



TOGETHER
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GENDER EQUALITY
AND THE EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN: **AN OVERVIEW**



“Empowering women is empowering humanity. Gender equality and women’s empowerment is central to UNIDO’s work as it is not only a matter of human rights, but also a precondition for sustainable development and economic growth, which are drivers of poverty reduction and social integration. When women and men are more equal, economies grow faster, more people are lifted out of poverty and the overall well-being of societies is enhanced.”

Statement of UNIDO Director General LI Yong
on International Women’s Day, 8 March 2015

UNIDO'S APPROACH TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Gender architecture

UNIDO is committed to promoting gender equality and has built the necessary structure to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the Organization. The Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, adopted in 2009, was reviewed in 2015 and a new policy, aligned with the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP), was agreed.

In order to implement the new policy, UNIDO has established a Gender Mainstreaming Steering Board (GMSB), chaired by the Director General, to ensure accountability for gender equality results; assigned Gender Focal Points in all divisions and field offices; and created an Office for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women within the Department of Human Resources Management in the Office of the Director General. This office is headed by a Gender Coordinator, who acts as the Secretary of the GMSB, coordinates and conducts gender mainstreaming activities and is the Organization's Gender Focal Point vis-à-vis the United Nations System and public and private stakeholders.

To implement its commitments, UNIDO has also developed a Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategy for 2016-2019. The strategy was approved by UNIDO's Executive Board and presented to the 16th session of the UNIDO General Conference in December 2015, which also adopted a resolution addressing "UNIDO, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" (GC.16/Res.3) that reinforces the priorities of the updated gender policy and strategy. The resolution requires a report from the Director General on its implementation, to be submitted at the 17th session of the General Conference in 2017.

Partnerships

UNIDO seeks to increase its collaboration with relevant United Nations entities, including UN Women, and to strengthen its contribution to the promotion and implementation of gender equality initiatives at the policy, regional and country levels. To that end, in late 2015, the UNIDO Director General met with the heads of UN Women, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to discuss how to strengthen joint efforts to deliver on the economic empowerment of women in the context of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development. UNIDO also continues to systematically participate in several relevant inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and thematic and donor networks, including the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), and to coordinate global and regional events. It also collaborates with a number of private sector partners to promote gender equality and empower women, especially young women.

Organizational culture

Promoting gender parity, creating a gender-sensitive culture and furthering accountability are the three gender priority areas through which UNIDO seeks to advance gender equality and empower women within UNIDO. Besides having a goal of 50:50 gender balance at all levels, the Organization regularly conducts training to help create a gender-sensitive culture and shares informational materials to raise awareness of gender-based discrimination. The establishment of a Code of Ethical Conduct and the incorporation of flexible work-time arrangements have been two important steps towards creating a gender-sensitive culture at UNIDO. These measures also create awareness and build capacities for mainstreaming gender into UNIDO's technical cooperation.

Gender mainstreaming UNIDO's technical cooperation

To harness the economic potential of women—half of the world's population—UNIDO mainstreams gender in all its core programmes and activities, complemented by specific interventions for women's economic empowerment. The Organization seeks to contribute to structural changes at the level of policies, institutions, enterprises and communities. As part of UNIDO's approach to gender equality and the empowerment of women over the coming years, attention will be given to formulating and implementing gender-sensitive industrial policies to help address gender imbalances in the manufacturing sector (such as wage gaps) and women's unequal representation in industrial leadership positions. Sectors with high potential to empower women economically will be particularly supported.

The following section of this brochure showcases how UNIDO mainstreams gender into its technical cooperation activities, grouped by thematic priority.



ADVANCING ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Context

In today's globalized economy, trade plays a leading role in providing developing countries with prospects for sustainable economic growth. Yet trade activities tend to have different effects on women and men: the former tend to be more affected by the negative side effects of trade liberalization and face bigger challenges than men in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by trade. This situation arises out of gender-based biases in education and training, inequalities in income and control of resources, as well as unequal access to productive inputs such as credit, land and technology.



