

A stylized illustration of a balance scale, rendered in a light green color, positioned on the left side of the page. The scale is slightly tilted, with the right pan being lower than the left pan.

## **Evaluation of the “Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (1997–2005)”**



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Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) with partners

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## Abbreviations

ADF	Afghan Development Forum
AMOR	Department for Quality Assurance
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
BESSIP	Basic Education Sub-Sector Investment Program (Zambia)
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDCs	Community Development Councils (Afghanistan/NSP)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (Zambia)
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DCM	Development Cooperation Manual (Norad/MFA)
EC	European Commission
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Monitoring Information System (Zambia/BESSIP)
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FOKUS	Forum for Women and Development
FTI	Fast Track Initiative (for Education for all)
GAP	From emergency to development assistance funding
GBS	General Budget Support
GENDERNET	Gender Network in OECD/DAC
GFPP	Gender Focal Point Persons (Zambia)
GAD	Gender and Development
GID	Gender in Development
GIDD	Gender in Development Division (Zambia)
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GRZ	Government of Republic of Zambia
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HIP	Harmonisation In Practice (Zambia)
HQ	Headquarters
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (Afghanistan)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDD	Institute Development Department, University of Birmingham
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
KS	Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities
LCG	Local Consultative Group (donor forum Bangladesh)
LEP	Lateral Entry Programme (Afghanistan)
LMG	Like Minded Group (of donors)
MDC	Ministry of Development Cooperation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affair (Afghanistan)
MWCA	Ministry for Women and Children Affairs (Bangladesh)
NCG	Nordic Consulting Group

NCWD	National Council for Women's Development (Bangladesh)
NDF	National Development Framework (Afghanistan)
NDP	National Development Plan (Zambia)
NIBR	Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGOCC	Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee (Zambia)
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NSP	National Solidarity Programme (Afghanistan)
NUFU	The Norwegian Council for Higher Education's Programme for Development Research and Education
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Co-operation Directorate
PAF	Performance Assessment Framework (in relation to budget support)
PEMD	Planning and Economic Management Department, Ministry of Finance and National Planning, MoFNM (Zambia)
PEMFA	Public Expenditure Management and Financial Accountability Programme (Zambia)
PFA	Platform for Action (4th International Conference for Women, Beijing, 1995)
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategies
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSD	Private Sector Development
PTA	Prosjekt Tiltak Aktivitet (financial management system in MFA/Norad)
Sida	Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
SOS	Department of human development and service delivery (Norad)
SSØ	Department for governance and macro economics (Norad)
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
ToR	Terms of Reference
UKS	Norwegian Foreign Service Institute (MFA/Norad training institute)
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGEI	UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNICEF)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMACA	United Nations Mine Action Centre Afghanistan
USAID	US Agency for International Development
VP	Activity plans (virksomhetsplaner)
W&GE	Women and Gender Equality
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organisation
WID	Women in Development
WIDD	Women in Development Department (Zambia)
WLUML	Women Living under Muslim Law
WWB	Women's World Banking
ZAWA	Zambia Wildlife Authority

## Executive Summary

This report is an evaluation of the implementation of the Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (the Strategy), and is an analysis of how the development cooperation system, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Norad and the embassies in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Zambia have organised their Women and Gender Equality (W&GE) efforts, and how this system interacts with and collaborates with external partners. This evaluation focuses on bilateral aid, primarily the institutional aspects, including organisation, resources, communication and decision-making. The argument for focusing on bilateral aid is that recently other studies and reports have been produced on W&GE in multilateral organisations.

The Strategy was approved in 1997, after five years of preparations. The main message of the Strategy was that W&GE should be integrated into all development cooperation efforts; in addition efforts should be made to targeting women directly.

The following priority areas were identified in the Strategy:

- Rights
- Participation in decision-making processes
- Economic participation
- Education
- Health
- Management of natural resources and the environment

Norwegian development cooperation has placed strong emphasis on women and gender equality (W&GE) for many decades. There is still strong support for W&GE in Norwegian development cooperation, and W&GE has a prominent place in all major policy documents and in most strategies. The main challenge is to move from policies and goals to translating W&GE into country level dialogue, programming and operations.

The administration has been receptive to gender mainstreaming in policy goals and in mentioning gender as a cross cutting issue in important programme and country documents. The administration has been much less receptive to institutionalising this concern, and the balance between mainstreaming and targeting has not been systematically addressed.

Political commitment expressed in goals and objectives needs to be translated into a commitment to making W&GE an active and visible part of country dialogue, programming and reporting.

### **Institutional resources**

#### ***Staffing and organisation***

Human resources are inadequate for the implementation of the Strategy and support for W&GE efforts in Norway's development cooperation. In the MFA, there is one gender advisor in the Department of Global Affairs, strengthened last year with the addition of a temporary junior desk officer; and a part time advisor in the Department for Development Policy. These resources are not adequate today when bilateral state-to-state cooperation, including dialogue with the embassies on development policies, has been moved to the MFA.

Norad abolished its full time position as gender advisor in 2001, and has since then had only part-time gender advisors.



### *Recommendations*

- It is recommended that MFA create a unit for W&GE work that also has the capacity to address W&GE in bilateral development cooperation, and to work on synergies between bilateral and multilateral aid at the country level. It is also recommended that MFA reconsider in which department this unit should be placed.
- It is recommended that Norad create a full-time gender advisor position with a mandate that includes an active role in mainstreaming. The gender advisor should be better positioned, perhaps reporting directly to the relevant director in Norad. Gender advisor capacity in Norad needs to be strengthened in macroeconomics and gender, and in the poverty analysis and poverty reduction strategies (PRS), as well as in mainstreaming in new aid modalities in general. Capacity in targeting women's support should also be enhanced.
- Organisational arrangements need to be improved. It is recommended that MFA and Norad consider establishing a thematic network on W&GE in the MFA/Norad. It is also recommended that embassies appoint gender focal point persons, and that regular and relevant W&GE information be shared within the system, including the embassies.

### *Handbook, tools and training*

A Handbook on Gender and Empowerment Assessment was published in 2000, and systematic training sessions took place in 1999-2000. No other tools and methods have been developed, and little analytical work has been carried out in MFA or Norad on how to mainstream gender concerns and work on W&GE in the new aid structure and new aid modalities; or to operationalise gender as a cross-cutting issue.

There is generally limited use of both the Strategy and the handbook in Norad, the MFA and the embassies. Knowledge that the Strategy exists seems to improve the awareness of the topic, and the handbook may be of assistance to new people joining the MFA/Norad. Norad's Department for Quality Assurance (AMOR) has been requested by summer 2006 to develop and update handbooks and other methods and tools, to complement the Development Cooperation Manual.

### *Recommendation*

It is recommended that MFA and Norad assess the scope and format for a W&GE training programme, as part of the work with the revision of the Strategy. Experiences so far point to developing of W&GE modules into other training programs as the most effective approach. The new W&GE training also needs to address W&GE in macro economic policy issues and the new aid modalities. Mainstreaming of W&GE in joint donor training should be encouraged, especially at the country level.

### *Reporting*

Responsibility and accountability for gender mainstreaming at headquarters is currently weak. This is a situation that Norway shares with other donors. No proper accountability systems are in place, and the W&GE reports in Norad have had little strategic value and do not function as watchdog reports.

### *Recommendation*

- It is recommended that MFA and Norad revisit and revise the current reporting format for the W&GE reports, to make them more strategic, and establish a system for follow up to take action on issues of concern identified in the reports.

### *Funding for analytic and innovative work*

There is no earmarked funding for analytical, proactive W&GE efforts. Non-earmarked resources are available in general budget lines for more proactive support for targeting and mainstreaming W&GE, but this funding opportunity does not seem to translate into activities.

### *Recommendations*

- It is recommended that MFA and Norad consider the option of establishing a separate time-

limited fund for analytical work and catalytic activities for mainstreaming and innovative efforts on W&GE. This should not be a fund for women's projects, but for strengthening W&GE in overall development cooperation, with an emphasis on innovative practices and with a special focus on new aid modalities. A carefully organised and managed gender fund could improve the mainstreaming of gender into planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of projects and programmes, including budget support. However, the Evaluation Team also recognises powerful arguments against a separate gender fund.

- It is also recommended that Norad do a stocktaking on to what extent and how W&GE issues are addressed in current programs for research and higher education, with a view to how this contribute to skills and capacity building both in partner countries and in Norway.

### ***Partner dialogue in Norway***

W&GE is not an explicit issue on the dialogue between MFA and Norad with Norwegian partners, whether it is NGOs, public sector institutions, private sector or research. There seems to be ample scope for increasing the scope for W&GE in partner dialogue, both to promote W&GE and as an instrument to achieve other goals, through improved synergy.

Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS), the umbrella organisation for NGOs working with gender issues, has not been transformed into a competent knowledge partner for Norad.

When the policy on the mobilisation and use of Norwegian institutions in development cooperation (the Norway Axis) was developed in the 1990s, no or little effort was put into identifying Norwegian partners in W&GE work.

### ***Recommendations***

- It is recommended that MFA and Norad consider how W&GE may be an active part of dialogue with partners in Norway, both to promote W&GE as an end in itself and as an instrument to achieve other goals, through improved synergy.
- There should be a potential for a greater role for FOKUS as a watchdog, but also a knowledge partner on W&GE for MFA and Norad.
- It is recommended that work be done on identifying knowledge partners on W&GE from public and private agencies, including research and NGOs.

## **Country level W&GE efforts**

### ***Country dialogue***

Currently, the most important country dialogue seems to be held on macro economic issues, budget support and public expenditure reviews. W&GE issues seem to be conspicuously absent from this dialogue.

The country case studies in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Zambia document that Norway has a long tradition for support to W&GE. Partners in the South conveyed a strong message that Norway should continue to have a high profile on W&GE; that Norway should be courageous and active in their support; and that there were missed opportunities where Norway could have been more active.

### ***Recommendation***

- W&GE needs to be more visible in Norway's dialogue with countries, and specifically in the dialogue on macro economic issues. Norway should continue to express strong support for W&GE in country programming, including Joint Country Assistance Strategies. It is recommended that MFA and Norad consider the mechanisms whereby they may improve the visibility and voice of W&GE, including the option of (joint donor) gender auditing of country programmes.

### ***Mainstreaming and targeting***

It is difficult to document good practices of mainstreaming, except in sectors where W&GE issues are well integrated, such as support to the education sector. There is no evidence that Norway is at the forefront of mainstreaming and integration of gender in its programmes and projects. It is

remarkable that W&GE is not mainstreamed into the programme support in Afghanistan, where the situation of women was one of the primary reasons for support to the country.

Norway has been an active partner in supporting gender secretariats and women's NGOs in several countries. This support has moved well beyond financial support, and it has developed into partnership relations that support the active use of institutional structures and policies and has assisted in solving organisational problems and in setting up functional units. The embassies have struggled with the challenge of setting up appropriate financial management systems to numerous NGOs, and many have opted for creating umbrella organisations, that channel funding to their member organisations. Umbrella organisations are efficient financial management mechanisms, but may hamper the development of individual member organisations.

#### *Recommendations*

- It is recommended that MFA and Norad do a stocktaking of their experiences with support to gender secretariats and women's NGOs. Embassies should be more systematic in their support to gender mainstreaming in national planning, sector support and women's NGOs so as to make local/national gender strategies operational.
- Support to women's NGOs offers a unique opportunity for access to information and knowledge about national and local social and economic development. Attempts to form umbrella organisations in the South should be reconsidered. Alternative options in the form of gender funds might be considered. A call for concentration and new aid modalities should not crowd out such partnership efforts on W&GE.

#### *Development partner groups on gender*

The embassies in our three case countries, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Zambia, as well as many other embassies, are active members in Development Partner Groups on W&GE. However, these W&GE groups seem to lack a strategic focus in several countries, and they seem to have problems addressing mainstreaming and working with other thematic donor groups.

#### *Recommendation*

- The embassies should actively contribute to making the Development Partner Groups work more effectively on gender.

### **Harmonisation and new aid modalities**

#### *Changing aid modalities*

Harmonisation has not been sufficiently reflected in gender policy work, and gender issues have been little reflected in harmonisation efforts. Work does not seem to have been initiated on this important topic, neither in Norad nor the MFA.

The implementation of the gender strategy has not been adapted to the context of changing aid modalities. Hardly any analytical work has been done on this, and W&GE was almost totally absent from the new policy development in Norad in 1999-2003.

New aid modalities, such as sector concentration and harmonisation, restrict the number of policy issues to be presented. A harmonised donor dialogue focussing on macro economic questions and related to general budget support (GBS) may easily become overloaded, and both partner countries and donors are concerned about this. W&GE may easily suffer from this and be left out of the policy dialogue. At the same time, the new aid modalities also offer the possibility of addressing W&GE at a higher national policy level. Little use is made of this opportunity today, and little analytical efforts are invested into addressing how W&GE is interlinked with other goals, and can be instrumental in promoting these goals.

### *Recommendation*

- It is recommended that specific work be done on how to open up the possibilities for addressing W&GE in new aid modalities and joint country level dialogue. It is also recommended that MFA and Norad invest in analytic work and research to improve the knowledge, and ability to develop indicators and monitoring systems that account for the synergies between complimentary goals. Approaches to this as well as tools and methods, need to be developed in cooperation with other donors and key partners whenever possible.

### ***Gendering PRSP and MDGs***

Much work does exist globally on the gendering of the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Less work seems to have been done on sector and budget support. Norway supports many of these efforts internationally, through funding of UN agencies and International Financial Institutions, but it does not seem to bring the lessons learned back to its own organisation and work. Norway is not a leader in these efforts, and few Norwegian resources, either in the administration itself or the external resource base, are allocated to such activities.

W&GE efforts, imperative for reaching the MDGs, require analytical work on gendering the MDGs. Much work in this area is already being performed on a global scale, and Norway needs to catch up. Norway should continue to step up its support to gendering of the PRSPs.

### *Recommendation*

- A joint donor fund for innovative efforts in mainstreaming W&GE to reach the MDGs is being discussed in MFA. The Evaluation Team supports such an idea, which will go beyond the efforts that Norway supports in the individual development banks. In particular, such a fund should cover joint donors' initiatives at the country level.

### **Input to the revision of the W&GE strategy**

The W&GE Strategy is to be revised in 2006. The status of a new strategy for W&GE should be made clear. There are grounds to argue that the strategy for W&GE should be given a higher status than many other strategies. There is also a need to analyse the implication of W&GE as an overarching issue versus a cross-cutting issue.

The new strategy itself needs to be embedded firmly in the organisation and at all management levels. This requires that the revision of the Strategy be carried out in a manner that includes a broad spectre of the development cooperation administration.

The ambitions of the revised strategy should be adapted to a situation of new aid modalities, harmonisation and partnerships. It should be formulated in a language identifying ambitions and targets that the system can operationalise and report on to the Norwegian National Assembly.

A revised strategy needs to be accompanied by the development of tools and methods for its implementation and for training purposes. Much work is being performed internationally on this. As much as possible, MFA and Norad should work in cooperation with other donors on this. The reestablishment of a Nordic network for gender advisors could serve as a focal point for this. The MFA and Norad should also make active use of the OECD/DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) in these efforts. The embassies should be actively involved in these efforts to ensure that tools and methods are relevant to their activities in the partner countries.

# 1. Introduction

The Norwegian Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (1997-2005), hereafter called the Strategy, was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 1997 (MFA, 1997b). The White Paper (St. Meld.) 35 (2003-2004) announced the revision of the Strategy, and this evaluation is commissioned to provide lessons learned for such a revision.

This evaluation assesses the institutional and operational implementation of the Strategy and how women and gender equality (W&GE) is organised and communicated in the Norwegian development cooperation system. The evaluation includes three country case studies, which describe and assess how W&GE is addressed in country programming and development cooperation. The three country cases are Zambia, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The countries were chosen by Norad to document how the Strategy is implemented in different country contexts.

