms for gender equality.

Challenges to the achievement of gender equality and women's rights offer an important opportunity for national mechanisms to influence economic and social reforms and governance to ensure the promotion of the human rights of women. There is a wider scope of issues that should be addressed by the national mechanisms for gender equality and there are also new forums and new entry points for addressing issues related to gender equality.

The increase in the number of national entities addressing gender equality horizontally and vertically within states is a sign of their response to these opportunities in order to prepare gender-sensitive and multiple accountability tests across the government.

The development of different entities to address gender equality across the public sector and civil society underlines the need to think unconventionally and creatively in coordinating the efforts of civil society, political parties and government institutions and their accountability mechanisms.

National Institutions for Human Rights and Gender Equality

National human rights institutions are national official commissions with constitutional or legal mandate to protect and promote human rights. They comply with the Paris Principles for national human rights institutions and operate within the benchmark of international human rights standards within the state, i.e., they work within an international reference but with national tools and in a national context.

"The Paris Principles for National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights", issued by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 134/48 has specified the minimum conditions that must be achieved by any national human rights institution if it wants to have legitimacy (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1993).

In the framework of the Paris Principles, national human rights institutions are requested to do the following (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010):

- **Firstly**, protect human rights, including by receiving, investigating and resolving complaints, mediating conflicts and monitoring activities; and
- **Secondly**, promote human rights, through education, outreach, the media, publications, training and capacity building, as well as advising and assisting the Government.

The criteria to be met by national human rights institutions under the Paris Principles are as follows:

- Mandate and competence: a broad mandate, based on universal human rights norms and standards;
- Autonomy from Government;
- Independence guaranteed by statute or Constitution;
- Pluralism;
- Adequate resources; and
- Adequate powers of investigation.

National institutions for human rights work within their mandate as specified in the constituent laws. They can enjoy broad and unrestricted mandates by law to deal with all human rights issues, including women's rights. Other institutions have limited mandates with regards to combating discrimination and promoting equality rights.

The question is: to what extent do national human rights institutions actually address gender equality issues? 71% of the national human rights institutions reported that they have general mandate for the protection of all human rights, 11% of them reported that their mandate is limited to one specific type of rights such as equal rights and combating discrimination, and 19% reported that their legislation allows them to address gender issues and/or issues of equality (in addition to other general human rights mandates). 46% of

the surveyed institutions considered that there is another apparatus specialized in combating discrimination and equality rights and/or women's rights at the state level (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, 2012).

This shows that despite the fact that these national institutions for human rights do handle issues of women's rights and gender equality, they do not do so to the same level and they do not always prioritize women's rights and gender equality.

THE PRESENCE OF MORE THAN ONE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTION

Article 39 of the statute of the International Coordinating Committee states that "at General Assemblies Member States of the United Nations shall be eligible to be a voting member and that the State shall have one speaking right, one voting right, and if elected, to be one Bureau member or alternate member."

There is a common and increasingly growing trend that shows that there are a multiple number of institutions within the same state responsible for the promotion and protection of certain rights (for example, gender-specific rights, children's rights, indigenous people's rights). It is recommended that they establish coordination mechanisms among them in order to leverage their collective functions and powers in a way that ensures the protection and promotion of human rights. The International Coordinating Committee and its concerned Subcommittee have highlighted this development, which is happening in many

parts of the world and the role that multi-national institutions can play, under clearly defined strategies to improve cooperation, including memoranda of understanding or other agreements to address possible overlap in terms of mandate and addressing complaints or issues, and informal arrangements governing the transferring of individual cases to the most appropriate mechanism (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2010).

Draft of the Amman Principles

After a thorough review, reading and analysis of previous documents and gathering information on the reality of the national mechanisms for women operating within their specific international and national context; as well as assessing these mechanisms' efforts, achievements and challenges against the references that govern their activities - specifically the international human rights system in general and other references concerned specifically with gender equality

- we present our initial vision for the draft "Amman Principles for National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls."

This draft is intended to serve as a platform for dialogue at the national, regional and international levels to enable national mechanisms to carry out their functions on normative foundations, which allow them to achieve maximum impact efficiency.