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Strategy

Recognizing the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women for economic growth, productivity and innovation, UNIDO endeavours to:

- Strengthen the capacity of national and subnational governments to develop and implement policies on industry, trade, quality, technology and innovation, and legal frameworks that promote an enabling environment for economic growth that does not discriminate against women and girls
- Promote female investors and entrepreneurial role models, as well as knowledge and mentoring networks at the local, national, regional and international levels
- Strengthen the participation of women as employers and employees in manufacturing, industrial services, clusters and domestic and global industrial value and supply chains; and increase their involvement in innovation, science and technology
- Increase opportunities for both young women and men to make life choices that go beyond gender-limiting cultural norms by empowering them with entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and knowledge

Selected projects



TRADE CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR ZAMBIA, PHASE II (2013-2016; US\$1.7 million; Norway)

JOINT UNIDO-WTO TRADE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK FOR ZAMBIA (2009-2013; US\$2.8 million; Norway)

Since 2011, UNIDO has been helping Zambia re-engineer its institutions working on quality in order to boost exports. Given that historically women's participation in technical and leadership positions in this sector has been an issue, the Zambia Weights and Measures Agency (ZWMA) has, with the support of UNIDO, drafted a gender policy that commits the department of human resources to encouraging the recruitment of women candidates. As a result, ZWMA has hired women in technical and management positions for the first time. Since the policy also states that women ought to be prioritized in technical and management training, it will facilitate the recruitment of more women at all levels in the future. In the case of the Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS), a gender focal point was designated to ensure efficient cooperation on gender, as well as better gender mainstreaming practices. UNIDO plans to hold further training on gender mainstreaming in Zambia's national quality infrastructure.

BETTER WORK AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME (BEST): QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE, FISHERIES AND TEXTILES (2010-2015; US\$16 million; European Union, NORAD)

Over 15,000 stakeholders have taken part in training and awareness-raising activities as part of this five-year long programme that strengthened the aquaculture capacities of the Department of Fisheries in Bangladesh and introduced inspection methods in line with international market demands. Since the Bangladeshi fishing industry is very much male-dominated, training courses were provided to women-only groups and farmer couples (husbands and wives). The women-only courses led to beneficiaries improving their business practices, while the farmer-couple training led to most trainees experiencing increased incomes, as well as a more equitable share of responsibilities between husbands and wives. Many women credited the training with giving them a new voice in the household, once they became acknowledged as contributors to the family economy. By empowering women in the workforce and at home, the project helped to ensure food security and advanced the socio-economic development of poor and marginal households.



CREATING SHARED PROSPERITY

Context

Women and girls still make up 70 per cent of the world's extreme poor. Most of them live in isolated rural areas, have little access to resources and manage to subsist through small-scale productive activities. Gender biases in the legal and institutional frameworks and patriarchal cultural norms are particularly detrimental to rural women and prevent them from realizing their full economic potential.



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Strategy

To enhance the role of women as drivers of poverty reduction and social cohesion and to bring about more gender equality, UNIDO helps develop competitive agro-industries that create jobs and sustainable livelihoods for the rural poor. It achieves this by:

- Promoting equal opportunities for women and men to develop competitive agriculture-based value chains
- Addressing gender-related constraints to the transformation of informal businesses into formal businesses
- Strengthening women's entrepreneurial and technical skills, business support services, advocacy and self-help networks and by improving women's access to technologies
- Paying increased attention to integrating gender dimensions in post-crisis and human security interventions, such as restoring and upgrading local productive capacities and livelihoods, and strengthening the economic resilience of the most vulnerable, in particular, female, heads of households

Selected projects



PROMOTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION (2015-2016; US\$1 million; Government of Italy)

UNIDO is taking a number of actions in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia to support women entrepreneurs. Since the beginning of this project in 2015, UNIDO has promoted a public-private dialogue on necessary policy reforms to create a more conducive business environment for women and has made recommendations and highlighted action points for all six countries involved. It has also reinforced women business associations and has, so far, enhanced the financial literacy skills of over 100 business associations' representatives. Having also held over 300 meetings between entrepreneurs, associations and Italian companies, assisted 180 women with the formulation of their business proposals and provided training on strategic planning for the establishment of a regional business associations' consortium, the project is making long strides towards facilitating business partnerships and investments, and empowering women entrepreneurs in the region.

