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IOM International Organization for Migration  
OIM Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations  
OIM Organización Internacional para las Migraciones

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**REPORT BY THE WORKING GROUP ON GENDER ISSUES  
ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING  
IN THE ORGANIZATION**

## **REPORT BY THE WORKING GROUP ON GENDER ISSUES ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE ORGANIZATION**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The IOM Council adopted the IOM Staff and Programme Policy on Gender in 1995. While a gender mainstreaming strategy was devised in 1997, its application has proved slower than originally planned. Despite the existence of a written policy endorsed by the governing bodies, commitment from the leadership, and financial and human resources devoted to the task, gender mainstreaming is still far from being an automatic process.

2. This had already been recognized as a result of the gender sensitivity survey launched by the Working Group on Gender Issues (WGGI) in 2002. Under the direct supervision and guidance of the Deputy Director General, the WGGI's programme for 2003 was designed to address this through a two-pronged approach: (a) continued support to project activities which could serve as catalysts for future project development by combining a gender dimension with migration; and (b) work on increasing staff sensitivity to gender issues.

### **II. ACTIVITIES IN 2003**

#### **Training**

3. To assist staff in broadening their sensitivity to gender issues, two training events were organized. The first was a workshop held at Headquarters in May to:

- increase sensitivity to gender issues in general;
- provide hands-on insight into gender mainstreaming from a regional perspective;
- gain new insights on issues and challenges for professional women in the public sector.

4. Five Gender Focal Points (GFPs) from the Field and one from Headquarters gave presentations on how they applied the gender perspective and gender analysis to their work:

- **She, He, It, They ...: Open Questions for the Realization of Gender Equality (IOM Zagreb)**
- **Gender in Conflict and Transition: Survivors and Sustainers (MRF Washington, D.C.)**
- **Addressing the Human Trafficking Problem through a Gender Lens (MRF Dhaka)**
- **Gender Mainstreaming in Togo, Getting Men Involved (Headquarters)**
- **Migration Flows from a Gender Perspective: Undocumented Labour Migration from Nicaragua to Costa Rica and Internal Displacement in Colombia (IOM Bogota)**
- **Female Excision (FGM) (MRF Nairobi)**

5. An external gender expert on career development, diversity, and interrelations in the workplace from the International Labour Organization (ILO) gave a presentation on “**Breaking the Glass Ceiling, Women in Management**”.
6. The second workshop was held in October 2003 in Istanbul. Its main purpose was to draw a broad range of views on strategic issues stemming from IOM’s gender policy. A mix of men and women, and senior, middle, and junior Gender Focal Points from Headquarters and the Field were invited to review or draft three important documents:
  - (i) IOM’s brochure on gender policy and mainstreaming, published in 1998, which needed updating to better incorporate the male migrant perspective and include gender perspectives in other issues, such as HIV/AIDS, counter-trafficking, integration, post-conflict activities, and unaccompanied minors.
  - (ii) A set of responses to address the issues raised in the gender sensitivity survey in 2002, in which close to 500 staff members participated.
  - (iii) An assessment of the 1998-2003 WGGI Plan of Action and drafting of the next guidelines for 2003 to 2008.
7. The workshop contributed significantly to advancing the work on these key documents.
8. Participants in both workshops gained enhanced knowledge on gender issues in general, and about specific programmes and issues in particular. They recommended that training events should be organized at least once a year in order to sensitize and involve more staff in gender mainstreaming.

### **Recent Achievements**

9. Although substantial weaknesses remain to be addressed, there have been many concrete achievements by the WGGI in its outreach to staff and migrants:
  - A generic Fact Sheet on Gender and Migration was published in 2002. It will be updated on a regular basis to illustrate gender mainstreaming throughout its activities.
  - Sessions on gender issues are being introduced in briefing or induction programmes for new or targeted staff members, such as Chiefs of Mission, Project Developers and Administrative Support Officers. A formal CD ROM briefing kit on gender mainstreaming is planned for 2004 in cooperation with Staff Development and Training. This kit will be shared with all Missions and Headquarters departments.
  - Vacancy notices are circulated to Gender Focal Points and posted on the United Nations web site of “Women Watch” to ensure that more qualified women receive them.
  - A career development survey by gender is in progress, in cooperation with the Human Resources Management Department.