The evaluation has been carried out by a team of researchers from the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) in collaboration with Norwegian and international researchers and consultants. The entire team includes:

Berit Aasen, sociologist, NIBR. Team leader, responsible for the inception report, desk report and main report.

Siri Bjerkreim Hellevik, political scientist, NIBR. Gender assessment of strategies.

Dr. Marit Haug, political scientist NIBR. Afghanistan case study and main report.  
Local partner, Afghanistan: Mr. Akbar Sarwari, consultant.

Dr. Carol Rakodi, geographer, the International Development Department (IDD), University of Birmingham. Zambia case study. Local partners, Zambia: Ms Edwidge Mutale, consultant, Sister Auxilia Ponga.

Marit Sørvald, sociologist, Nordic Consulting Group (NCG). Bangladesh case study.  
Dr. Nurul Alam, anthropologist, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka.

Dr. Britha Mikkelsen, sociologist, COWI Consult. Quality assurance.

## 1.1. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (ToR) specifies the purpose of the evaluation:

- To provide knowledge about certain central aspects connected to the *implementation of the Strategy*; the evaluation must focus on the available capacity, tools and training, and assess their adequacy and how they have been employed.
- The degree to which the gender perspective has been reflected in other key policies and strategies; this will also form an important part of the evaluation.
- To learn more about the process by which *partners and Norway interact on issues of women and gender equality*, and also to learn something about the outcomes of these partnerships.
- Assess the process by which Norway and partners have attempted to promote women in development and gender equality.
- Focus on lessons learned from applying the gender mainstreaming approach and targeted interventions.

- The evaluation should have a *strong learning element*. The evaluation should emphasise lesson-learning, be forward-looking and deal with new aid modalities.

This evaluation has given priority to the learning element and forward looking approach. We have therefore made less effort to document the past and placed more emphasis on thinking about the future. Furthermore, when looking ahead, answers cannot be found unless one goes beyond the current institutionalisation of women and gender equality efforts to examining how cross-cutting issues can be addressed in the new overall architecture of the development cooperation system, including new aid modalities.

## 1.2 Approach to the evaluation

The evaluation focuses on bilateral aid, primarily the institutional aspects, including organisation, resources, communication and decision-making. The argument for focusing on bilateral aid is that recently other studies and reports have been produced on W&GE in multilateral organisations (MFA 1999b, MFA 2002b). This evaluation is an analysis of how the development cooperation system, the MFA, Norad and the embassies in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Zambia have organised their Women and Gender Equality (W&GE) efforts, and how this system interacts with and collaborates with partner organisations, including Norwegian and national organisations.

One weakness of this report is that it does not evaluate all Norwegian development cooperation; this also makes it difficult to deal with such urgent matters as improved country level coordination of the various channels for development aid. However, there might also be good reasons for focussing on bilateral development cooperation given restricted time and resources. While Norway has continued to work actively to promote gender mainstreaming in UN agencies and international finance institutions, including earmarking funding for mainstreaming efforts and establishing requirements for reporting on mainstreaming activities, we have found that less has been done in this area in bilateral development cooperation. Reporting from UN agencies to MFA on their work on women and gender equality work and its results seems to be better organised and more systematic than reporting from Norwegian bilateral development cooperation. This clearly signals weaknesses in the system regarding W&GE in bilateral development cooperation, and strong reasons to look more into the situation and for possible remedies.

The evaluation covers the period 1997-2005, and will only include earlier periods when

- addressing the historical context of the Strategy
- placing country case studies in the historical context of Norwegian support for Women and Gender Equality (W&GE).

The following countries have been selected by the Evaluation department, Norad, for the evaluation: Zambia, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. This selection of countries was done to cover variations in national context and in Norwegian aid approaches.

The Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation covers six priority areas: rights, decision-making processes, economic participation, health, education, and natural resources management. The ToR has limited the evaluation, including the country case studies, to the three first thematic topics: rights, decision-making, and economic participation. The reason given for this is that a great deal is already known about the three last topics.

Several other countries have evaluated their W&GE efforts over the last few years. Several of them have published revised gender strategies or are in the process of doing so. The Evaluation Team has been inspired by Sida's (Sida 2001b, 2003) and the EC's (EC 2002) gender evaluations, by their joint workshop on gender strategy evaluations and gender mainstreaming (Sida 2004), and by preliminary background papers for the ongoing DFID evaluation (DFID,



2004, 2005). Our findings are very similar to the findings of these evaluations. Our critical findings therefore reflect the observation that Norway's weakness in its implementation of W&GE efforts is part of a general and widespread frustration with W&GE efforts in development cooperation as a whole.

The Office of Auditor General of Norway is conducting a review of the implementation and results of the gender strategy, 1997-2005, with country cases from Nicaragua and Uganda. The review started in 2003, and is expected to be published in early 2006.

### **1.3 Method**

The evaluation team has collected data through the use of:

- document review;
- in-depth interviews with key informants;
- in-depth interviews and focus group discussions in the country cases.

Information and data have been collected from relevant personnel and key informants in:

- Norway: the MFA, Norad, and partner organisations/NGOs
- three partner countries (country cases): the embassies, other relevant donors with joint programme management, and partner organisations (government, NGOs, private sector) at the national as well as project level. Key projects targeting women and mainstreaming W&GE rights, decision-making and economic participation in projects are included.

In the country cases the country teams assessed background information, including archives at the embassies, made in depth key informants interviews, with embassy personnel, government officials and project staff. They attended meetings, and also organised focus group interviews.

There are serious shortcomings in the documentation on W&GE efforts in Norwegian development cooperation. The Norad Action Plan from 1998 for the implementation of the Strategy was not found in the Norad archive; neither was any reference found to letters from NGOs protesting the abolishment of the gender advisor position in 2001, nor of a seminar jointly organised by Norad and the NGOs on gender mainstreaming in May 2002. The evaluation team has attempted to compensate for this by conducting more interviews. However, it should be acknowledged that this might easily lead to gaps in our documentation. The Norad archive is accessible, and since 2004 Norad has had an electronic archive, which in the future might provide for improved documentation and certainly much better access. The MFA does not have any electronic archive as yet, and access to the MFA's archive is cumbersome and ill-suited for an evaluation of gender mainstreaming, in which documentation is needed across countries and areas of development politics. On the other hand, the lack of documentation and the low visibility of W&GE efforts are in themselves important findings of this study, and this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the system.

The ToR specifies that the evaluation should have a strong learning element, by emphasising "lesson-learning, be forward looking and deal with new aid modalities". This is in contrast to a detailed descriptive presentation of the implementation of the Strategy. An emphasis on lessons-learning does not exclude a proper description of institutional and procedural shortcomings. It does however not limit itself to this, and detract lessons from this that may inform us on how to approach W&GE in the future.

This might be easier said than done. What lessons are valid in a new situation in which present policy and aid modalities have changed substantially? New aid modalities are a major challenge to implementation of W&GE in Norwegian development cooperation. More effort has to be made to relate W&GE to macro economic reforms and national poverty reduction strategies.

The evaluation team decided to take the lessons-learned approach one step further by using the reference group actively in its work. There have been a number of reference group-meetings on the inception report, country studies, preliminary findings and two drafts of the evaluation. There is a wealth of experience in the MFA and Norad that needs to be harnessed for future W&GE efforts. On the other hand, past experience might not be enough in a situation of harmonisation, new aid modalities and decentralisation of development cooperation to in-country offices (embassies). In a new context such as this, improved systems of accountabilities and improved monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting systems for W&GE are necessary.

#### **1.4 The OECD/DAC peer review of Norway's development cooperation**

OECD/DAC undertook peer reviews of Norway's development cooperation in 1999 (OECD/DAC 1999) and 2004 (OECD/DAC 2005c). Both reports point to the lack of the implementation of the W&GE strategy. The report from 2005 points to the fact that weaknesses identified in the 1999 report regarding institutionalising W&GE efforts had not been addressed. MFA did not agree easily with this conclusion. Their response was:

“With respect to mainstreaming, it is a challenge to all of us to deal with cross-cutting issues in the era of new aid modalities. However, these challenges do not give reason to question mainstreaming as the right approach. In the case of gender for instance, I truly believe that the best way to promote women's rights is to strengthen the forces from within, be it in or outside government. We are trying to do that. Gender equality can never be implemented from the outside. I am more than willing to discuss this further with you.” (MFA 2004d)



## 2. The Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (1997-2005)

### 2.1 Historical background

The Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation, hereafter called the Strategy, was published in 1997. It had taken five years to develop the Strategy. The work started in 1992, and a mandate was approved in 1993. The strategy was delayed and was not ready for the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 as planned. In 1996 the work was revitalised and a new working group, with two representatives each from MFA/Bilateral Department, MFA/Multilateral Department and from Norad, was established. An additional member of the working group representing the humanitarian aid was added some time later. The working group seems to have done most of the work itself. A consultant was hired at some time, but her work was discontinued. The NGOs do not seem to have played any role, nor organisations or representatives from the South. The draft Strategy was presented for a consultative round within the MFA/Norad in February 1997, and approved in June. There is no evidence from any public consultative round with NGOs in the archive.

Norwegian development cooperation has placed strong emphasis on women and gender equality (W&GE) for many decades. According to the Strategy, the integration of women's concerns into development cooperation was first mentioned in the White Paper (St. meld.) 94 (1974-75). This concern was restated in the white paper (St.meld.) 51 (1991-92).

The most comprehensive document addressing Women in Development (WID) was Norway's Strategy for Assistance to Women in Development (MDC, 1985), with a Norad – Plan of Action for Norwegian Bilateral Assistance to Woman, and a Plan of Action for Norwegian Multilateral Assistance to Women. This strategy included a description of objectives, monitoring systems for the strategy, and the necessary resources for mobilisation, including training, research, and evaluation, as well as administrative procedures for the implementation of the strategy. A committee on WID and a system of WID-contact persons was set up in the Ministry of Development Cooperation (MDC). All units in the MDC, which included Norad at that time, and all Norad missions were obliged to have a contact person for WID issues. All the contact persons were to meet with the committee once a year to “discuss progress and problems”.

The role of the contact person was to “ensure that measures to support women are promoted and that women's interest are incorporated into the activities in their respective areas of responsibilities” (p. 10). The 1985 Strategy uses the word “incorporate” in reference to women's interests. The term “gender” and “gender mainstreaming” were not yet in use, but the term “incorporate” clearly points in that direction.

The Norad Action Plan (1985) included a description of how women-oriented development assistance to various sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, industry, credits, health, education, water, roads, energy, and culture, could be organised and focused. It also discussed channels for development assistance in relation to WID.

In the early 1990s a unit for gender and for environment (KVIM) was established in the Director's Office of Norad. Later this unit also included advisors on human rights and on macro economics. This was done as an attempt to give higher attention to these development

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1) For definitions of 'gender' and 'gender mainstreaming', see Annex 5: Important concepts underlying gender mainstreaming, Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, UN, 2001.

policy issues. Parallel to this the Technical Department (FAG) in Norad also has advisors on the same development policy issues. A tension developed between the Technical Department and KVIM; and by 1995 KVIM was abolished.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s there were regular meetings on W&GE with the management of the Ministry of Development Cooperation. These meetings were not called by the gender advisor, but by the secretary general of the Ministry who had a strong interest in W&GE.

There was also a network of gender focal points at the embassies, and regular meetings in the regions where the gender advisors from headquarters met with the gender focal points in the region. This network had already disappeared before 1997.

A gender fund was established in 1985, but was abolished in 1999. It was clearly stated by the Norwegian National Assembly in 1999 that the removal of the specific fund for Women in Development should not lead to reduced funding of such initiatives and that other financing mechanisms should compensate for the removal of this budget line. The gender fund was last evaluated in 1991. Our evaluation does not include an assessment of this fund. The gender fund, as well as the cultural fund and the environmental fund, were closed down due to the decision to simplify budget lines, to concentrate on sectoral development assistance, and to improve donor coordination and harmonisation. By 1997 it was evident that the gender fund would be closed down; thus, the fund did not play a role in the implementation of the Strategy. The budget for the gender fund was ca. 415 mill. NOK between 1990 and 2000. In 1997 the budget was exceptionally high, 71 mill. NOK, while the average budget was between 35 – 45 mill NOK per year (Bakka 2001:106, referred to in Liland and Kjerland 2003:211).

During the period 1985-1995 the terms “gender”, “gender and development” (GAD), and “gender mainstreaming” gradually replaced WID in development research and cooperation. By the time the Beijing Conference was prepared and organised, the focus had shifted to ensuring that gender was mainstreamed into all activities. Incorporation had often only led to add-on components addressing the situation of women, and compensating for weaknesses in project design, while the programmes themselves in many cases were detrimental to the objective of enhancing women’s position in society. At the same time, the efficiency argument gained more ground, i.e. which focusing on women and gender mainstreaming would make the projects and programmes more efficient and improve performance. The equality argument was supplemented by an efficiency argument.

This then was the background for the new and revised Strategy in 1997. It should also be noted that in 1997 “the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all areas of society” was one of five main priority areas for Norway’s development cooperation.

## **2.2 The content of the Strategy**

The message from the Beijing Conference was that in order to improve the situation of women and achieve gender equality, it was necessary to mainstream W&GE concerns into all areas of development cooperation. This was therefore the underlying message in all the strategies developed by bilateral donors in the period 1995-1997. Interestingly, the Strategy does not use the word “mainstreaming” at all, but talks about the integration of gender equality in all development cooperation efforts. It also says that affording women and men equal rights, opportunities and obligations requires fundamental changes in society. Finally, it states that W&GE efforts are time-consuming and that adequate resources are necessary in order to succeed.

The formulation of the UN Convention on the Elimination against all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979, and today 180 countries have ratified the convention. CEDAW together with the work in UN Division for the

Advancement of Women (DAW) and their work on implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), has created a common legal and normative framework for international assistance to W&GE efforts in developing countries.

The main message of the Strategy was that W&GE should be integrated into all development cooperation efforts. This does not, however, rule out specific projects that target women. The Strategy does promote one main area for targeting women, in which there is a long history of Norwegian support, and that is establishing “contact with civil society and organised groups, including women’s groups” (p. 13). It is also mentioned that Norway “will contribute towards competence-building in recipient authorities so as to integrate women into national policy and development planning” (p. 13).

The Strategy of 1997 makes it quite clear that the process of ensuring equal rights for women and men requires a radical development process at the national level, which again is dependent upon political will. The Strategy refers to the Beijing Conference and to “the national responsibility for advancing the position of women” (p. 7). Norway’s role is seen as “encouraging countries to follow up this responsibility by means of bilateral and multilateral assistance activities”. The Strategy makes a strong plea for gender impact assessment before the initiation of all bilateral assistance projects, so “as to make it possible to assess the possible consequences for women and men respectively”.

The group that developed the Strategy of 1997 decided not to use the word “mainstreaming”, and chose instead to refer to the Report to the Storting (Norwegian National Assembly) No. 19, 1995-96 and “make systematic efforts to ensure that the women’s and gender equality perspectives are integrated into international development cooperation, and in Norwegian aid”.

In order to “contribute to the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all sectors of society”, the Strategy states that “Norway will give priority to efforts on behalf of women and gender equality in the following areas:

- Rights
  - formal gender equality
  - human rights
  - violence against women
- Participation in decision-making processes
  - development processes
  - democratisation processes
  - conflict prevention and peace processes
- Economic participation
  - international economic framework
  - economic reforms
  - industrial development
- Education
  - basic education
  - adult education
- Health
  - primary health care
  - reproductive health
- Management of natural resources and the environment
  - traditional knowledge
  - nutrition and health”.<sup>2</sup>

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2) For a summary of the Strategy, see Annex 3.