The draft document proposes a number of principles that are believed to be a requirement for efficient and effective national mechanisms. These principles have been developed in reference to the Paris Principles for national human rights institutions on the one hand, while taking into account the need for effective mechanisms to address the specificity of challenges facing women's issues and gender equality on the other.

REFERENCE

Human rights of women and girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible component of the universal human rights. Therefore, the national mechanism should adopt the following as the foundational references for all its work:

- Charter of the United Nations.
- All charters, agreements and declarations on women's human rights.
- The final documents issued by the United Nations conferences on women.
- The final documents issued by international human rights committees and international committees on women, such as the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- Reports of the UN Special Rapporteurs.
- The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.
- International Criminal Law.
- International Humanitarian Law.
- The 1951 Refugee Convention and the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

JURISDICTION

The national mechanism is concerned with promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls of all age groups without discrimination, especially the rights of girls, older women and women with disabilities. It is concerned with integrating a gender perspective in all legislation, policies, strategies and programs and with the empowerment of all women and girls in various fields. Thus, the jurisdiction of national mechanisms must include:

- Reinforcement: The development of popular culture and mindset towards women based on the principle of women's equal rights to men with what this principle infers with reference to promoting education, change of stereotypical roles and image, data collection and disaggregation and conducting qualitative studies.
- Protection: Contribute to the development of women protection mechanisms to safeguard them from any attacks carried out by individuals in positions of authority or from the different political, economic and social contexts especially the family. This would require amendment of legislation, guaranteeing access to justice, and developing appropriate legal penalties.
- Mainstreaming gender perspective: Ensure that all legislation, budgets, strategies, plans and programs have taken into consideration the rights of women and girls, at both the levels of prevention and performance.
- Empowering women and girls: Providing effective support mechanisms to bridge the gap between women and girls on

the one hand and men and boys on the other so that women are able to achieve their human rights and contribute to development. This includes special women's education, capacity building training and adopting appropriate special measures to that end. These would also mean taking special steps to address the rights of especially vulnerable female groups including battered women and girls, inmates of rehabilitation centers, victims of human trafficking, refugees and asylum seekers, displaced women and women with disabilities.

MANDATE

National mechanisms shall have a mandate as broad as possible, and a clearly defined mandate enshrined in State constitutions and/or through legal provision and legislation. The mandate must be encapsulated in at least one law which defines the national mechanism's administrative composition, scope of work, as well as its areas of specialization and associated tasks.

The more comprehensive the responsibility assigned to the mechanism in terms of the promotion of women's rights, protection of vulnerable females, and supporting gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women, the broader is the mandate of the mechanism.

The more the mechanism underlines its direct and clear reference within the international human rights system, the more comprehensive will be its mandate.

The mandate should cover all women living within the borders of the state regardless of their nationality and therefore including migrant and displaced women, asylum seekers, refugees and stateless women.

The more a national mechanism can rely on a network of international cooperation in order to follow up on violations suffered by their citizens or residents of anywhere in the world, its mandate will be wider.

Finally, if the national mechanism has a semi constitutional status, which enables it to disrupt any national legislation which violates the international human rights law, its mandate will be broader.

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The national mechanism shall have the following illustrative rather than exhaustive tasks and responsibilities:

A. Provide advice, recommendations, proposals and reports on consultative basis to the government, parliament and any other entity with jurisdiction. It does so at the request of the concerned authorities or by using its right to attend to any issue without referral from a higher entity relating to the promotion and protection of women and girls' rights, mainstreaming gender and empowerment principles in all areas and at various levels. The national mechanism may decide to publish this advice, recommendations, proposals and reports, as well as all initiatives taken by the national mechanism, which include the following areas:

