



Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Gender and Economy

Preamble

1. The Working Group on Gender and Economy (WG on Gender) is a subsidiary body within the governing structure of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The member countries of the Programme are: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) provide overall support to the Programme.

2. Gender and Economy is a priority area which needs further efforts as declared in the resolution E/CN.6/2005/L.9 on women's economic advancement, adopted at the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (New York, February-March 2005). Its importance was also underlined by the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit. At the regional level, the Review of the Beijing process (Geneva, December 2004) concluded that in the countries of Central Asia, women's economic position deteriorated and female poverty was on a rise. In this context, the proposal to consider establishing a new WG on Gender within the SPECA framework was adopted at the International Conference on Strengthening Sub-regional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia and the Future Role of SPECA (Astana, May 2005). The WG on Gender shall start functioning and shall report its Terms of Reference and its Programme of Work to the SPECA Governing Council.

Objectives

3. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to support its member countries in developing sub-regional cooperation and in integrating their economies into the world economy, the WG on Gender shall: (i) raise awareness among all stakeholders on gender and economy issues and exchange good practices in mainstreaming gender into economic policies; (ii) develop pilot projects in selected areas such as financing and other support measures for women's entrepreneurship and gender budgets; and (iii) promote cross-sectional linkages and synergies with other relevant areas of SPECA activities, such as statistics, trade and ICT.

Participants

4. The WG on Gender shall comprise National representatives, nominated by the Governments of the SPECA member countries. The National representatives shall be senior officials involved in the formulation and implementation or be aware of national policies and programmes, which affect national gender machineries and economic ministries in their respective countries and able to effectively follow up the recommendations and decisions of the WG on Gender. Selected NGOs representatives will be also invited to be part of the Working Group.

5. Each participating country shall also nominate, on a permanent or on an ad hoc basis, experts on Gender and Economy as required.

6. Neighbouring countries of the SPECA region, such as Georgia, are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the WG on Gender, especially when issues concerning cooperation with neighbouring regions are discussed.

7. Relevant sub-regional organizations implementing programmes on Gender and Economy are invited to nominate their representatives to participate in the work of the WG on Gender.

8. United Nations bodies as well as other bilateral and multilateral agencies and organizations operating in the Gender sectors in the SPECA member countries are invited to participate in the work of the new Group and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

Modalities of operation

9. The WG on Gender shall elect two Co-Chairpersons from among the National Representatives nominated by the Governments of the SPECA member countries.

10. The Secretariats of UNECE and UNESCAP will provide secretarial support to the WG on Gender. The Secretariats will facilitate the preparation and organization of the sessions of the Working Group and will maintain records of its activities.

11. The WG on Gender shall hold annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries.

Funding

12. The operational costs of the WG on Gender as well as the costs of participation of National representatives and experts in its sessions shall as a rule be borne by the Governments of participating countries. In addition, the UNECE and UNESCAP shall support, within their available resources, the functioning of the WG on Gender.

13. The WG on Gender in cooperation with partner agencies shall also seek funds and technical assistance for its operations from multilateral and bilateral donors.

Programme of work and activities

14. The WG on Gender shall develop, agree upon and implement an annual work programme.

15. The WG on Gender shall formulate and agree upon specific projects and programmes and seek extra-budgetary resources for their implementation.

Other matters

16. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed in 3 years or sooner if the SPECA member countries so decide.

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