The Strategy did not initially include any action plan on how this is to be done, and it has few references to operationalising requirements. The following issues are raised in the Strategy's final chapter on quality assurance and reporting:

- Recommend that gender impact analysis are carried out.
- Strengthening of reporting by improving the criteria for reporting the results of development assistance in relation to specific goals. This should make W&GE more visible in annual reports and lead to good performance indicators for monitoring progress of measures to promote the participation of women and gender equality.
- Country reports are to include reports on W&GE and comments on Norwegian initiatives. Reports should address factors that promote or prevent the implementation of gender equality policies.
- W&GE will be a permanent item on the agenda for Norway's consultative meetings with donor countries.
- The above will form the basis for the annual report to the Minister.

### **3. Policies, management instruments, communication and dialogue on W&GE in development cooperation**

#### **3.1 Gender assessment of policy documents, strategies and action plans**

Most of the strategies and documents developed during the time period 1997-2005 aim at incorporating W&GE, and address some of the priority areas listed in the Strategy on W&GE. Most of the strategies and the action plans deal with W&GE in the problem description. The action plans on agriculture and combating poverty are the plans that best manage to integrate women in the problem description and to sketch out efforts targeting W&GE. These two plans of action suggest a number of measures that seem attainable.

The main response in the other documents with respect to mainstreaming, as well as direct targeting of W&GE, is dialogue with partner countries. Most of the strategies and action plans also focus on a human rights-based approach in its problem description and list of efforts to be undertaken. Within the area of human rights, several of these mention the formalisation of property rights for women as one direct effort at integrating W&GE in various development measures. Formalisation of such rights is highly demanding because it requires radical social reforms in partner countries. Also, other measures mentioned in several of the strategies and action plans imply social transformation. These efforts are ambitious and challenging to implement.

As acknowledged in one of the documents analysed, Norway may at best influence policies in partner countries that may change the current social situation of women. Although the documents list specific measures targeting W&GE, they do not require any reporting on W&GE. The lack of reporting on these issues weakens the importance of W&GE in development cooperation and evaluation of projects and programmes. For more detailed information on the gender assessment of the policy documents, strategies and action plans, see Annex 4.

##### *3.1.1 Country MoUs and Strategies*

###### **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**

The tools for country programming have changed during the period 1997-2005. In 1997 the MoUs between the governments of Norway and the recipient countries, where the main sectors for development cooperation were identified, were the most important programming tool. The process related to the signing of a new MoU, or revision of an existing MoU, involved high level decision makers, including the Minister for Development Cooperation and the Director of Norad. There were mid-term reviews of MoUs, including in specific cases evaluations (MFA 2000).

With donor harmonisation and the Paris declaration, there will be cases of joint assistance strategies. In Tanzania and Uganda there are plans for a joint assistance strategy (JAS), and in Zambia the new upcoming MoU will probably be a joint MoU with DFID and Sida. However, in most countries there still will be bilateral MoUs specifying the scope of Norwegian development cooperation for a specified time period of five to eight years. Almost all the MoUs consulted refer to W&GE as a cross-cutting issue to be addressed. It is interesting to note that no mention is made of W&GE in the guidelines for Norwegian assistance to Afghanistan.

## Country Strategy

An MoU was usually accompanied by a Country Strategy (previously) or Guidelines for Norwegian Support to the country in question (currently). The evaluation team assessed the four country strategies for Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda. These are selected because they were all completed in 2001-2003, and represent four of Norway's main partner countries.

The *Zambia* Country Strategy (Norad 2001d) states that "Other important cross-cutting issues include gender, institutional development, and private sector development. These will be addressed within all the selected sectors". It also refers to the history of Norway's support for the development of a gender equality policy in Zambia and to gender equity in primary education.

The Guidelines for Support to *Uganda* (Norad 2001c) mention that women are poorer than men due to lower educational level, less access to land, and social and cultural biases against women. Gender equality is mentioned as a cross-cutting issue, in addition to HIV/AIDS, sustainable management of natural resources management, institution building, transparency and accountability.

The *Malawi* Country Strategy (Norad 2001b) has a section on the lack of equality. Women "suffer from discriminatory laws and practices, a heavy workload, restrictive attitudes, domestic violence, and a scarcity of economic opportunities". It also refers to the Malawi national gender policy framework. Moreover, the "subordinate position of women has compounded the problem...of HIV/AIDS", as has low levels of literacy for women and low political participation. Gender is not mentioned as a cross-cutting issue to be integrated into all sectors of development cooperation. There is no reference to W&GE at all in the final part of the document on current and future Norwegian support to Malawi.

The *Tanzania* Country Strategy (Norad 2003c) addresses gender equity issues in education and HIV/AIDS in the country. There is also a statement that cross-cutting issues, including gender, will be included in all programme areas. No attempts have been made to identify the implications of this in the description of the programme interventions.

There is very little analysis on how to address discrimination against women and how to operationalise W&GE as a cross-cutting issue in country programming.

This illustrates two characteristics of country programming documents: (i) there is no standard format since even cross-cutting issues are not mentioned systematically in all documents, and (ii) W&GE issues and efforts have low visibility. In some country strategies, W&GE is mentioned in the country context presentation; in others it is mentioned as a cross-cutting issue to be integrated into all sectors. However, in none of the strategies does W&GE appear to merit any comment beyond its mention as a cross-cutting issue to be addressed, i.e. there is no operationalisation or specification of how to address it and with what partners. Reading the country strategies also raises the question of the status of these strategies in a situation of donor harmonisation, in which development cooperation is supposed to be embedded in the country's own plans and policies.

The overall impression is that the outcome is what DFID has labelled "gender policy evaporation" - concern about gender seems to evaporate the closer one gets to implementation of programme activities.

## 3.2 Management instruments

### 3.2.1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Budget Proposition 2005, White Papers, etc.

In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Budget proposition (St. prop. 1) 2005, in the chapter on priorities for 2005, gender is discussed under cross-cutting issues. Regarding W&GE, the



chapter states that “it is an important goal ... to strengthen women’s, children’s and youth’s rights and participation” and “gender equality and children’s rights are to be integrated into relevant activities supported by bilateral and multilateral development cooperation”,...“in addition to support to women targeted activities. The same is valid for children’s, indigenous people’s, and disabled’s rights” (p. 73). Here are some examples on how W&GE is addressed throughout the Budget Proposition:

- W&GE is a cross-cutting issue on problem analysis and goals, both in sectors and at the country level in the budget text for 2005. The areas in which W&GE has high visibility throughout the budget text are women’s human rights, girls’ access to education, and women’s access to land and property.
- Women’s human rights. This is often mentioned in relation to human rights efforts to promote the rights of marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples, disabled, children and women. (NGO support p. 153)
- At the country level, this is mentioned in South Africa; references are made to trafficking, violence against women and FGM. Discrimination against women and women’s human rights are also referred to in the sections concerning Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Ethiopia, where there is support for the Women’s Lawyers’ Association that supports women’s rights, there is no mention of this in the budget text.
- Improved participation of women in decision-making and governance systems is a goal. This is also mentioned at country level operations in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. (In Afghanistan, only women’s participation in development cooperation programmes is mentioned.) In Malawi, where there is support for the gender secretariat in the President’s Office, there is no mention of this in the budget text.
- Girl’s access to education is mentioned throughout the document as part of NGO-support, country level operations (Bangladesh, Nepal, Asia general, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Mali, Tanzania, Zambia, Eritrea) and at the policy level.
- Women’s economic participation and access to resources, including land and credit, are mentioned at the country level in Mali, Vietnam, Nigeria and Tanzania.
- Norad gives support to international women’s NGOs, such as Women’s World Banking (WWB) and Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML), and these are seen as strategic international partners.

To sum up, W&GE is prominent at the policy, sectoral and country levels of the Budget 2005. It is most often referred to as a problem in the description of the situation, rather than in action to be taken and activities to be funded. A budget text should not be too detailed, and this might be one reason that gender specific action and activities are subsumed under human rights and governance headings. However, the outcome of this is that W&GE is easily under-reported and thus made less important. Several of the country programmes do not have any reference to W&GE in their development goals, although most make some reference to W&GE in a country context description.

It might also be a side effect of the human rights orientation of gender-related efforts that women are mentioned together with other “marginalised” groups rather than being seen as an active partner. The focus on the elimination of discrimination might require a complementary focus on women as comprising half the world’s population and who play an active role in agriculture. (Annual letter of instruction from the MFA to Norad, and Norad’s annual report to the MFA.)

Along with the annual budget text, the *annual letter of instruction* (“*tildelingsbrev*”) is the most important instrument used by the MFA to instruct Norad. W&GE is rarely mentioned in these letters. Our interpretation is that W&GE is subsumed under human rights and governance and under gender equality in education. This results in a lack of effort to address the elements required for high quality W&GE work and very low visibility of the topic.

In the *White Paper "Fighting Poverty Together" of 2003*, approved by the Norwegian National Assembly in 2004, it was stated that both the environmental strategy and the gender strategy were to be revised. The MFA letter of instruction to Norad clearly identified the revision of the environmental strategy as part of the technical work to be performed by Norad in 2005. There was no mention of revision of the gender strategy or any other reference to W&GE efforts.

Norad presents an *Annual Report to the MFA (Etatsrapport)*. This report contains an annex to the report from the gender advisor regarding the gender markers on the development funds managed by Norad. A brief reference is made to this in the main report. Neither the annex nor the text of the main report goes beyond a descriptive presentation, and they make no assessment nor give further instructions for work on W&GE. The report lacks a strategic approach and does not actually report on W&GE as a cross-cutting issue.

### 3.2.2 Activity plans<sup>3</sup>

Activity plans are important in the annual planning and communication in Norad and the MFA. Historically, activity plans have been the domain of Norad, and less work has been carried out on this in the MFA. With the reorganisation of the development cooperation management in 2004, the responsibilities for activity planning for bilateral state-to-state development cooperation has been moved to the regional department of the MFA.

Specific topics are sometimes identified as priority areas, and the embassies are requested to report on these. Documentation obtained indicates that plans were made for reporting on W&GE in 1999 and 2002. No such reporting or planning can be found in the embassies' activity plans for these years. What is striking when one reads the activity plans is the absence of reference to W&GE efforts.

The gender advisor in Norad made an assessment of the reporting on W&GE efforts in the 2004 activity plans. This report from December 2003 is one of the rare, more strategic reports on how to assess W&GE efforts in the development cooperation system. The Norad gender advisor conducted a similar review of the rights-based approach, including gender, of the activity plans for 2005, albeit on a more limited scale.

Norad's activity plan for 2005 specifies the following priority areas:

- Anti-corruption
- HIV/AIDS
- Environment
- Rights
- MDGs

This again illustrates the low visibility of W&GE efforts. Rights may include W&GE efforts, but by always subsuming W&GE under rights, Norad contributes to its low visibility. This is even more remarkable in a year when the gender strategy is to be revised, as stipulated in the white paper from 2003. It is also an indication that the development cooperation system needs to address how it approaches W&GE efforts within the organisation. Higher visibility will only come about if W&GE efforts are treated as a separate issue in thematic technical and advisory work, and not subsumed under other topics such as rights.

### 3.2.3 OECD gender markers and statistics

Norad introduced the OECD gender equality policy markers in 1999. Norad has developed a Statistics Handbook to assist the desk officers in this work. The categories for the gender marker are (i) principal target, (ii) significant target, (iii) not target. Desk officers are required to code all development cooperation projects and programmes using the OECD markers. This

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3) The Norwegian word for activity plans is *virksomhetsplaner* (VP).



work has been continued by the Regional Department, MFA, after bilateral state-to-state development cooperation was moved to that department in April 2004. General budget support (GBS) is not coded using the policy markers. Bilateral aid (ODA) to Europe, ca. 1,5 mia. NOK per year is currently not being coded according to the statistical handbook of Norad/MFA, since the staff has not been given training in the management instrument PTA (the financial management system in MFA/Norad). This support is therefore not included in the gender related statistics of Norwegian ODA.

This gives a rather crude indicator of the gender-oriented nature of Norwegian development cooperation. The coding depends on the desk officer's assessment of the project/programme when s/he enters it into the MFA's database. The use of the markers requires training, and systematic and coherent use of the markers is necessary to produce good statistics. It is the impression given by several of MFA/Norad staff that the use of the marker is not done in systematic enough manner, and that this has to be improved. Norway has not performed any analytical work on the gender marker, while Norad in the same period, 1999-2005, completed two analytical papers on the environmental marker due to pressure from Norwegian environmental NGOs.

Gender as a principal target has remained low and has decreased slightly from 3.7% to 2.5% in this period (1999-2004), while the significant target has increased from roughly 7% to 12.5%, largely reflecting the shift in composition of development cooperation to social services and good governance, which are sectors with a relatively high score on significant target.

The OECD/DAC has started its own work on reviewing and revising gender markers as a collaborative effort between the statistical department and GENDERNET. As a prelude to this work, OECD Statistics produced a report on Aid Activities in Support of Gender Equality, 1999-2003 (OECD/DAC 2005a). The report shows that Norway scores relatively high on gender markers of its support to education, but less so on basic health and water and sanitation, where Norway's overall support has been significantly reduced. The report does not cover support to good governance, where Norway's support has a relatively high score on the gender equality marker.

The OECD/DAC is concerned about the future use of the policy markers in a situation with donor harmonisation, budget support and country-level focus. With new aid modalities, division of labour, silent partnerships and the like, it is most important to document the policy markers of the aggregate funding for development cooperation at the country level. On the other hand, the donors need to report to their constituencies, including the national assemblies, how the funding for development cooperation is used.

#### *3.2.4 Evaluation*

A separate evaluation of W&GE in MFA/Norad evaluations 1997-2004 was conducted summer 2005 by Nordic Consulting Group (Norad 2005a). The study documents that a minority of evaluations address W&GE issues. The main reason for this is that W&GE is not sufficiently addressed in programs to be evaluated; and therefore the ToR for the evaluations do not refer to W&GE. Even so, the study recommend that the opportunities should be taken to address W&GE in ToRs even in programs with little W&GE activity, but where one could expect W&GE to have been better mainstreamed.

Evaluations have generally been weak on addressing mainstreaming of W&GE in Norwegian development cooperation and in country programs. If W&GE is mentioned, it is usually given little attention beyond identifying the absence of the topic. There has been a number of evaluations of targeted W&GE activities, such as the evaluation from 2003 on W&GE in multilateral organisations (MFA 1999), and the latest evaluation of the "Women Can Do It"-program on women's political participation in West-Balkan (Norad, 2005b).

### 3.3 New aid agendas and aid modalities

It is the view of the Evaluation Team that new aid agendas and new aid modalities<sup>4</sup> in Norwegian development cooperation have tended to crowd out W&GE rather than strengthening such work.

It is believed that this is the main reason for the current low visibility and low level of operationalisation of W&GE in the Norwegian development cooperation system. New aid agendas and modalities may open up new channels of communication and dialogue on W&GE, but this does not happen automatically, and W&GE has had a low profile in the discussion of approaches, tools and methodologies for the new aid agenda and modalities in Norway. The resulting low visibility of W&GE efforts may be an indication that W&GE is not seen as a core activity by the management group, nor as an urgent topic that needs to be addressed to achieve overarching development objectives. It may also be an indication of the low level of operationalisation of W&GE efforts on the ground level and of the junior level positions held by gender advisors in Norad. The first test of this was in 1999 with the new policy on recipient responsibility, and the focus on concentration on fewer sectors, and better donor harmonisation in third countries. The embassies were asked by Norad to respond specifically to how the new strategies influenced the country level development cooperation in their activity plans for 2000. No reference was made to W&GE efforts in Norad's request, and none of the embassies reported on how the new Norad strategy impacted their work.