REINTEGRATION OF LIBERIAN REFUGEES THROUGH MULTI-SKILLS TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (2013-2015; US\$1.2 million; Government of Japan)

The project trained 544 women and young women and men who, after being refugees, had returned to Liberia and needed a livelihood. Market-driven vocational training and entrepreneurship training provided beneficiaries with micro-industrial skills in baking, beauty care, dressmaking, information technology, masonry and welding. Out of the total number of project beneficiaries, 82 per cent were women. The project resulted in a 70 per cent increase in beneficiaries' income, with women seeing a comparatively larger increase in their income than men, and this contributed directly to women's increased self-reliance. Through this project, UNIDO also built the capacities of partner institutions to conduct entrepreneurship training and educated 38 trainers of trainers, which will ensure the continued socio-economic reintegration of female Liberian returnees.



SAFEGUARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

Context

It is widely recognized that women are more vulnerable than men to climate change, pollution and resource scarcity. Due to prescribed gender roles, in many developing countries women spend much of their time on domestic duties such as carrying water and fuel, washing clothes and making fires for cooking and heating. The limited access to key resources such as energy and finance further diminishes their already restricted decision-making power, domestically and socially.



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Strategy

Engaging women beyond traditional female duties—and above all in decision-making processes—is essential to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and to prevent further environmental degradation. UNIDO therefore focuses on:

- Women's access to sustainable energy, to resource-efficient and cleaner production practices and to technologies that reduce time burdens and detriments to health
- Women's role as key agents of environmental protection, sustainable resource management and energy provision, whether as entrepreneurs or as employees integrated throughout the value chain
- Women's engagement, leadership and decision-making in green industries, through awareness-raising, networking and peer support, with a view to minimizing the adverse impacts of industrial development on ecosystems and human health
- Women and men's distinct needs and priorities, including in the implementation of international agreements, national and municipal environmental regulations, technology development and transfer and capacity-building

Selected projects



PROMOTING RENEWABLE ENERGY-BASED MINI-GRIDS FOR PRODUCTIVE USES IN RURAL AREAS IN THE GAMBIA (2012-2015; US\$ 1.8 million; GEF4)

GREENING THE PRODUCTIVE SECTORS IN THE GAMBIA: PROMOTING THE USE AND INTEGRATION OF SMALL TO MEDIUM-SCALE RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS IN THE PRODUCTIVE SECTORS (2015-2017; US\$ 1.3 million; GEF5)

The Government of the Gambia is committed to seeing more women and men set up renewable energy businesses. With the support of the EU Energy Initiative Partnership Dialogue Facility, UNIDO is assisting in the development and adoption of a renewable energy law that includes a plan for establishing and implementing a renewable energy entrepreneurship fund for women and youth. More than 270 women and young women and men have directly benefited from the project so far. Over 3,700 have also benefited indirectly through the installation of an 8.3kWp photovoltaic hybrid system at the Mbolo Training Centre (to be scaled up to a 20.7kWp photovoltaic hybrid system), which powers handicraft activities and training. Women are also provided with the opportunity to install, test and maintain the systems.

WOMEN IN GREEN INDUSTRY SUBCHAPTER OF THE GREEN INDUSTRY PLATFORM (2014-2015; US\$57,000 [subcomponent]; UNIDO)

Recognizing the need to promote and encourage female green entrepreneurship and leadership, the Green Industry Platform has established a chapter specifically targeting women. The platform was launched jointly by UNIDO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to bring together business, governments and civil society in order to secure commitments and mobilize action in support of sustainable industrial models. The Women in Green Industry Chapter of the Green Industry Platform connects female professionals with a shared interest in Green Industry and provides them with a platform for networking, peer support and exchange. Furthermore, the chapter gives exposure to success stories of female entrepreneurs and leaders, commissions best-practice and best-policy studies dealing with gender aspects in green industrial policy development and, ultimately, promotes female leadership. All activities of the chapter are closely coordinated with UN Women, Global Action Plan International and other agencies active in this field and are linked to the Knowledge Gateway on Women's Economic Empowerment.



*"Countries with more gender equality have better economic growth. Companies with more women leaders perform better. Peace agreements that include women are more durable. Parliaments with more women enact more legislation on key social issues such as health, education, anti-discrimination and child support. **The evidence is clear: equality for women means progress for all.**"*

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 8 March 2014