1. Review, amend and introduce legislation, policies and programs to protect the rights of women and girls, mainstream gender perspective and empowerment, including legislation, policies and programs in force, draft laws, regulations, instructions, administrative decisions and proposals, policies, strategies, operational plans, draft laws, regulations and instructions, administrative decisions and their proposals, draft policies, strategies and executive plans, proposals of programs and activities and public budgets, and give the recommendations it deems appropriate to ensure compliance with the basic principles of human rights and with the principles of international conventions of women's human rights;
 2. Monitor violations of the rights of women and girls, follow-up on them, document them, make recommendations to ensure that they do not recur, especially those related to gender-based violence, violence in crises, conflicts, wars and emergencies including those resulting from pandemics;
 3. Prepare periodic reports on the national situation of women's rights in general, and on more specific issues according to the local context and priority issues;
 4. Draw the attention of the government to cases of violations of women and girls' rights in any part of the country and submit proposals related to initiatives that put an end to these violations. Where appropriate, express an opinion on the government's position or any of its representatives and its or their reactions;
 5. Provide analysis, disseminate gender and age disaggregated data for all demographic, social, health and economic indicators, indicators of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and complex and crosscutting data.
- B.** Promote and ensure the harmonization of national legislation, policies and practices with international conventions on the rights of women to which the state is party to and ensure their effective implementation;
 - C.** Encourage the ratification of the aforementioned conventions, joining them, or lifting of reservations submitted by the state, and ensuring their implementation;
 - D.** Prepare reports to the relevant UN bodies to examine the committees' reports on the extent of the state's compliance with conventions, through reports that represent the mechanism's viewpoint independently of the government.
 - E.** Provide advice to the government on reports submitted by the state to the UN committees, while preserving the independence of the national mechanism.
 - F.** Cooperate with the UN and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, with all other UN and regional institutions and with national mechanism in other countries specialized in the promotion and protection of human rights of women;
 - G.** Assist in preparing programs related to mainstreaming a gender perspective in educational institutions, teaching women's human rights and related research, and participate in their implementation in schools, universities and professional circles;
 - H.** Cooperate and assist in the implementation of training and awareness-raising programs for women and girls, including legal awareness, social, psychological and health counseling, and training in the field of the safe use of technology in all its forms.

COMPOSITION AND INDEPENDENCE

A. The composition of the national mechanism and the appointment of its members, by elections or otherwise, should be in accordance with procedures which provide the necessary guarantees for equitable and fair representation of all parties concerned with the promotion and protection of women and girls' rights and should have powers that allow for effective cooperation with the following parties or the participation of their representatives:

1. Non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, women's organizations and local ones concerned with the rights of women and girls in particular and human rights in general, social organizations and trade, professional and labor unions, such as female jurists' association, female academics associations, business and professional women's associations, doctors' associations, journalists, scholars and scientists;
2. Young and old female activists, women with disabilities and women from the minorities;
3. Universities, women's studies centers and female experts;
4. The parliament (consultative status only);
5. Government institutions or their representatives (consultative status only).

B. The national mechanism should have the appropriate structures for the smooth conduct of its activities, particularly trained and qualified human and financial resources while ensuring its independence from the government. It should not be subject to financial control, which might compromise its independence.

C. In order to ensure a stable mandate of the national mechanism members, they should be appointed by an official decision which specifies the duration of their mandate and the mandate should be renewable, provided that the plurality of membership in the mechanism is ensured.

D. Members of the mechanism as well as its employees should enjoy full independence and should not be held accountable for their activities or reports regarding their role in the mechanism.

E. The premises of the mechanism should enjoy the right of immunity, which guarantees non-interference in its work and that no attacks are launched on its headquarters and its branches by any party.

WORK METHODS AND MEANS

The national mechanism, in the framework of its work, should have/do the following:

A. The freedom to discuss all issues that fall within its competence, whether submitted by the government or without being submitted by a higher authority based on a proposal submitted by its members or any other person;

B. Listen to any person, obtain any information or necessary documents immediately to assess situations falling within its competence;

C. Address directly the public or through the media, especially to introduce its work, stances, views and recommendations;

D. Hold meetings on a regular basis and when necessary, in the presence of all its members who are invited to attend in accordance with the established rules;

E. Form working groups among its members, as appropriate, and establish local branches to assist it in carrying out its tasks;

F. Conduct consultations with other judicial or non-judicial bodies responsible for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls (in particular the national human rights institution, ombudspersons, conciliation mediators and similar institutions);

G. Establish relations with non-governmental organizations devoted to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls and to the protection of vulnerable groups in particular (especially young girls, female prisoners, battered women, migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, older women) or with organizations working in specialized fields.