The thematic priorities identified for 1999 and 2000 for the activity plans did not include W&GE. Rights-based development was included both years, and there is reason to believe that W&GE was subsumed under this heading. This did, however, lead to very low visibility and awareness of W&GE in both reporting and plans in the activity plans. Environment was identified as a topic both years, while another cross-cutting issue, HIV/AIDS, was not identified in the list of priority topics.

The Norwegian guidelines for budget support (Norad/MFA 2004) have no reference to cross-cutting issues, such as W&GE. The guidelines for budget/programme support of both Danida (2003b) and Sida (2000) have such references in the text.

It is questionable whether such references to gender as a cross-cutting issue make any difference in practice. The evaluation has reviewed drafts of three general budget support (GBS) agreements: Zambia, Tanzania, and Malawi. While all three refer to gender as a cross-cutting issue, only the Malawi GBS had included gender as part of the Performance Assessment Framework (PAF). The PAF is supposed to be embedded in the PRSP of the country, and where there are clear goals for gender equality in the PRSP there should be room for making use of them in the PAFs. On the other hand, this may conflict with the requirement that the PAFs not be overloaded with issues to report on and that the PAFs be based on high quality data so that there is agreement among the partners on the indicators. The Malawi GBS has included a requirement of moving towards the SADC decision on gender representation in decision-making positions. One might also consider the requirement of moving towards gender parity in access to education as another gender-related indicator in the PAFs.

This might illustrate that in multi-donor activities, and in the situation of harmonisation, the individual country's guidelines are of less importance. It might also illustrate that even if gender is not mentioned in the guidelines, the overall policy of gender as a cross-cutting issue in MoUs and overall Norwegian development cooperation are more important than the text in the guidelines. On the other hand, there is no reason why the guidelines should not contain references to gender as a cross-cutting issue.

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4) New aid agendas and aid modalities refer to harmonisation of donors, joint assistance strategies, general budget support, sector wide approaches etc.

On the other hand new aid modalities might provide opportunities to integrate W&GE at higher policy level. The best example of this is W&GE in education sector programs. There has been a strong focus on girl's education both through sector programs and education budget support, and through UN agencies through UN Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI), Education for all (EFA), and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI). Girls education is also the gender marker most commonly used in performance assessment frameworks (PAF) for general budget support (GBS).

### **3.4 Communication with external partners, NGOs, private sector, and research and higher education**

The Evaluation Team found that W&GE is weak in Norad's dialogue with external partners. This does not necessarily imply that the W&GE efforts of external partners are weak and limited. Our ToR does not include a proper assessment of their efforts, and is limited to the dialogue that MFA and Norad have with their external partners.

The main change in Norad's policy towards the *Norwegian NGOs* came in 2001, when the new policy on NGOs as partners for strengthening civil society in partner countries was published. Today there is limited dialogue with the NGOs on policy issues and little focus on W&GE in the dialogue that does take place. The main dialogue occurs among their respective desk officers and concerns management issues more often than policy issues. Several of the large NGOs have country and regional programmes on gender-related issues, including violence against women, and also receive financial support for improved gender mainstreaming in their organisations.

There are irregular joint meetings between the organisations and Norad on specific issues, such as FGM (spring 2005) and violence against women (autumn 2005), but no regular meeting place or forum. The organisations express an interest in seeing a more active Norad that will request better reporting on W&GE and become a more active partner to the organisations. On the other hand, no one has an interest in a forum that does not address a specific work-related task; meetings and networks have to deal with pressing issues as well as develop better knowledge and cooperative efforts.

The umbrella organisation for women's organisations, Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS), has 62 members. Development NGOs with separate organisations (e.g. divisions/teams) for their W&GE efforts are eligible for membership, and several of the large Norwegian NGOs are members. The overall funding for FOKUS and its member organisations is low, ca. NOK 19 million in 2004. Much greater funding for W&GE efforts is channelled through the other large NGOs.

Norad and FOKUS have not been able to develop FOKUS into a competent knowledge partner organisation for Norad, and the Team found that only to a very limited extent does FOKUS play the proactive watchdog role on W&GE issues that the environmental NGOs have taken on. However, FOKUS did send an open letter of concern to Norad's Director in 2001, when Norad closed down the gender advisor position. There should be a potential for a greater role for FOKUS as a watchdog, but also a knowledge partner on W&GE for MFA and Norad.

When the policy on the mobilisation and use of Norwegian institutions in development cooperation (the Norway Axis) was developed in the 1990s, no or little effort was put into identifying Norwegian partners in W&GE work. It is recommended that this work be done, and that knowledge partners on W&GE be identified from public and private agencies, including research and NGOs.

W&GE issues are almost absent from the dialogue with *the private sector*. The instruments and funds for private sector development are few and the dialogue limited. Gender has not

been addressed in private sector strategies in which the Norwegian Chambers of Commerce have been instrumental.

A separate *research programme on Gender and Development* was funded by the MFA/MDC and organised by the Research Council of Norway in 1987-1993. Since that time, gender has been mainstreamed into the research programmes funded by the MFA, and into programmes in *higher education* (NUFU) and research collaboration. The number of female PhD candidates in development studies has increased, but there seems to be little ongoing research on W&GE, and the trend seems to be declining. One exception is in the area of women's rights, where there has been specific support to this area from the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo.

### **3.5 Ongoing and future efforts on policies and methods**

The revised Development Cooperation Manual was approved in May 2005, and the Department for Quality Assurance (AMOR), Norad, was requested by the MFA to make an assessment of all currently available handbooks, their status and their possible future use in Norwegian development cooperation. This work led to the decision to produce three additional documents to supplement the DCM, one of them a handbook on all the (revised) sustainability criteria used in appraisals and reviews, including gender. This work is expected to be completed in 2006. AMOR has also been requested by the MFA to produce guidelines for reporting of results and risk management given the new aid modalities and for the new Norwegian state regulations on financial reporting on budgets and their results. A draft outline of the guidelines is expected by summer 2006, and consultations with the embassies will be held on this issue in 2006.

The activity plans for the embassies were requested and approved by the regional departments of the MFA in December 2004. A report was made to the Minister on these activity plans and on the overall bilateral state-to-state development cooperation. One of the issues identified for follow-up was how to address cross-cutting issues given the new aid modalities, higher level of harmonisation and more division of labour among the donor groups in the respective partner countries.

These ongoing efforts provide an opportunity to examine how cross-cutting issues should be addressed in Norwegian development cooperation and in the country programming cycle. It is recommended that the gender advisor be actively involved in these efforts, and upgrade the advisor's competence and capacity to be a partner in developing approaches, tools and methods to improve efforts on cross-cutting issues.

## 4. Women and Gender Equality resources, organisation and procedures in development cooperation 1997-2005

### 4.1 Norway's development cooperation 1997-2005: Policy development work and restructuring

To assess the implementation of the Strategy and changes made to the W&GE efforts during the period 1997-2005, it is necessary to situate this work within the overall restructuring of Norway's development cooperation and its administration, and in relation to development policy work carried out in MFA and Norad in the same period.

Two reorganisations of the development cooperation administration took place in this period, both with substantial impact on the resources made available to W&GE efforts.

In *January 2001* Norad implemented an internal reorganisation, primarily of its technical department activities. Norad introduced three networks across the organisation for governance, macro economy and financial management, and private sector development. While most of the advisors remained in the technical department, one advisor (from each of the three networks) was placed in each of the four regional departments. The task of the networks was to share experiences and build a better foundation for knowledge in their respective areas. The reason for placing the thematic advisors in the regional departments was to bring this knowledge closer to operations and country level work. A similar network for gender was not put in place. The position as a full-time gender advisor was abolished, and the human rights and conflict management advisor was given the additional responsibility of addressing gender issues. A system of gender focal points in the regional departments was designed. This network was only in operation from 2002 to 2004.

In *April 2004* bilateral state-to-state development cooperation was moved from Norad to the MFA. In this process of reorganisation, the position of the gender advisor was not given any attention and was further weakened. The gender focal point network was abolished, and attempts to form new networks were rejected/postponed.

The main development policy efforts taking place in this period were:

- *Recipient responsibility.* Norad published its document "Recipient responsibility and Norad's role as a donor" in 1999. (Norad, 1999)
- *Good governance.* This period saw a substantial increase in support to good governance, including human rights, political development (elections, etc.), public sector reforms, including local government reforms, financial management and anti-corruption efforts.
- *Poverty reduction strategies* and support grounded in national PRSPs. Norway published its strategy for poverty reduction in development cooperation in 2001. Norway has also strongly supported the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- *Budget support.* Macro economic analytical work and strong support to general budget support (GBS) when the country capacity has allowed for this. The document "Guidelines for Budget Support" was published in 2004.
- *Donor coordination.* The establishment of the Utstein group, later often referred to as Utstein +. The Like Minded Group (LMG) included many of the same donors.
- *Harmonisation.* Norway strongly supports the Paris Declaration on Aid Harmonisation (OECD/DAC 2005b).
- *Delegated responsibility and silent partnerships.* Norad published its principles on delegated cooperation in Norad in 2003 (Norad, 2003). Delegation of aid through other donors,



known as “silent partnership”, was to be carried out mainly at the programme level, such as support to agriculture through the Dutch in Zambia. In specific cases, delegation goes beyond this, as when Norway manages Swedish development cooperation funding to Malawi.

One should note that W&GE was not an issue in most of this policy work. Even in an area such as poverty reduction strategy, in which W&GE assumed a prominent role in the text of the strategy, the policies did not lead to any new innovative measures or tools for strengthening W&GE efforts within the organisation. Generally, much analytical work during this period has been related to “getting the (national) system in place”, with a focus on partner responsibility, budget support, financial management and good governance. Poverty reduction has been the overarching development policy area, with less focus on new innovative, cross-cutting policy areas. This has clearly affected W&GE efforts, which globally have seen less innovative thinking and an absence of analytical work that would better operationalise gender mainstreaming and strengthen the situation for women.

## **4.2 Staffing and organisation**

The implication of mainstreaming is that management has a responsibility to address W&GE in its work with country dialogue and programming, technical advising, dialogue with multilateral agencies, humanitarian assistance, and peace and security. It also is responsible for annual reporting on W&GE efforts. The reporting task can be delegated to gender advisors (Norad) or to regular staff (regional department/MFA).

The Evaluation Team that developed the Strategy was quite explicit in its discussion on the importance of leadership and management responsibilities for implementing the Strategy. However, the team was not able to spell this out in any detail or to establish any system to follow up these responsibilities. Therefore, on the one hand, efforts related to W&GE issues have largely remained the domain of the gender advisors; but on the other hand, country programmes (see chapter 5 on country cases) do show tendencies towards mainstreaming of gender, although not in a systematic way.

The Strategy did not design any new organisation of the work; it hardly refers to such issues. The major point was that each unit had to work harder on integrating women’s issues in its activities, and that gender specific reporting and statistics had to be improved.

### *4.2.1 The MFA*

The principal gender advisor in the MFA has been positioned in the UN section in the Department of Global Affairs, with special responsibility for W&GE in the UN and CEDAW. Since 2003 the current gender advisor has had the status of ambassador, and since 2004 she has been part of the management of the department, as well as affiliated with the UN section. She is responsible for W&GE issues at the UN General Assembly Third Committee (Human Rights), and serves as a desk officer for support to and contact with UNIFEM. The gender advisor takes part in activities related to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and participates in the Norwegian delegation to the CEDAW meetings. The gender advisor provides the Minister with regular advice, supports W&GE efforts in the MFA, and produces an annual report to the Minister for Development Cooperation on W&GE in development cooperation. In recent years, much work has been carried out on women and conflict and on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. From 1997 to 2005 three different gender advisors have served in the MFA.

Since November 2003, a junior desk officer has been employed on a temporary basis to strengthen the W&GE efforts in the UN section of the MFA. In addition, the Development Policy Department has usually had a part-time gender advisor. In 2005 this person mainly deals with post-conflict issues, while gender work is a limited part of her responsibilities.

With limited capacity and little tradition for cross-departmental work in the MFA, it is a challenge for the gender advisor to work across the many departments of the MFA. A special challenge is related to addressing development policy issues in the restructured regional department, which from April 2004 also includes bilateral development cooperation. A senior advisor has recently been added to the management group of the regional department to address development policy issues across the regions. W&GE efforts will greatly benefit from improved procedures for cross-departmental cooperation.

#### 4.2.2 *Norad*

Norad had two gender advisors from 1997 to 1999. One of the gender advisors took up work at one of the embassies in 1999, and her position was discontinued. A gender focal point network between the gender advisors in Norad and the Norwegian NGOs was in operation from 1997 to 2000, with FOKUS as the coordinator and secretariat. The network slowly disintegrated, and FOKUS itself believes that a revival of such a network would depend on identification of specific tasks for which such a network would give added value.

In the internal restructuring in 2001, Norad abolished the position of a full-time gender advisor, and added on gender to one of the human right advisors. The reason given was that the organisation and implementation of gender efforts were not being conducted in accordance with the mandate of mainstreaming. There was opposition to this view from inside the organisation and from women's groups outside Norad. FOKUS, the umbrella organisation for women organisations' development work, did address the Norad director on this in an open letter in "Bistandsaktuelt" (Norad's external information journal). The response from Norad's director was that work on W&GE should continue as before, and that the way in which gender efforts had been organised did not promote the mainstreaming of gender efforts, and often led only to add-on components intended to address weaknesses in programme design.

A system of gender focal points in the regional departments in Norad, and a network coordinated by the gender advisor was established. This task was added on to the other regular tasks of the desk officers, and people selected for this work were either former gender advisors or junior staff. The network was not made operational until summer 2002. The gender advisor was concerned that the mandate for the focal point network had to go beyond mere information sharing and be more operational, and should reconfirm that gender mainstreaming remained the responsibility of the management. However, this view was not shared by the organisation, and the mandate remained limited to sharing information and experiences, with no mandate to intervene or be more operational. The general view is that the gender focal network had little status and little impact, as its mandate was not sufficiently strong, and not backed by management support.

A rapid succession of gender advisors took place between 2001 and 2005. In the period January 2001 – summer 2002 there were four different gender advisors. This is in stark contrast to earlier periods when the gender advisors usually served in the same position for several years. This has undermined the continuity of the W&GE efforts.

In April 2004 bilateral state-to-state development cooperation was moved from Norad to the MFA. In this process of reorganisation, the position of the gender advisor was not given any attention and was further weakened. The gender focal point network was abolished, and all attempts to form new networks were either rejected or postponed.

Norad currently has one desk officer who works part-time as a gender advisor and part-time as a desk officer in charge of support to FOKUS. There is also a senior advisor originally hired as an advisor on child rights (including a coordinator for Norad's support to UNICEF), who also covers gender issues, and is on a temporary contract. Consequently, the one post is divided between these two areas of responsibility.

Since the last reorganisation, the gender desk officers have been working in the Human Rights Group, which is now part of the Department of Governance and Macro Economics (SSØ), Division for Human Rights and Public Administration. Their time is split, however, between SSØ and the Department of Human Development and Service Delivery (SOS).

The SSØ also contains a division on poverty reduction work. This may give the gender advisors an opportunity to work more closely on both women's participation in decision-making and poverty reduction given that they are part of the SSØ.

Today there are several thematic networks between the MFA and Norad, including one on the environment which started up in 2004. There is no network on W&GE, and attempts to introduce such a network have met resistance in the MFA. Norad's director indicated interest in establishing a gender network in Norad, but this was postponed pending the appointment of a new director.

Per October 2005 there is no full-time gender advisor in Norad, and human resources available for W&GE efforts are limited. No real mandate for the gender advisors to address gender mainstreaming has been developed. Given limited capacity, much of their current work is related to rights-based work or women-targeted projects, with not enough time to address mainstreaming or to be pro-active in other areas.