- A non-voting *ex-officio* WGGI member attends all meetings of the Appointments and Postings Board dealing with candidatures for vacancy notices in an effort to ensure that gender balance is borne in mind.
- Three workshops were organized this summer in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Guinea. These workshops targeted women in post-conflict situations and aimed at their empowerment through micro-credit management and micro-enterprise development.
- In cooperation with the ILO Regional Office for Africa, a directory of “African Women at the Service of the Union” was published to assist the African Union in its gender mainstreaming efforts in the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).
- An ongoing quarterly publication of the Gender and Migration News Bulletin is posted on the IOM web site.
- There is an ongoing direct monitoring and assessment of selected and financed projects with a specific gender dimension.

10. As to specific project activities in 2003, a summary can be found in Annex I of the attached report. As in the past, a questionnaire to assess the gender dimension of all WGGI projects is attached in Annex II.

### **III. WEAKNESSES**

11. When examining why gender mainstreaming has not been as rapid as hoped, the WGGI has identified a number of weaknesses. While IOM has an impressive network of Gender Focal Points around the world now numbering 80 (including the 20 members of the Working Group on Gender Issues in Headquarters), there is only a core group that effectively bears the responsibility for catalysing gender mainstreaming throughout the Organization. A survey is planned in the near future to determine the constraints and obstacles facing GFPs that have hindered their efforts at gender mainstreaming in their respective Missions. Conversely, regional networks in Africa and the Americas have provided noteworthy examples of what could and should be done to reinforce the process and set an example.

12. The review of the 1998-2003 WGGI Plan of Action concluded that the WGGI guidelines for the next five years needed to be more realistic in order to achieve greater overall success, perhaps at a slower but more durable pace. More internal training events on gender – perhaps on an inter-agency exchange basis for cost-saving reasons – should be organized; more gender analysis and budgeting should be included when developing projects; more performance indicators need to be incorporated into all projects; and a gender sensitivity clause should be added to all personnel vacancy notices and terms of reference for staff. In sum, more visibility for gender issues is necessary both in programme and staffing matters.

13. Moreover, in the rapidly evolving world of gender and migration issues, the WGGI has concluded that the gender specific approach of IOM’s programme policy should be broadened to a more gender balanced one. However, this evolution should not be to the detriment of the

special care and consideration needed to meet the specific needs of migrant women. Projects should continue to target migrant women but not to the detriment of gender mainstreamed projects. This needs to be applied in all IOM projects. It is only when projects are analysed for their gender dimension that the benefits will be greater for both migrant women and men. Therefore, an important WGGI project for 2004 will be to update IOM's policy brochure, along with gender mainstreaming guidelines, and the development of gender and migration indicators for distribution to all stakeholders.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

14. The needs for gender mainstreaming are as great, if not greater, than six years ago when the current strategy was initiated. The Working Group on Gender Issues feels that more realistic goals need to be set so that progress can be surer and have a more lasting impact. The WGGI also realizes it needs to take a more proactive role in gaining visibility. Until the majority of staff are convinced of the benefits of gender analysis and mainstreaming for both women and men and accordingly incorporate this analysis and objective thinking into project development for migrant women and men, progress is likely to remain short-lived and superficial. The Working Group on Gender Issues needs continuing support from its leadership and the Member States in order to pursue its efforts for the benefit of all its stakeholders: States, migrants and staff.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A request for funding from the Council for future project support, ongoing training events, and new initiatives can be found in the Programme and Budget for 2004 (MC/2117) – General Programme Support, Chapter VIII.6 – Gender Issues Activities.

## Annex I

### STATUS REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF WGGI-SPONSORED PROJECTS<sup>2</sup>

#### A. Organization of gender sensitivity training sessions for IOM personnel and local counterparts dealing with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Colombia

1. Over recent years, internal displacement due to the armed conflict in Colombia has increased and is now creating important social dilemmas. This displacement affects women and men differently and it is important to bear this in mind when developing projects for them. Research in Colombia has found that displacement creates new family schemes and influences the roles and relations between men, women and children.