H. Conduct independent investigations when requested to do so and on its own initiative in matters connected to its mandate and related to the massive violations of the rights of women and girls. All parties, without any delay, should cooperate and provide the necessary information, including law enforcement institutions, the government and the private sector. The possibility of putting a joint mechanism for investigating violations of women's rights within the family should be explored.

BUILDING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The national mechanism should build and strengthen partnerships in carrying out its tasks. In particular, it should:

A. Coordinate and cooperate with national human rights institutions on matters related to the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls, including the provision of

advice, recommendations, proposals and joint reports.

B. Coordinate and cooperate with other governmental mechanisms for the advancement of the status of women and girls, and the unification of efforts among them for the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in various fields and sectors;

C. Coordinate and cooperate with civil society institutions, women and local organizations, strengthen ties with them, involve them in preparing recommendations, proposals and reports, and in identifying priority issues at the national and local levels.

D. Strengthen cooperation with the parliament and its women's committees and work with female parliamentarian alliances and women coalitions to introduce new laws, review their reports and address violations contained therein.

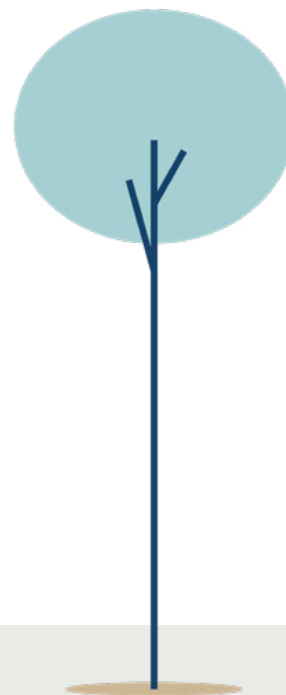
E. Consolidate partnership with the print, audio, visual and electronic media to introduce the concept of gender mainstreaming, shed the light on violations to women's and girls' rights and support gender equality, social justice and equal opportunities.

F. Cooperate and coordinate internationally and regionally with similar national mechanisms, with the UN commissions and with international organizations specialized in women's rights and human rights in the field of exchange of information and the implementation of activities and programmes.

CONFRONTING CRISES AND EMERGENCIES

The national mechanism should be capable of continuing its work during crisis situations, conflicts and wars, natural disasters resulting from climate change, and in health emergencies such as pandemics, especially since women and girls are the most vulnerable to abuses in these cases. The national mechanism should particularly:

- A.** Conduct a periodic assessment of the internal and external conditions surrounding the work of the mechanism, identify strengths and weaknesses, risks, challenges, and available opportunities, and develop response strategies to ensure the continuity of its work.
- B.** Develop alternative plans for the continuity of its work in the form of short-term strategies for human or financial resources, remote work, delegation of authority to branches or any of its partners or collaborators, activation of the referral systems or other procedures to ensure the sustainability of its work.
- C.** Build the capacity of workers, employees and its partners on protection and promotion of the rights of women and girls in situations of crisis and emergency, and assess experiences and lessons learned from them.
- D.** Develop its technological capabilities to ensure the swift electronic transformation to carry out its work, provide its services, and ensure that these services reach the most vulnerable groups, such as children, girls, and women with disabilities, elderly women, female refugee and migrant workers.
- E.** Assess the extent of the impact of crisis and emergency conditions resulting in exceptional governmental measures on the extent to which women and girls enjoy their rights within its mandate, and monitor violations and abuses.



The Accreditation of National Mechanisms

PROPOSALS FOR REFERENCE, ACCREDITATION MECHANISMS, PROCEDURES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

We would like first to stress that the Amman Principles for National Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls are mainly based on the Paris Principles for National Human Rights Institutions. Given that the accreditation of national human rights institutions is given through the National Institutions Unit of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the accreditation of national mechanisms for gender equality, it could be provided by the same Office as an option.