Communication and dialogue related to W&GE have evidently suffered from frequent reorganisations, not least from frequent personnel changes in the gender advisor position. There is a tendency to address each request on an individual basis, and more effort could be made by the gender advisors to work systematically and learn from the experiences of individual assignments. A rare example is the additional funding for Norwegian Association of Regional and Local Authorities (KS) on lesson learning from support to gender secretariats in government machinery, based on KS's assignment on assessing support to gender machinery in Malawi (Schanke 2005a, b).

There is substantial communication between the MFA and Norad on certain targeted areas for support to women. The MFA and Norad are partners in the Norwegian networks on implementation of the Action Plan against Trafficking of Women and Children, and in the implementation of the Action Plan against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The gender advisors have regular meetings with the NGOs on FGM, and Ethiopia has been selected as a pilot country for these efforts. The Norad network on Trafficking of Women and Children was abolished in April 2004 when bilateral state-to-state development cooperation was moved to the MFA, but Norad has continued to be involved in this work.

#### **4.3 Action plan, tools, and training**

The work on the action plan (Norad 1998) for the implementation of the Strategy in Norad started in late 1997 and was approved by Norad's director in September 1998. The 1985 Strategy had included both a Norad action plan for bilateral aid and an action plan for multilateral aid. This work was conducted while Norad was part of the Ministry for Development Cooperation. In contrast to the 1985 Strategy, the 1997 Strategy was only followed up by an action plan a year later, and then only directed towards Norad's bilateral aid responsibilities.

The evaluation team cannot find the action plan in Norad's archive. All information on this topic has been given to the evaluation team by a former gender advisor. There is no systematic documentation in the archive on what happened to the action plan. From the information we have received, the action plan was never revised and died a quiet death.



The action plan (Norad 1998) identified the following tasks:

- *Production of a gender and empowerment assessment handbook*

This work started in 1997 and was conducted parallel to work on three other handbooks on institutional development, financial management, and human rights, developed between 1997 and 2000. The handbook was published in 2000.

The handbook was tested in the field and in training sessions, and presented during visits to the embassies and to the gender focal point network meeting between Norad and the NGOs. In addition to raising interest in and awareness of how to assess and address W&GE in development cooperation, the handbook is intended to assist desk officers in using the gender marker when registering new projects. Certain embassies have made active use of it by sharing it with other donors and partners, demonstrating its usefulness in project appraisal and management.

The NGOs expressed an interest in the handbook; several of them made use of it, and they also eventually revised and adapted it to their own work programmes.

It is the impression of the evaluation team, however, that the use of the handbook has declined in recent years. The Norad/MFA Development Cooperation Manual (DCM) from 2000 (Norad/MFA 2000) did refer to a number of handbooks, but it did not make any reference to the Gender Handbook. The current DCM (Norad/MFA 2005) does not make reference to any handbooks. The Department for Quality Assurance (AMOR), Norad, has been requested by the MFA to assess the current status, relevance and usability of the handbooks and other methodological instruments developed by Norad during the last years. AMOR has recently been asked by the MFA to develop additional tools to the DCM, in three areas, one of them is the sustainability dimensions (bærekraftselementene), including W&GE.

- *Training programme*

A training programme was established at the Norwegian Foreign Service Institute (UKS) in 1998 for the handbook, and training sessions also took place in the embassies. In 2000 UKS carried out five training courses. Separate training courses on W&GE were later abolished. An attempt to make a module on cross-cutting issues, including W&GE, was not successful and was abandoned. It was felt that the approach did not reach those most in need, and that new approaches had to be found.

New attempts by UKS instructed trainers to mainstream gender into training programmes in both peace building and private sector development failed. Separate lectures/sessions on W&GE have therefore been given in two courses, in “Development Policy and Humanitarian Questions” and in “Peace Building”. UKS is in the process of revising its main training modules, and new training programmes should be ready by spring 2006. It still remains a challenge to develop proper training modules for cross-cutting issues. The ongoing efforts in AMOR to establish tools for sustainability issues might give a better platform for developing more relevant training modules.

Several donors want to conduct further training in-country for their embassy personnel and partners. A selected number of donors, including Norway, have asked the organisation Train4U to develop courses for in-country training in (i) the role of donors in PRSP, (ii) peace building, and (iii) financial management. How best to address W&GE in in-country training programmes is an important question and should be discussed - whether this should be done by mainstreaming gender into existing and new training programmes or into separate W&GE training programmes. Based on experience, it seems that stand alone W&GE courses have little appeal, and should be avoided. Since also mainstreaming W&GE into all lectures have met much resistance, the option seems to be specific W&GE sessions to be integrated into core and obligatory courses and training sessions.

- *Selection of priority areas: education and agriculture*

The approach taken in the action plan was that one should start with a few selected topics and move to others if and when W&GE becomes firmly embedded in the topics first chosen. The first topics chosen were agriculture and education. However, although work was carried out on these two sectors, Norad's W&GE report for the period 1998-2000 points to a broad work programme and little systematic sector-related work. One could have expected Norad to have drafted an approach paper on how to address W&GE in sector work, but no such analytical work was performed. Since the action plan was not revised, a further selection of priority sectors was not done.

- *Each department in Norad to identify programmes for gender auditing and activities to improve gender mainstreaming*

No documentation can be found in the archive or from interviews concerning the results of these plans. Little analytical work seems to have been done on a thematic or sector level. One rare exception was the Association of Local Authorities (KS), which under its framework agreement with Norad performed a gender audit of its technical assistance (TA) work programme in local government projects supported by Norad (KS 2002). Although a workshop was organised in which KS presented its findings, no further follow up was done.

In 2001-2002 Norad did identify private sector development (PSD) as an area for improved W&GE efforts<sup>5</sup>. A gender component was included in the common ToR for all PSD studies, but as a general rule W&GE was only addressed in the problem description, not in proposed activities, the exception being Bangladesh (Norad 2002a), in which the PSD-report is also explicit about interventions relevant for W&GE.

- *Selected embassy to implement gender auditing of its development assistance programmes*

In 1999 the embassies were asked to report specifically on the implementation of the Strategy and the action plan in the activity reports. They were also asked to name one to two projects or programmes each to be gender audited. According to the gender advisor's report, the findings from the activity reports were as follows: one-third of the embassies referred to the action plan, several of the embassies had improved their reporting on the gender dimension, and several of the embassies were involved in gender-related work in human rights, decision making, agriculture, education, health and economic participation.

However, it is our view that the reporting was unsystematic and anecdotal. The request was never properly answered, and gender auditing and gender focusing of the embassies' programmes were never carried out in any systematic way. Some embassies did make use of this opportunity, but initiatives seemed to depend primarily on staff taking a special interest in the topic.

Environmental audits were carried out at several embassies in 1998, and plans were made for gender audits of selected embassies. No documentation can be found in the archive or from interviews concerning the results of these plans. It is the view of the team that the focus on the partner country system and new aid modalities worked against such efforts, and that there was more focus on partner country strategies.

In a rare instance, a recent gender audit of a donor country programme was performed in 2004 for DFID Malawi (Moser 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). The auditor's method was time consuming and comprehensive, and required active management leadership and full cooperation of all staff members. Use of an adapted version of this audit might be considered for relatively

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5) Information received through interviews with the gender advisor in Norad. There is no documentation of these decisions in the archive.

large embassies with large country programmes. On the other hand, separate gender audits of donor programmes might work against the trend toward focusing on strengthening partner country systems and reporting. In such a system, gender audits of joint donor programming, rather than individual donors, might make more sense, seen from a partner country perspective. A rare example of a proxy Norwegian gender audit was performed on the country programming for Afghanistan (Lindbäck et al. 2005), which was requested by the embassy in Kabul. Although not a gender audit in its traditional form, the assignment was to address the extent to which W&GE was addressed in current country programming and to make recommendations for improvement. Due to limited staff capacity at the embassy, the gender audit has so far (October 2005) not been acted upon.

#### **4.4 Reporting and management response**

Each year beginning in 1997, Norad has produced a W&GE report. The gender advisor has produced the report, which has been sent to Norad's director, who has included the major points in the annual Norad report (Etatsrapport) to the MFA, and attached the gender report itself as an annex. No documentation can be found on any feed back from Norad management on the reports. In its letter of instruction for the reports, the MFA specifies that the Norad report should identify weak links in the W&GE efforts and present action to be taken for improvements.

The gender advisor in the MFA has since 1997 presented an annual report to the Minister for Development Cooperation, which is a summary of the report from the various departments in the MFA as well as from Norad. The report presents the work done by MFA/Norad and its partners, and identifies weaknesses and makes recommendations for action.

These annual W&GE reports are potentially powerful instruments, if and when they are acted upon. The reports state clearly that mainstreaming is still weak, and that many still perceive W&GE as a marginal topic, not integrated into their responsibilities. The reports further identify the need to work more on W&GE (i) in country dialogues, (ii) in macro economic work, (iii) on new aid modalities, and (iv) mainstreaming. In 2000 the Minister asked for a separate meeting to follow up the report and improve action. However, the general impression is that there has not been sufficient follow up. There is no system in place for dealing with the shortcomings identified (see above). On the other hand, no separate system should be necessary; the MFA's own management system and procedures should be able to address issues raised. To complement a revised Strategy, additional procedures should be put in place to deal explicitly with follow up and management response to issues raised in the reports.

Chapter 6 in the Strategy refers to quality assurance and reporting. It is evident that reporting took place, but that it was not systematic enough and that it was not acted upon, when identifying weaknesses in the system.

Should W&GE reporting be made mandatory? An interesting comparison could be made with the mandatory reporting from the embassies to the MFA on human rights in partner countries. Similarly, MFA is recommended to assess the option of establishing a system whereby the embassies were obliged to report on the W&GE situation related to international agreements and national strategies in partner countries, as well as on how Norwegian development cooperation, including HR-dialogues, contribute to improving the W&GE situation.

Per October 2005 there is a new initiative in the MFA to address the format and direction of development policy documents. The basis will be a thematic background and lessons learned document, complemented by an action plan presenting a set of priorities to be addressed through the various financial channels. Such action plans with identified priorities would simplify reporting, and potentially make it more effective.

## 5. Country cases: Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Zambia<sup>6</sup>

These three countries vary in their institutional relationship to Norway as a donor country. While Bangladesh and Zambia are long-standing recipients of Norwegian aid, Afghanistan has been a partner country since 2004. In Zambia harmonization of aid policies has come a long way, and Norway has been an active player in the process and has worked closely with the Dutch and Sida, with whom Norway has established "silent partnerships". Innovative collaboration and funding models for support to the civil society sector has been developed through the women's NGOs umbrella organisation, Non-Governmental Organisations Coordination Committee (NGOCC). With a reduced volume of bilateral aid to Bangladesh, the private and civil society sectors have emerged as the most significant recipients of Norwegian funding. Bangladesh is well-known for its strong civil society organisations and empowerment of women through its micro credit programmes, which have also been supported by Norway. Norwegian support to Afghanistan has been channelled to the trust fund set up for reconstruction after the war (approx. 50 per cent), as well as through the United Nations and Norwegian NGOs.

### 5.1 Country contexts: Human rights, and economic and political participation

Violence against women is spreading in *Zambia* and *Bangladesh*. In *Afghanistan* violence against women is pervasive, and few women are exempt from the reality or threat of violence. Maternal and infant mortality rates in Afghanistan are the highest in the world. Zambia has one of the lowest life expectancy rates, at 33 years, as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Poverty is on the increase in Zambia, and Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world after decades of war and instability.

In all three countries there seems to be a persistent tension between customary law, traditional practices and religion that discriminate against women and international instruments and state law that in theory ensures gender equality. Discriminatory practices prevent women from accessing services and resources although their biological needs and their needs as caretakers and providers for their families are greater than those of men.

On the other hand, women have made progress with respect to political representation. Appointments of the first female governor in an *Afghan* province, a female ambassador and female ministers, albeit not in the most powerful ministries, are noted by women activists as steps forward in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Women mobilised actively during the constitutional assembly, the Lloya Jirga, and affirmative action policies have been adopted for Parliamentary Elections. In Zambia, a quarter of the cabinet ministers were women in 2004, but women comprised only 10% of the deputy ministers, 19% of the permanent secretaries, 23% of the directors, 44% of the deputy directors of civil service departments, and 16% of the district commissioners.

In *Bangladesh* there has been improvements in the areas of economic empowerment of women due to nationwide micro credit programmes, participation of millions of women in the garment industry and other industries, and political empowerment. In *Zambia* women comprise 60-80% of the country's 350,000 small-scale, largely subsistence farmers using low inputs, limited technology and family labour. About three-quarters of the informal entrepreneurs in urban areas are engaged in petty trade, and at least two-thirds of these are

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6) This chapter is based on the three case country reports: Haug and Sarwari 2005, Rakodi 2005, and Sørvald and Alam 2005. The reports are available at the Norad webpage: <http://www.norad.no>

women. In *Afghanistan* information about the economic role of women is extremely limited. The war destroyed the traditional subsistence agriculture and pastoralism, transforming Afghanistan into the world's largest opium producer and a centre for arms dealing and smuggling. In urban areas the public role of women in the economy was undermined as women's access to public employment and education collapsed due to the breakdown of the state sector. At the same time Afghan women when they were refugees in neighbouring countries, gained access to income generating programmes and employment in aid agencies, although on a limited scale.

## 5.2 Institutional set-up

Like all the other ministries in *Afghanistan*, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) started from scratch to develop visions, objectives, plans, strategies, capacity and links to other ministries. The establishment of the MOWA was agreed upon at the Bonn Conference in December 2001 and set up with substantial financial and technical support from donors. Unlike most other ministries, the MOWA does not have a large project portfolio of its own. The role of the MOWA is not entirely clear; should the MOWA restrict itself to policy-making and providing technical advice should it channel funds from donors to NGOs, or should it be involved in service delivery activities? The MOWA itself states that it has shifted strategy from a "welfare oriented, direct implementing approach into a policy influencing body – from that of a 'doing' to a 'thinking' ministry."<sup>7</sup>

The MOWA has set up a number of structures and activities to achieve outreach to other ministries:

- mainstreaming of gender in the national development budget and processes
- MoUs with the ministries of education, health, commerce, planning and justice to mainstream gender equality into these ministries
- training programmes for ministries
- gender focal units in ministries
- coordination with donors through the gender advisory group.<sup>8</sup>

Minister Mosouda Jalal<sup>9</sup> recently identified several key constraints on the efforts to advance gender equality, including the lack of an adequate structure or mechanism for gender mainstreaming, the lack of policy direction, and the absence of a funding mechanism.

In *Zambia*, the agreements signed by the government at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and other conferences in the mid-1990s provided a basis for lobbying. In 1996, the Women in Development Department (WIDD) was converted into the Gender in Development Division (GIDD) and moved to the Cabinet Office, where its director was upgraded to the position of permanent secretary, meaning that it had control over its own budget<sup>10</sup>.

GIDD advocates gender mainstreaming, but it also undertakes women-specific activities, such as the programme for women entrepreneurs (with ILO support). It works with line ministries on projects and programmes related to women's issues, but it also encourages the ministries to adopt gender analysis so as to develop an understanding that unless power imbalances between men and women inside and outside the home are acknowledged and tackled, women's welfare is unlikely to improve. Thus, the GIDD tries to ensure that national policy documents mainstream gender, including those issues that have become prominent since the approval of the National Gender Policy, such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the participation of women in decision-making.

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7) Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA): 1382 (2003-4): Accomplishments and plans

8) For the purpose of formulating the national development budget, the Government of Afghanistan has established 16 consultative groups, six of which have been given responsibility for ensuring that cross-cutting issues are considered. The cross-cutting issues are gender, environment, humanitarian affairs, human rights, monitoring and evaluation, and counter-narcotics.