2. IOM's post-emergency assistance programme for displaced groups and receptor communities is being developed in seven departments in Colombia and is promoting projects within different interrelated areas, such as income-generating activities, housing, health, education, community stabilization and communication. Some of the projects in these areas are designed to directly benefit women, and while they have been successful in empowering the internally displaced women and increasing their access to development, much remains to be done.

3. IOM personnel and local counterparts in Bogota identified the need for practical guidelines on how to incorporate a gender perspective throughout the whole project development process to enhance their impact on IDPs. Consequently, a practical guide for the promotion of a gender perspective in work with IDPs was developed by IOM. The guidelines *per se*, however, are not the purpose of this gender mainstreaming process, but would culminate in a series of workshops to promote and familiarize IOM personnel and counterparts with this tool to ultimately benefit the IDPs in Colombia.

4. Thus, in September 2003, IOM Bogota organized and implemented a series of nine one-day workshops on gender perspectives targeting male and female IOM personnel and local counterparts in each department having an IOM presence, i.e. Norte de Santander, Santander, Chocó, Valle de Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo and Caquetá, Huila and Cauca.

5. Participants in these workshops felt they had benefited from the demonstration of the advantages of gender mainstreaming in projects for IDPs. Possibilities for extending gender perspectives in project development are being explored for assistance programmes for ex-combatant children and for peace programmes.

**Constraints:** none encountered

**WGGI funding:** USD 10,000

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<sup>2</sup> Full reports on the projects can be made available upon request.

**B. Sponsorship of a book on the “Feminization of Migration, North American Perspectives”**

6. The WGGI concluded that very little literature had been published or sponsored by IOM on migrant women in general other than on counter-trafficking issues. The last available study was the Report of an Expert Group Meeting on the “Temporary Labour Migration of Women”, published in cooperation with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in 1999. The WGGI believes that if IOM is to remain a leading reference institution on migration, it should produce another publication on migrant women. The interest in sponsoring this initiative lies in the possibility for future publications on the feminization of migration, from other regional perspectives.

7. The basic outline of this book includes the following subjects:

- Chapter One: Introduction material / What is gender / Gender theory
- Chapter Two: Labour migration
- Chapter Three: Remittances and development
- Chapter Four: Trafficking
- Chapter Five: Smuggling
- Chapter Six: Rape
- Chapter Seven: Gendered asylum issues / FGM

8. This book should enhance other ongoing activities by the WGGI and help staff members to better understand the concerns, obstacles and vulnerabilities of half of the world’s migrant population – women.

**Constraints:** Due to efforts to be exhaustive, as most published information on the migration of women is anecdotal, additional research was required, and some published information was not available when needed. As a result, the author was unable to submit the manuscript according to the original deadline. The initial draft will now be ready by the end of 2003 and the book should be published in 2004.

**WGGI funding: USD 5,000**

## Annex II

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Did the implementation of your project contribute to raising further gender awareness among your partners – including government – or Mission staff other than for staff directly involved in the project? If so, how?
2. Have other gender-related activities or projects resulted from the implementation since the allotment of discretionary income was meant to support other gender-related initiatives?
3. Did you feel encouraged to further develop gender mainstreamed activities while implementing this project? Were there constraints that were clearly directed towards the fact that it was a typical gender-related project?
4. As the main objectives of the project were to strengthen the Organization's commitment to examine a range of gender-related concerns, integrate gender mainstreaming into IOM's planning and operational activities, as well as to serve as models for further gender mainstreamed project development, what were the lessons learned in this context?
5. Do you think there was a balanced impact on men **and** women in your project? If so, what was the relationship between the two?
6. By implementing this initiative, do you feel an enhanced capacity to design and implement gender mainstreamed projects? In the same perspective, has your network of contacts on gender issues increased as a result of the project?
7. Would you consider the project successful from a gender mainstreaming perspective?
8. Through the implementation of the project, have you accumulated more relevant gender-specific data that could help you to define innovative tools to address the needs of migrants?