However, as an optimum option, a way of emphasizing specialization would be to have the mechanism accredited by a unit to be created by the United Nations Commission for Gender Equality and women's Empowerment (UN Women), especially considering that the Commission compiles a list of national mechanisms for the advancement of women from all over the world and therefore can, in parallel, set up an international coordination committee to study accreditation requests.

SUBMITTING THE ACCREDITATION APPLICATION FOR THE FIRST TIME

The national mechanism submits its accreditation request for the first time to the President of the International Coordinating Committee after obtaining the special accreditation application forms through the National Mechanisms for Gender Equality Unit of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, a secretariat for the International Coordinating Committee (statutes and regulations for the work of the unit and the International Coordination Committee are to be drafted).

The following should be attached to the accreditation application:

- A letter to express the desire of and reasons for the national mechanism to submit an accreditation application.
- A copy of the legislation (law/regulation/ resolution of the Council of Ministers ...) upon which the national mechanism was established.
- A copy of the organizational structure of the mechanism.
- A copy of the last three annual budgets, if any.
- A copy of the last three annual reports, if any.
- The accreditation application duly filled out.

Submission of the accreditation application to the National Mechanisms Unit

Revision of application/ International Coordination Committee

Sub Committee recommends the accreditation

Specifying the accreditation category (A, B, or C) International Coordination Committee

ACCREDITATION CATEGORIES:

Category (A): Full compliance with the Amman Principles (stating privileges of the category).

Category (B): Partial compliance with the Amman Principles (stating the partial privileges of this category).

Category (C): No compliance with the Amman Principles (no privileges).

COMPLIANCE INDICATORS

In this section, we have identified compliance indicators for six of the nine proposed principles. The indicators for the remaining three principles will be developed through workshops over the course of the project and will be added to this list in the final version of the Amman Principles.

Principle (1): Specified and broad mandate

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Broad mandate Jurisdiction subject matter	The jurisdiction is as broad as possible		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It includes all rights of women and girls, including civil, political economic, social and cultural rights of women 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It includes most of the rights of women and girls, including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It only includes civil and political rights of women 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It includes a subset of civil and political rights of women 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is only limited to one right (such as GBV) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is limited to women citizens and excludes foreigners (migrant workers, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless women) 		
Broad Mandate Jurisdictional Scope	Jurisdictional Scope		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state and the private sector, without restrictions 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state, without restrictions 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state with partial restriction with regard to sensitive state agencies 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state with sweeping restrictions regarding sensitive state agencies 		

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Broad Mandate Temporal Jurisdiction Broad Mandate Temporal Jurisdiction	Temporal Jurisdiction		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can discuss any matter or issue even before the creation of the mechanism 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no restrictions on examining any issue since the creation of the mechanism 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretionary power to limit investigation of cases prior to the creation of the mechanism 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited power to discuss matters or issues prior to the creation of the mechanism and it is stipulated in the law 		
Responsibility Giving Advice	The mechanism can provide advice on its own		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on legislative or administrative texts 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on any violation of the rights of women and girls adopted by the mechanism 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the status of women and girls at the national level, in general or in particular 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on abuse cases and the government's response to them 		
	Advice can be provided directly without referral or request from a government agency		
	Advice, recommendations, proposals and reports can be published without referral or prior approval of any party		
Other Responsibilities	Encourage the harmonization of national legislation and practices with the international human rights for women conventions as well as their effective implementation, through:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in reviewing legislation and policies at the time of ratification 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review and the provision of official comments on draft legislation and policies 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review and the provision of official comments on the human rights situation of women in general or on key issues 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging the ratification of international covenants on women's human rights 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to human rights of women reports 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct participation in the drafting of the full report 		

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Other Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section (s) of drafts on the work of the mechanism and the review report 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section (s) of drafts on the work of the mechanism 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full or partial review report 		
	Cooperation with international and regional women's human rights bodies and other national mechanisms		
	The development of education and research programs in the field of human rights for women and participating in them through:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting in the development/revision of the educational curricula 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisting in the training of women prisons supervisors, shelter supervisors, the police, the army and the security forces 		
	Raising awareness among people on human rights through awareness, education and the media by:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing an annual report 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting on important issues regularly through the media 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing basic manuals on the mechanism 			