9) She made the remarks at a preparatory meeting ahead of the Afghan Development Forum meeting in March 2005.

10) There was some confusion in 2003-2004 when a Deputy Minister for Women's Affairs was appointed in the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, although subsequent Deputy Ministers in that ministry have not been given specific responsibility for women's affairs.



In 1996, Gender Focal Point Persons (GFPP) were designated in all line ministries, provinces and districts. Originally, they were intended to be senior staff members with responsibilities including:

- ensuring that the ministry formulates and implements gender-sensitive sectoral policies
- coordinating gender-mainstreaming activities and ensuring that budgets are engendered.

For a number of reasons, the contribution that provincial and district GFPPs can make to development planning is limited. Because of the limited effectiveness of GFPPs, gender sub-committees are now being formed and trained in each ministry, province and district.

Although progress on implementing the gender policy and plan of action has been patchy, the existence of such documents approved at the highest levels of government enables those concerned with gender equality to draw upon them in lobbying for action or legislative change and in ensuring that initiatives are sustained, even when political and senior bureaucratic support is weak. The GIDD is well-positioned in government, and the institutional framework for mainstreaming gender seems sound. However, because of the limited political support for gender equality, it is essential that the GIDD be highly effective. In practice, rapid staff turnover (especially in the leadership) and the appointment of inexperienced staff have weakened the GIDD and damaged its credibility as an organisation.

In *Bangladesh* the government's strategic approach was to integrate women into mainstream economic activities, and the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) included strategic support to the macro objective of poverty reduction and human resource development by developing skills to increase women's involvement in economic activities and opportunities in the labour market. There is a Ministry for Women and Children Affairs (MWCA).

The Bangladeshi government has endorsed, without reservation, the Platform of Action (PFA) of the Fourth International Conference for Women in Beijing in 1995.

Fifteen ministries have been identified as line or sectoral ministries in relation to implementation of PFA, and a network of 42 WID focal points have been established. They have their respective plans of action for implementation of the PFA. The overall coordination and monitoring responsibility lies with the MWCA, but all ministries and agencies have equal responsibility for women's advancement. The MWCA's role is focused primarily on advocacy, policy leadership, coordination and monitoring of implementation of the NAP by all other sectoral ministries. In addition, a 44-member National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) chaired by the Prime Minister was established in 1997. In the Country Report presented at the UN Conference Beijing+ 10, the GoB reports on progress achieved, but admit that "much still remains to be done".

### **5.3 The legal and policy environment: incorporation of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in state law and policy**

The three countries are signatories to international instruments, including the Beijing Platform, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, Bangladesh has made reservations regarding two of the CEDAW Articles which contribute to a continued lack of secular legal framework regarding inheritance and family law.

Even in Afghanistan 'the overall legal framework is nearly ideal' according to some informants. In Bangladesh and Zambia national policies and action plans were developed, inspired by the Beijing Declaration, but donor representatives expressed their frustration over the lack of ability of governments to implement national policies at many levels.

The new *Afghan* Constitution adopted a provision stating that all citizens, men and women, have equal rights under the law. In the National Development Framework (NDF) from April

2002, the need to pay special attention to women and girls to enhance their capabilities and to integrate gender into all programmes was reiterated. The Berlin Declaration of 1 April 2004 stated that “all efforts to build a new Afghanistan will reflect the aspiration of the Civil Society and promote the participation of women through increased recruitment of and equal opportunities for women in the civil service as well as gender mainstreaming.”

In 1998 the Government of *Bangladesh* prepared a comprehensive plan of action, the “National Action Plan for Women’s Advancement: Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action” based on the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action. Yet, it should be noted that gains made in this area are not irreversible as the government recently proposed to adopt a less specific and more ambiguous national policy.

In 1996 the *Zambian* government formulated a Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women based on the Beijing Platform for Action. An inter-ministerial task force was set up to produce a comprehensive gender policy, and in 2000 the National Gender Policy was approved by the Cabinet (GRZ 2000). The policy’s vision is “to achieve full participation of both women and men in the development process at all levels in order to ensure sustainable development and attainment of equality and equity between the sexes” (p. 44). Its overall aim is to eliminate the gender imbalance that places a greater burden of poverty on women, through enhancing women’s access to and control of economic resources and opportunities, including land, information, financial resources, employment and income-generating opportunities, and women’s and men’s participation in decision-making processes.

The Strategic Plan of Action (2004-2008) was subsequently agreed upon following extensive stakeholder consultations. The plan of action is comprehensive, with no internal prioritising – there are 32 policy objectives, 86 strategies, and 264 activities, most with at least two indicators.

Both the constitution and the penal code are currently under review, and it is envisaged that, among other changes, gender rights and equality will be more systematically and explicitly incorporated into both (GIDD 2005a, b, c).

#### **5.4 Norwegian aid**

Since the early 1980s, Norway had provided humanitarian aid to the Afghan population through Norwegian NGOs. In 2004 *Afghanistan* became a partner country for Norwegian development assistance, and Norway provided 456,4 mill. NOK in aid.<sup>11</sup> Norwegian aid to Afghanistan is provided through four channels:

1. The Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) is a multi-donor trust fund set up in order to facilitate donor coordination in response to a strong wish from the Government of Afghanistan for such a mechanism. The major part of the funding for transitional and long term assistance is channelled through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF). The ARTF does not include tools for gender mainstreaming, or any targeted support for women (more on this in chapter 5.7.4, p. 47).
2. Norwegian, Afghan and international NGOs.<sup>12</sup> The Norwegian Church Aid and the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee have had a long-standing presence in Afghanistan, both in relief and rehabilitation, and they receive funding from Norad as well as the MFA (Knudsen 2004).

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11) The corresponding figures for previous years were 486 million NOK in 2002 and 487 million NOK in 2003.

12) The Norwegian NGOs consulted for the study were the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee and the Norwegian Church Aid. A few Norwegian NGOs receive smaller amounts from Norad. Other Norwegian NGOs are funded from the humanitarian budget of the MFA. Humanitarian aid is not included in the ToR of the evaluation. The Norwegian Refugee Council and the Norwegian Red Cross are the largest recipients of humanitarian funding. The Aga Khan Foundation, an international NGO, is also a recipient of Norwegian GAP funding. (GAP funding is intended to serve as bridging funds in the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.) The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission receives funding from the humanitarian budget.

3. United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, IOM, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, FAO, UNDP, UNFPA and UNMACA are recipients of aid<sup>13</sup>.
4. Joint funding with other donors. is built on this model. Norway is co-funding<sup>14</sup> a police project where Germany is lead donor, and manages the dialogue with the Government of Afghanistan on the project. Norway has a team of instructors at the police academy in Kabul for the purpose of training the Afghan police force. Special emphasis is given to training of female police officers, with Norwegian female police officers being part of the training staff.

Aid is provided through the ARTF as a way of strengthening the new Afghan government. NGOs were supported during the conflict, and they are now being supported as they gradually move away from humanitarian aid towards rehabilitation and development. The combined support to civil society and the government means that Norway is potentially in a position to contribute to increased mobilisation and participation of women in the economy and politics, as well as to a gender perspective in government policies and programmes.

Norway has supported *Bangladesh* since 1971. Bangladesh has been a main partner country since 1975. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from 1995<sup>15</sup> states that Norwegian aid should strengthen the democratic process and support the education sector and the productive sector<sup>16</sup>. Gender and environment were identified as cross-cutting considerations. The current MoU from 2003 places stronger emphasis on human rights, anti-corruption and improved financial management. Gender is identified as an important concern, together with the environment, institutional capacity-building and HIV/AIDS control<sup>17</sup>.

The volume of the bilateral programme between Norway and Bangladesh was approximately USD 24.8 million in 2004.<sup>18</sup> Over the years, state-to-state cooperation has been reduced, and support to the NGO sector and the private sector has increased. NGOs and the private sector currently receive the greatest share of Norwegian funding. In 2005 this is expected to change, with bilateral state-to-state cooperation increasing due to an education sector program being started up.

From 1997 to 2005, some of the areas relevant to gender equality covered by the organisations supported by the embassy were<sup>19</sup>:

- the promotion and protection of women's human rights
- networking women-led organisations all over the country
- human rights development programme for women at the grassroots level
- integrated development efforts for industrial workers
- incorporating gender in the national budget
- promoting gender equity
- human rights and democracy
- HIV/AIDS in relation to female prostitutes
- girl/child labour rights
- employment generation.

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13) Most of the UN agencies are supported through humanitarian aid funding. Several UN agencies which have been supported in earlier periods did not receive funding from Norway in 2004 and 2005.

14) The project is funded from the Department of Global Affairs, MFA, from their human rights and democracy funding.

15) Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh concerning Development Cooperation, 1995.

16) Changed to private sector development in the 2003 MoU.

17) Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh concerning Development Cooperation, 2003.

18) Health and Education 43.4 %, HIV/AIDS 0.4 %, Economic Development and Trade 29.8 %, Good Governance 7.9 %, Environment and Energy 18.4 %.

19) NGO/WID Partner Organisations (1997-2005). Updated write-up received from the Norwegian Embassy, Dhaka.



In Bangladesh, the framework conditions provided by the GoB for donor cooperation have so far not allowed for substantial progress towards donor harmonisation and budget support.<sup>20</sup>

Norway's current programme of development cooperation with *Zambia* is governed by a MoU, negotiated in 2000 (and not time limited), which was based on a long-standing partnership (MFA, 2004). It was agreed that Norway's assistance programme would contribute to:

- reinforcing human rights and democratisation
- improving basic education
- strengthening the roads sector
- enhancing environmental management, with the main focus on wildlife management.

Norad developed a Strategy for Norwegian Development Cooperation with Zambia (2001-2005) based on the MOU negotiated in 2000. This reiterates the main areas of support identified in the MOU and states that cross-cutting issues "will be addressed within all the selected sectors" (p. 14). This is the only reference to women and gender equality in the strategy.

The largest allocation is to the education SWAP (2003-2007), in conjunction with seven other donors. More than double the agreed upon contribution to budget support has been allocated (2004-2010), although a variety of activities aimed at improving public expenditure management and harmonisation, which is necessary for effective budget support, are also being funded. In terms of the overall volume of financial assistance, the next most significant area is environmental and wildlife management. Currently less than before in terms of the amount of funding allocated, agricultural support is channelled through other donors. Delegated support through an agreement with the Netherlands is ongoing, while discussions on a similar agreement with Sweden are under way. In line with the directive to reduce the number of sectors in which Norway is involved, support to the roads sector is being scaled down and focused primarily on improving road access to national parks.

Specific gender-targeted activities command a relatively small budget, with primary focus on support for the Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee (NGOCC), a coalition of women NGOs.

## 5.5 The embassies: organisation and resources

The Norwegian Embassy in Kabul was established in 2002 following the fall of the Taliban, and *Afghanistan* became a partner country for Norwegian development cooperation in 2004. Currently, the embassy has relative few staff given the large volume of aid<sup>21</sup>. One person has primary responsibility for long-term development cooperation<sup>22</sup>, one on humanitarian assistance. This portfolio overlaps to some extent with the administration of the humanitarian and GAP<sup>23</sup> budgets. The person in charge of the development portfolio is also responsible for the gender-related efforts at the embassy. Inevitably, this means that gender is only allocated limited time and resources. Staff members say that they routinely review proposals and projects from a gender perspective, as required when writing the appropriation document. No specific training had been given on gender issues in preparation for staff postings to Afghanistan.

Despite the institutional constraints outlined above, the embassy has addressed the issue of gender by commissioning a review of gender in Norwegian assistance to Afghanistan (Lindbæk et al 2005) and through the supervision mission of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), for which a consultant was funded to specifically examine the gender aspects of the NSP (Scanteam 2005b). Both exercises were intended to improve the

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20) Interview with donor representative, Dhaka, May, 2005.

21) Aid to Afghanistan is meant to be temporary post conflict assistance to provide funding for rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the low staffing is intentional.

22) One additional staff is currently under recruitment.

23) GAP funding is intended to serve as bridging funds in the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.

knowledge and competence in this field in order to facilitate a more strategic approach to gender-related efforts. According to the embassy, the priority areas for a more strategic approach are to work more closely with the Ministry of Women Affairs and to promote donor coordination among likeminded donors by building on the work already carried out by the Gender Advisory Group coordinated by the Ministry of Women Affairs.

Embassy staff attends meetings organised by the Ministry of Women Affairs through the Gender Advisory Group. At present, however, this is not seen to be an effective forum for voicing and raising gender issues with donors and the government. Embassy staff members are also linked informally with staff members from other embassies with an interest in gender issues.

In *Bangladesh*, the ambassador has delegated the daily responsibility for the development programme to the counsellor. There are four national and four Norwegian advisors (secretaries/diplomats) assigned to work on the embassy's development portfolio. Current Norwegian staff members at the embassy cover a wide range of fields, including private sector, education, law and political science. One Norwegian advisor, trained as a lawyer, is responsible for gender equality issues. Since Norway's development strategy in Bangladesh is based on a rights approach, her legal competence is useful.

Having held her position for 15 years, the local W&GE advisor has ensured continuity in the work on gender issues. Together with the Norwegian advisor responsible for gender issues, she represents the embassy on W&GE matters. In her capacity as a gender focal point, she has participated in regional gender focal meetings. These annual or bi-annual meetings managed from Norad Oslo came to an end in the mid- 1990s due to changes in priorities and in the implementation of the gender strategy.

For a long time, experienced women and men from the MFA and Norad have held key positions at the embassy, including as gender advisors. Since 1999, there have been two female ambassadors. The first held the position for nearly five years, until 2003. According to cooperating partners within the NGO group, the role of the ambassador is of vital importance in explaining Norway's concern for gender issues and Norway's influence in the area. The current ambassador is well aware of her political role as the Norwegian government's representative, and she serves an important function in key meetings in which gender issues are raised or in which Norway should make its position known.<sup>24</sup>

Embassy staff members raise gender issues when they find it relevant, as documented in the Annual Activity Plans, Mid-Term Reviews and meetings. Women and gender equality is brought up as a topic within the private sector development cooperation, the education sector and as a human rights issue. However, the embassy staff members, especially the Norwegians, said that they do not feel comfortable with the term "gender mainstreaming". According to one advisor, the issue of gender is raised on an ad hoc basis and not as a core issue. "Norway is not as active as other larger donors, such as for instance DFID. DFID is active and pushing."<sup>25</sup> Some of the embassy staff members regard their role as generalists. In their view, the embassy's job is to identify partners with competence to implement the programme activities.

In line with the MFA's procedure, the bilateral cooperation was evaluated in 2001 as part of the revision process. In relation to women and gender issues, the evaluation concluded, "...both sets of partners have been effective in focusing efforts on women, but this does not mean that this is underpinned by good quality gender analysis."<sup>26</sup> The evaluation report

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24) For instance, the ambassador held a speech at the 14th anniversary of Karmojibi Nari in May 2005 while the field visit in Dhaka took place. Her speech explicitly expressed clear support for the women workers' movement.

25) Interview with Norwegian adviser, Norwegian Embassy, Dhaka, 23 May 2005.

26) MFA 2001.

expressed satisfaction with the efforts made by the embassy to identify women in programme activities, but it requested more explicit analysis and impact assessments, stressing the need to target the poorest segments of women.

To administer its development cooperation programme, the embassy in *Zambia* currently has four diplomats (environment and agriculture; economics, finance and governance; education and HIV/AIDS; civil society and internal quality control) and four locally recruited programme officers responsible to a minister-counsellor and the ambassador.

The embassy in *Zambia* is required to perform an assessment of W&GE as one of seven sustainability criteria when writing an appropriation document. Two members of the embassy staff (2<sup>nd</sup> secretary and programme officer) have specific responsibility for gender, spending approximately 20% and 40% of their time, respectively, on gender issues. All the programme officers comment on every appropriation document, and they report that the response to raising a gender concern is generally constructive. If relevant, gender is built into the ToR for appraisal of the project document and subsequent reviews. Furthermore, when a project is approved and entered into the ICT management system PTA, it must be coded according to listed OECD/DAC statistical categories, such as directly or indirectly gender-targeted. It was felt that the commitment of a senior diplomat is essential to securing the necessary funding for gender-related efforts, including both gender-targeted projects and activities specifically related to gender within a broader project/programme. Those holding the gender portfolio have insufficient time to participate in annual meetings relating to sectoral projects in which they are not specifically involved and so do not examine whether project reporting reflects gender objectives and issues.

The embassy staff members interviewed claimed to be familiar with the W&GE Strategy, although it has not been important for the embassy's activities. Only one staff member mentioned that she referred to it in her work, and no printed copy of the Strategy appeared to be available in Lusaka, either to embassy staff or development partners. Respondents did not know whether this was because the Strategy was under review or the document was out of print, and they did not appear to feel hindered in their work as a result. Copies of the Handbook of Gender and Empowerment were available at the embassy, but it did not appear to be widely disseminated to development partners, and only one member of the embassy staff acknowledged using it in her work.

All the staff interviewed believed that they had sufficient general knowledge of gender issues. However, views differed with respect to staff members' understanding of how gender equality can be mainstreamed into sectoral programmes. Some were confident of their own knowledge. Others felt that even though they were obliged to mainstream gender equality and were prepared to do so, they lacked practical knowledge of good practice and relevant tools. This is a matter of concern, given that some development partners also mentioned their lack of knowledge of tools to support the operationalisation of gender mainstreaming in both budgeting and sectoral activities. It was, therefore, considered vital that the embassy staff continue to include a gender specialist, although even this does not guarantee sufficient expertise to advise on all sectoral programmes and development partner requirements. In the past, information and advice has been obtained from specialist staff in Norad, but the availability of such support and expertise since the reorganisation is unclear. Certainly, embassy staff members have not received material or information on tools, but neither have they needed to ask for assistance recently.

Diplomats newly posted to *Zambia* receive training, as required, on the *Zambian* context, the development cooperation system and the management of aid. Over and above this, there is a menu of training opportunities, but the MFA was reported to be less directive than Norad as to which training activities are deemed to be relevant. Locally recruited programme officers are generally given an in-office orientation and may be offered the opportunity to attend a

training course in Norway on management of the development cooperation programme. None of the staff members had attended a specific training course related to gender. Training programmes for disciplinary experts are offered, but these may not include a specific component on gender; even if they do, some staff, seem to regard training in specific technical areas, as opposed to cross cutting issues, as more useful.

There is little evidence that W&GE in the development cooperation strategy document is used by embassy staff members to inform their own analysis, actions or dialogue with partners. Most feel that gender has become so ingrained in the way of thinking in Norway, both domestically and within the aid programme, that it is automatically considered by all staff members as part of their work. If it is not, the requirement that it be taken into account as a cross-cutting issue in project/programme design ensures that it is not forgotten. Review of project documents by the staff members with specific responsibility for gender equality is also thought to ensure that gender is mainstreamed. However, constraints on the time of these staff members prevent their subsequent involvement in implementation, monitoring and review of projects for which they are not responsible.

## 5.6 Policy dialogue

In *Afghanistan*, there are a number of arenas for policy dialogue on gender issues in broader donor fora. The Norwegian Development Minister raised human rights and women's issues at the Berlin donor conference. The embassy has followed up by raising gender equality issues at the Afghan Development Forum (ADF) meetings. Norway is also generally known by the other donors for their having raised women's issues in donor meetings. Donor coordination at the national level is weak, and the only donor forum that until recently met regularly for consultations on gender issues was the European Union Forum. In a new initiative, the Danish embassy has initiated regular donor meetings.

There is a dialogue between the embassy and the government at the sector level, both through the consultative group mechanism and through bilateral meetings at the ministerial level. Yet, the decision to provide the major part of Norwegian transitional and long term funding to Afghanistan through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund has meant that the embassy has had no structured dialogue platform for policy discussions at the programme level with the Government of Afghanistan, even in areas of priority for Norwegian aid.<sup>27</sup> Norway has been urging the Afghan government to establish regular meetings at the programme level to enable a closer follow-up on gender benchmarks included in programmes supported by Norway.

Practically all donor informants made statements to the effect that "gender is not a priority" in their dialogue with the Government of Afghanistan. The list of priorities for development of Afghanistan after the war is endless. For some, the multitude of pressing tasks is used as an argument against working on gender issues in the current context. Another argument states that due to traditions that discriminate against women, gender sensitive programming will not have an impact because men are inevitably going to resist such interventions. For example, civil servants have a tendency to list all the obstacles, rather than focus on how they could be overcome. The implicit belief in the "tradition" argument is that these values are hard to change and that donors must wait for an enabling environment to emerge. Others argue that there will never be a right time and that now is as good a time as any.

While the majority of donor representatives argue that gender is not a priority and that very little progress is being made, there are people within the ministries who are of the view that "a lot of attention is given to women". Within the government, including at the higher levels, there are people who are sympathetic to gender issues and who argue that donors should use their influence to further gender issues in order to take advantage of the leverage resulting from the government's heavy dependence on donor funding. According to this view, the current context provides donors with a window of opportunity which they should make better use of.

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27) However, for the purpose of reporting on the objectives of the Fund, reporting is adequate.

Several informants suggested that policy dialogue should be accompanied by benchmarking and monitoring of results to ensure compliance with established objectives, thereby moving away from a sole focus on financial accountability towards political accountability. It was pointed out that at present there are no institutions with accountability for achieving policy objectives. Although there is reluctance on the part of donors to earmark funding, it was suggested that donors could be more explicit about their own priorities.

Many Afghans find that donors lack an adequate conceptual understanding of gender issues in Afghanistan, as well as of the general Afghan context. There are many reasons that explain why “the situation at the moment is dismal”, as it was put by a representative from a donor agency. Missions in Afghanistan are new. Most people have very little experience working in Afghanistan. Many missions have limited staff and are in the process of increasing the number of staff members. There is a large turn-over among mission staff as staff members only hold positions for a short period of time. Staff members are offered frequent leave to compensate for being posted to Kabul. Due to the prevailing security situation, they also face restrictions on movements around Kabul and the country, which limits their access to information.

In *Bangladesh*, W&GE issues were always raised in the bilateral annual consultations with the government, both when sector priorities were discussed and in separate statements. Whether this has changed with the introduction of multi-donor consultations is difficult to document<sup>28</sup>. Other donors suggest that the annual multi-donor consultations have not diminished Norway’s role in raising women and gender issues. Although a number of donor representatives bring up gender issues in these consultations, representatives from the donor groups, women organisations and human rights organisations say that Norway continues to play a leading role in raising gender issues.

The Bangladesh Development Forum is the main forum in which donors meet and consult with the government. Until August 2005, the largest donor forum, the Local Consultative Group (LCG), was led by the World Bank, but it now has a rotating leadership. LCG consists of the bilateral and multilateral donors. It has an Annual Development Forum/PRSP Implementation Forum with the GoB where they have been able to raise gender issues. Outside this annual forum it has not had regular consultation where gender issues are addressed.

The LCG has 11 sub-groups, and there is one sub-group on Women and Gender Equality (W&GE). Norway is chairing the W&GE sub-group from June 2005 to June 2006. Other sub-groups that Norway participates in address education, the private sector, and governance.

The discussion of new aid modalities is important to the ongoing dialogue within the donor group. Budget support, sector programme support and harmonisation are regularly and continuously being debated. Due to the framework conditions provided by the government for donor cooperation, the process of new aid modalities has not yet brought about substantial changes in the relationship between the government and donors. This is also due to the long process connected to the GoB’s drafting of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The W&GE sub-group was active in the process of commenting on the PRSP. The other sub-groups were challenged by the W&GE sub-group and other stakeholders to include gender mainstreaming in their comments to the Interim PRSP. Some informants expressed satisfaction with the role played by the sub-group, referring to substantial revisions of the Interim PRSP by the government. The LCG’s general comment to the Interim PRSP was positive.<sup>29</sup> Yet,

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28) The major donors presently in Bangladesh are the United Kingdom, Japan, USAid, EU, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Australia, The Netherlands, DANIDA, various UN bodies and World Bank Group. They participate in the Bangladesh Development Forum, which is the comprehensive multi-donor group.

29) Comments on the PRSP from the LCG, Dhaka, April 2005, page 2.



sub-groups referred to the importance of improving action plans for the implementation of the PRSP. Others expressed dissatisfaction and referred to the W&GE sub-group as one that pays a lot of attention to women and gender equality without achieving substantial changes due to lack of coordination, joint implementation by the donors and inaction by the government. Norway has provided direct support for gender-specific activities in the past and makes the issue central to its dialogue with the Government of *Zambia*. A mid-term review of the MOU with Zambia was conducted in 2002. Gender was mentioned only in the education paper with respect to measures to improve equity in access to schooling. W&GE was discussed as part of the portfolio of good governance support.

In advance of the consultative process on the PRSP, after considerable debate, 90 CSOs, including women's organisations, formed an umbrella group of NGOs, called the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), in order to promote effective civil society input into the PRSP process. Only later did the government engage specialised institutions to prepare papers on those issues not considered by its eight working groups, including the cross-cutting themes of HIV/AIDS, gender and environment, and various components of infrastructure. By then, there was too little time to consult on these papers, with the result that the integration of cross-cutting themes into the main chapters was inconsistent and links were not made between the themes. CSPR's concern and initial scepticism led it to mount a "shadow" PRSP preparation process. First, ten thematic areas were identified, and thematic status was given to the issues identified by the government as cross-cutting (including gender).

The gender strategies included in the PRSP are based on those set forth in the National Gender Policy, and they focus on the removal of barriers to women's economic participation (through legal reform), special economic programmes and reduction of women's workload through the provision of appropriate technologies. Access to land is regarded as an important aspect of gender equity, justified in terms of family and national food security (GRZ, 2002). With a few exceptions (some disaggregated data for male/female headed households, literacy, school enrolment, HIV/AIDS, nutritional status, representation of women in decision making and senior positions), the analysis is not gendered. Most policies were stated in extremely general and ambitious terms: the means of implementation, targets and resource implications were not specified (a few exceptions being education, reproductive health, and legal impediments to women's access to productive resources). As a result of the inadequate treatment of issues by the working groups, an insufficient share of planned expenditures was allocated to both the cross-cutting themes (with the exception of HIV/AIDS) and infrastructure components, especially water and sanitation.

Until 1994, donors shared their experiences with gender issues and avoided duplication through a WID platform. Today, donor coordination occurs through informal bilateral and multilateral discussions, sometimes formalised into agreements (for example, the division of labour and "silent partnerships"). Donors do not participate in the Gender Consultative Forum that advises GIDD, but they do participate in the Gender Forum, which has expanded from the donor WID platform to include a broader spectrum of stakeholder groups, and is chaired alternately by GIDD and NGOCC. Its bi-monthly meetings are regularly attended by the Scandinavian donors, the Dutch and GTZ, and occasionally DFID, and they are useful for information sharing and networking. Gender tends to be raised as an issue in donor gatherings by staff members with specific gender responsibilities. There is a separate advisory group for gender, but it is not yet clear how it will be dealt with, and one of the issues donors expect to raise with GRZ is the question of how it intends to deal with cross-cutting issues, including gender.

## **5.7 Gender mainstreaming**

### *5.7.1 Sector support - Zambia*

*Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA)*. Gender is to a certain extent addressed in Norway's dialogue with ZAWA. For example, the embassy has promoted the advancement of women in

the management structure and as scouts, and it has asked for reporting on this. In response, ZAWA has trained a number of women as scouts and has found that the women employed were more stable employees than some of the male scouts.

**Education sector.** The Education SWAP in Zambia, BESSIP, is related to the Ministry of Education Strategic Plan and contains 12 sub-programmes, including one cross-cutting sub-programme on Equity and Gender (special educational needs, gender and HIV/AIDS), which includes activities to sensitise traditional leaders, communities and parents on the importance of education, particularly for girls, and targeted grants and bursaries for poor households. In addition, the timetable and dates of terms have been adjusted to correspond with seasonal labour demand, particularly in agriculture. Recognition of the poor quality of existing information led to the initiation (with US support) of the Education Monitoring Information System (EMIS), which has begun to improve the quality of data, including gender disaggregated data.

The SWAP model puts the government in the driving seat. Although policy dialogue occurs, and donors and the government see eye-to-eye on many issues, donors are less able to promote particular issues, partly because this would contradict the principle of recipient responsibility and partly because it would strain the already limited capacity of the ministry or agency concerned. Both the ministry and donors place great importance on girls' education. The new ministry work plan incorporates a target of achieving gender equity in education by 2007, in addition to the relevant MDGs. Within the ministry there is a policy committee, which is supposed to deal with cross-cutting policy issues, and a gender sub-committee, which is supposed to deal with implementation. In addition, a planning officer is the GFPP, and a USAID consultant is currently looking at mainstreaming. However, there are fewer women in senior positions in the ministry than in the past.

#### 5.7.2 *Harmonisation in Practice - Zambia*

Agreement on the principles of harmonisation was reached at a donor meeting in Rome in 2003. By mid-2003 a Harmonisation in Practice (HIP) initiative was proposed based on five principles:

- that the leadership and guidance for donor coordination must come from the GRZ
- commitment to civil service reform
- commitment to the PRSP as a basis for strategic planning and poverty monitoring
- commitment to sector-wide approaches, and
- possibly direct budget support linked to the PRSP.

In addition, the HIP donors agreed to develop common procedures and requirements. In April 2004, the first MoU was signed by about three-quarters of the donor community, setting forth principles, processes and procedures for donor coordination and harmonisation.

However, a fully developed national coordination structure within government had not yet emerged by mid-2004, and donors continued to take most of the initiative (OECD, 2005). Although the intention of harmonisation is to reduce transaction costs for both recipient governments and development partners, in the short term the process is extremely labour and time intensive for those involved. The core group of donors (Norway, DFID, the EC and the World Bank) meets with the government weekly, and the wider group of donors meets every couple of months.

Norway provides support for:

**Improving public financial management:** While there is some gender disaggregated data that is used if available, the economist based in the embassy believes that gender budgeting is unattainable in a system in which the basics are not working and that its introduction should be postponed, even though there is some support within the Zambian government (GIDD, PEMD) and other bilateral donors (e.g. the Dutch) for introducing some gendered analysis in



the budget process<sup>30</sup>.

**Budget support:** Norway is hoping for approval shortly. A joint appraisal memorandum for possible budget support from Norway, Sweden, Netherlands and the DFID to the government (using the Sida format) summarises the PRSP, recognising that it identifies gender as an issue but noting that gender has not been fully integrated into the policy proposals. However, the content of appraisal of the budget support arrangements does not mention gender, even where the Performance Assessment Framework is discussed.

**Performance Assessment Framework:** This is a multi-annual matrix of priority milestones, targets and indicators based on the NDP, public expenditure management and accountability reforms under the PEMFA programme, other components of public service reform, macro-economic stabilisation policy and debt sustainability, which is updated annually<sup>31</sup>. Only the education indicators (net primary enrolment and completion rates) are disaggregated by gender, while one of the three health indicators refers to women's health (percentage of deliveries supervised by trained personnel). Although it is acknowledged that gender needs to be reflected in the PAF, ways of doing this have not yet been found. For example, the EC agreement included a target of 30% representation of women in senior positions, but this was omitted from the new MoU because the government regards it as unattainable in the short term.