Principle 2 & 3: Self-management independent from the government – Independence guaranteed by law

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Delegated authority (Mandate)	Mandate is specified in the constitution or in the law		
	The mandate gives the mechanism the authority to strengthen women's and girls' rights and to protect them		
The appointment process	Appointment is done according to an official law		
	Appointment is for a specified period (for example: 2 years because of possible impact on independence and effectiveness)		
	Appointment could be renewable as long as pluralism is guaranteed		
	The appointment process, duration, renewability, and criteria are stipulated in the law		
	The appointment process support pluralism, independence and gender equality		

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
The appointment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It includes nominations made by CS 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The parliament participates in the selection process 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment is open to men and women 		
The dismissal process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment criteria includes proven expertise in women's human rights 		
	The law stipulates dismissal conditions		
	Conditions relate to grave bad or inappropriate behavior, conflict of interest and incompetence only		
	A dismissal decision requires approval best by an independent commission such as a committee of the higher court judges or by parliament majority votes		
Self-management and independence	In case there are government officials, they only have a consultative status		
	The Mechanism reports directly to parliament		
	Members enjoy immunity for the official work they do		
	The employees and the headquarters of the national mechanism enjoy immunity		
	State funding is sufficient to ensure that independence of workers		
	Government funding is sufficient to implement basic programs to promote and protect women's human rights		
	Funding is not under financial control that may affect independence		
	Freedom to fundraise from multiple local and international sources		
	The budget put by the mechanism:		
	Is separate from the budget of any other department		
	The mechanism has the mandate to discuss its budget before the parliament		
	A safe budget:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not subject to discretionary cuts in the year it was approved 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not subject to discretionary cuts from one year to the other 		

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Looking into issues	The mechanism can look into any issue or case within its mandate on its own initiative based on a proposal by its male or female members or from any other person		
Meetings	The mechanism can communicate with the public or the media without the need for approvals from higher authorities		
	The mechanism meets regularly and in a general assembly		
	Special meetings can be held when necessary		
	All members are officially invited for the meetings		
The organizational structure	The mechanism can form working groups (composed of members who are not members of the mechanism itself)		
	The mechanism can open local offices and branches		

Principle 4: Pluralism and diversity

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Membership/employees	Pluralism in the appointment of male and female members		
	Composed of representatives of most of the social forces, including women organizations, NGOs, unions and professional and labor associations, study centers and universities		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composed of representatives of the most vulnerable groups (the elderly, persons with disabilities and minorities) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One member from representative consultative councils or any similar structures to facilitate and ensure pluralistic participation 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of members guarantees gender balance 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of employees guarantees gender balance 		
Consultation and work	The mechanism consults with other commissions responsible for the enhancement and protection of women's rights, their empowerment and for gender mainstreaming in all areas		

Consultation and work	The mechanism consults with NGOs working in the field of human rights, women organization and those working in similar fields		
	The mechanism implements joint projects with NGOs working in the field of human rights, women organizations and those working in similar fields.		

Principle 5: Sufficient resources

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Financial independence	State funding is sufficient to ensure the independence of employees		
	Government funding is sufficient to implement basic programs for the promotion and protection of women's human rights		
	Funding is not under financial control that may affect independence		
	The budget established by the mechanism:		
	The budget prepared by the mechanism		
	A safe budget:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not subject to discretionary cuts in the year it was approved 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not subject to discretionary cuts from one year to the other 		

Principle 6: Sufficient powers to investigate

Principle	Requirements	Yes	No
Discussing issues and investigating them	The mechanism can look into any issue or case within its competence on its own initiative based on a proposal from its members or from any other person		
	The mechanism can listen to anyone or obtain information or documents necessary to do its work		
	The law provides for the right to enter any building to continue investigations		
	The law penalizes obstructing obtaining or denying access to a person, document, or building		
	The mechanism has legal authority to enter and monitor any detention place, prison or shelter		
	The mechanism can enter detention places, prisons or shelters without warning		

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