### 5.7.3 "Silent partnerships" and implications for gender mainstreaming – Zambia

In recent years, the level of Norwegian support to the agricultural sector has steadily declined, and it only continues at present because of the "silent partnership" with the Netherlands that has operated since the beginning of 2004. Under the silent partnership arrangement, a Dutch staff member takes responsibility for project management. The Norwegian diplomat responsible attends one formal meeting a year (although he does have informal interim discussions with the Netherlands embassy) and no longer has any direct contact with the projects. Since 2003, requests for new funding have been handled by the Netherlands embassy using Dutch procedures and report formats (which are not dissimilar from Norwegian ones), although copies of the proposals, appraisal memorandums, work programmes and annual progress reports are made available to the Norwegian embassy. Five organisations were supported by Norway prior to the partnership and continue to be supported by Norwegian funding managed by the Netherlands.<sup>32</sup> Indications from the five organizations suggest that gender equality is not mainstreamed. There is a:

- narrow technical approach to agricultural research
- lack of gender analysis in reviews
- absence of gender disaggregation in log frames
- lack of reference to gender in monitoring and evaluation outcomes.

However, the findings also demonstrate that if commitments made to gender are not followed up, the problem is raised by the Dutch during regular reviews, and action is then requested.

The current Dutch aid policy, adopted in 2002, has no explicit gender content, apparently because it was assumed that gender had already been integrated into Dutch development thinking and support. There was also some scepticism about what had been achieved, and attention shifted to other issues, e.g. donor harmonisation.

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30) The gender budget approach has developed rapidly in recent years. It is based on the propositions that economic institutions bear and transmit gender bias, that the macro economy must be defined to include household maintenance activities (work activities whose supply is by and large inelastic), and that gender relations affect the division of labour and the distribution of productive inputs, employment, income and wealth. In so doing, gender relations affect macroeconomic processes and thus gender budgeting needs to consider inputs, process and outputs within the public revenue and expenditure framework. It must consider gender in the appraisal of government spending and taxation, the gendered impact of public expenditure policies and the gender awareness of budgetary strategy. Tools include public expenditure incidence analysis, gender disaggregated beneficiary assessment, analysis of the impact of public spending on time use and assessment of the articulation of gender concerns, i.e. they are concerned with both budgetary processes and the distributional impacts of resource generation, allocation and expenditure (IDD, 2005).

31) MoU Poverty Reduction Budget Support, 1 April 2005.

32) Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust (GART), Zambia National Farmers Union, the Agricultural Consultative Forum and the Livestock Development Trust.

#### *5.7.4 Trust funds - Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF)*

According to a recent evaluation, there is no expressed gender policy in ARTF despite the fact that gender has been defined as a cross-cutting issue in the National Development Framework of the Afghan government. According to the evaluation “ARTF gender policy is ad hoc in that it greatly relies on the experience of the World Bank’s task managers assigned to projects” (Scanteam 2005a: 43). According to the World Bank, the ARTF does not have a gender dimension, except for the microfinance project which mainly benefits women and the Community Development Councils (CDCs), which are part of the NSP programme and which provide a voice to women. Despite the lack of a general policy, gender equity has been a concern in community development projects, and indicators have been established to measure achievements on gender.

Norwegian funding through the ARTF in Afghanistan has been channelled to i) the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), which assists in the construction and development of rural communities and in strengthening community level governance; ii) the Lateral Entry Programme (LEP) implemented by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), whose mandate is to modernise and reform the public sector; iii) the Water and Sanitation Programme implemented by the Ministry of Reconstruction and Rural Development; and iv) the education programme managed by the Ministry of Education. All the programmes are new or being planned, but they can potentially contribute significantly towards gender equality if a number of barriers to gender mainstreaming are overcome:

- lack of financial and human resources to demonstrate political will and donor commitment to gender equality
- lack of knowledge about tools which could be helpful for gender analysis and programming
- lack of gender guidelines and indicators
- absence of gender policies and strategies in relevant ministries
- non-availability of female field staff required to interact with women.

There are several ongoing initiatives aimed at improving the situation: appointment of gender advisors, strengthening of gender focal points, and research and documentation on the situation and role of women. At the Berlin conference it was suggested that a programme targeted towards women should be designed and implemented through the ARTF. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was asked to work on the development of a national plan for gender which could be funded under the investment window of the ARTF. The idea was that the plan should cover four sectors: primary education, maternal health, financial empowerment, and access to justice and legal aid. Due to a variety of internal organisational issues and lack of agreement on strategy between donors, this work has not taken off within CIDA.

#### *5.7.5 Funding through Norwegian NGOs – Afghanistan*

Norwegian NGOs have a basic understanding of the importance of working on gender equality generated from field experience. However, there is a lack of institutional competence about how to go about this work in relation to specific projects. Knowledge about tools and instruments for gender analysis for project planning, monitoring and evaluation is very limited or absent. Yet, NGOs believe that gender should be mainstreamed in all projects and programmes. In order to achieve this objective, they are exploring several strategies:

- recruitment of gender advisors with a mandate to mainstream gender in projects and programmes
- recruitment of female staff who have an intuitive understanding of gender issues and who will not, like male staff, resist gender mainstreaming. In Afghanistan, it is also often necessary to employ female staff since there are cultural constraints on the space available for interaction between men and women.
- train staff in gender analysis, programming, monitoring and evaluation
- work with women partner organisations.

According to Norwegian Church Aid and the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee, they maintain a good, general dialogue with the embassy, but gender does not figure prominently in the dialogue and is not raised as a priority area by the embassy.

#### 5.7.6 National NGOs

A number of national NGOs in *Bangladesh* are supported by Norway. These NGOs support women in a number of ways. Some have policies for increasing the number of women entrepreneurs and managers through institutions and capacity-building. Rights-based organisations work with men and women in an integrated manner and organisations such as SAMATA<sup>33</sup> have included both men and women in its land rights programme.

While one of eleven human rights commissioners in the *Afghan* Independent Human Rights Commission is a woman, and the Commission runs programmes on women's rights awareness, research and advocacy, in *Zambia* the Permanent Human Rights Commission's 2000-2004 plan did not mention gender specifically nor was gender referred to in the ToR for a consultant (in 2005) to help them review the strategic plan and decide a way to move forward<sup>34</sup>. In both countries, a dearth of data about gender-based violence has been identified as a gap.

## 5.8 Targeting

### 5.8.1 Support to government institutions working on gender issues - Zambia

In *Zambia*, Norway was the lead donor supporting initial staff and operational costs and capacity-building for the Women in Development Department within the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development in 1986. In 1996 the department was converted into the Gender in Development Division (GIDD), one of five divisions in the Cabinet Office. This would not have happened without Norad's financial and institutional support, which enabled the GIDD to increase its visibility and attract other donor funding (for example, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Netherlands embassy, Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Sweden) (SGS, 1999). However, there has been periodic donor concern about the limited and fluctuating capacity of the GIDD. Under a "silent partnership" agreement with the Dutch, support to GIDD is managed today by the Netherlands. The GIDD is not currently invited to the annual meeting with the Norwegian embassy, nor is Norway invited to the six monthly meetings that the GIDD holds with the Dutch.

Informants felt that donor support is needed in several areas: first, it is needed in policy dialogue to help those concerned inside and outside government to strengthen the remit of the GFPPs, and secondly, with financial support for continued capacity-building and ensuring that full-time GFPPs are available. Currently, funding is available for a limited time period for civil servants dealing with mainstreaming HIV/AIDS under the HIV/AIDS support programme, on the condition that their posts become part of the establishment in due course. It is suggested that a similar approach is necessary to advance gender mainstreaming. Although donors are reluctant because they think that such initial funding for civil service posts reduces country ownership and civil service reform is supposed to include downsizing, there is both support and precedence for such an idea - Norway funded some posts in the early days of the GIDD, and both Norway and the Netherlands have funded some provincial GFPP posts.

### 5.8.2 Targeting through women's NGOs

In *Afghanistan*, efforts targeted towards women are characterised by a small-scale, welfare-oriented approach, which is a legacy from the relief and rehabilitation efforts during the war, and by programmes for awareness raising and training in the areas of human rights and political participation. Networks are weak, and professional advocacy is considered to be a

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33) SAMATA means "equality" in Bengali.

34) PHRC partnership project between the PHRC and the donor community, No. PHRC/DC/2000: 2001-3; Terms of Reference for a consultant to help the PHRC with its strategic plan 2005-9 (February 2005).

new field for women NGOs. Norway does not fund any women's organisations directly, but two women's organisations involved in community development are funded through the NCA. One of the organisations started the first shelter for women in Kabul. Individual NGOs with a well-conceived intervention methodology have been able to improve the situation of women, even in areas where discrimination against women and traditional practices are pervasive.

In *Bangladesh*<sup>35</sup> there are large, membership-based women's organisations<sup>36</sup>, and a women's movement which has access to and a voice in the national media. Norway has had a number of long-standing partnerships with the most influential national women's organisations that have been successful in raising women's rights issues and in identifying and taking on emerging issues, such as the rights of women workers and trafficking of women and children. The organisations that receive support have a strong advocacy profile, often combined with research and training on human rights issues. Norway also supports the efforts of one NGO that is involved in economic development, specifically in the areas of credit, livelihoods and food security.

Partner organisations in Bangladesh felt that Norway is a democratic partner that does not impose issues on them, and provides support to what one of the key partners defined as "basic issues". Their appreciation of Norway's dedication, continuity of policy and continuity of partnership was highlighted by the women organisations that have been receiving funds for a relatively long period of time. The reasons for this are several: Norway does not desert a partner when the partner is in crisis, it supports programmes which are not always supported by other donors, such as networking, advocacy and human rights, and the embassy is accessible when the partner is in need<sup>37</sup>. The general consensus among the partners is that the interests and priorities of their organisations are quite well-reflected in the project document. The organisations have the opportunity to brainstorm, confer, and debate, and then agree to work together. Partners mentioned that the appraisal reports allow room for specific dialogue.

It appears from the appropriation documents of support to the women organisations that the embassy took the issues of management and financial capacity-building very seriously and pursued these issues in both the pre-contract and post-contract periods. Much has been achieved in strengthening the organisations' institutional capacity during the period of Norwegian support. There is a continuous dialogue between the partners on these issues, which is welcomed by the women organisations.

As a result of efforts to harmonise aid to *Zambia*, Norway channels almost its entire funding for women NGOs in Zambia to and through the Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee (NGOCC), an umbrella organization for women NGOs<sup>38</sup>. Small amounts of support continue to be given directly to individual women NGOs, such as to Women and Law in Southern Africa<sup>39</sup> for its regional activities, and to the Women's Legal Aid Clinic<sup>40</sup>. The NGOCC was set up by nine women's NGOs in 1985 after the UN conference for women in Nairobi and has received Norwegian assistance since 1989. In 2003, it stated its function and aim as follows: "NGOCC is an umbrella organisation coordinating and strengthening member NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) addressing gender and development through capacity-building, networking, communication and advocacy. At present its membership is 73 and these members reach up to about 75% of Zambian women"<sup>41</sup>.

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35) The case organisations for this study were Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Naripokkho, Karmojibi Nari, Association for Community Development

36) The largest of these has a membership of 134 000.

37) This is the view that the Evaluation Team discerned during the group discussion with several partners on 24 June 2005 at the BMP.

38) The key NGOs supported in Zambia in the 1980s and 1990s included the National Women's Lobby Group, Women for Change, Women in Law and Development in Africa and Women and Law in Southern Africa.

39) Women and Law in Southern Africa provides legal support to women in the courts and carries out legal skills training through CBOs throughout Zambia to empower women to acquire and retain resources (GIDD, 2005). In September 2004, these two organisations prepared minimum standards on women's and children's rights to be incorporated in the new constitution, on behalf of the NGOCC and the women's movement, and presented them to the Constitutional Review Commission in November 2004.

40) The Legal Aid Clinic for Women has received support from Norway since 1994. It is a wing of the Law Association of Zambia and provides free legal services for poor women.

41) NGOCC Proposal for basket funding, Interim measures, April 2003, p.1.

To simplify aid management, the Norwegian embassy wanted to find an alternative way of managing the support that previously was given to a number of larger individual NGOs selected because of their capacity and strategic roles in the women's movement. In addition, after many years of support to the NGOCC, it was deemed appropriate to give this committee more responsibility. After initial reluctance and careful consideration of alternatives, the NGOCC accepted a new role as an intermediary. A separate Grant Management Unit has been established and a Grant Management Manual developed, and a Grant Management Committee with members who are not affiliated with the NGOCC member organisations has been selected and approved by the NGOCC board and membership.

This fund has succeeded in reaching out to smaller organisations that were previously unable to access donor funding. Yet at the same time, the size of individual grants has decreased, resulting in decreased funding for larger organisations, particularly in relation to core costs. Questions were also raised as to how the fund would affect the role of the NGOCC as a membership organisation, and whether its new role in allocating scarce resources would lead to conflicts among its members.

Overall, the NGOCC seems to have developed a strong, high profile position as the focal point of the women's movement in Zambia. It fulfils an important role in coordinating and supporting its members, and it has won the confidence of its members and the respect of the wider community. It will need ongoing financial and managerial support to strengthen its management practices and avoid the potential pitfalls of its new role as a grant-making intermediary.

Our informants were unanimous that women's organisations in Zambia today should pursue a mixture of WID and GAD activities, and it is essential that continued support for both is provided. Given the disadvantaged economic, social and political position of women, women-specific activities and affirmative action continue to be vital. However, it was agreed that these need to be situated within a GAD framework that locates women-targeted activities within a wider gender analysis and measures to empower women to negotiate greater equality.

## **5.9 Partners' views of the Strategy - relevance**

In *Bangladesh*, it appears that most of the respondents know about the Norwegian gender strategy. Indeed, some of them even showed the copy of the Strategy during the discussion. One respondent stated that the contents of the Strategy reflect what they are actually doing and also what they intend to do in the future. In *Afghanistan*, there was no familiarity with the Strategy beyond the embassy and a few donors.

In the past, the Norwegian gender strategy was useful in assessing and justifying particular projects in *Zambia*. Today, however, it is considered more useful to refer to Zambian gender policy and government strategy documents than to the policies of external donors. Informants from the Zambian government suggested that, while Norway may need a gender strategy to justify providing support for gender issues, its Strategy is of no benefit to Zambia, which now refers to its own gender policy and action plan. Several informants within the embassy expressed the view that the Strategy was useful in the past to assess and justify gender specific projects and gender components in sectoral projects, but that it is less useful today.

With donor harmonisation and alignment, it is widely felt to be inappropriate for each donor to have a separate strategy. If there is to be a new strategy, informants thought that it should be prepared in cooperation with other donors, possibly at the country level, and that it should be a leaner document. Even better would be donor engagement in policy dialogue to ensure that gender is integrated into national policies and plans. Because there is something of a backlash against "women" and "gender" as issues (both in Norway because gender equality



is already thought to be mainstreamed and in Zambia because of misunderstandings and/or male resistance), it was also suggested that a revised strategy might start from a rights-based approach to development, identifying how rights can be identified and achieved for both men and women and addressing unequal power relations.

### **5.10 Lessons from the country cases**

In all three countries there are legal frameworks establishing gender equality between men and women, and in Zambia and Bangladesh there are policy frameworks inspired by the Beijing platform. Women have achieved some degree of political participation and representation. Yet, despite formal equality between women and men and official commitment to gender equality, entrenched social and cultural attitudes and practices mean that the rate of “evaporation of gender policies in the patriarchal cooking pot” (Longwe 1997) is extremely high. Moreover, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, war, political conflict and poverty seem to have undermined the impact of efforts to improve the overall situation of women.

*Resources, organisation and policy dialogue.* Norwegian embassy staff members have general knowledge about gender equality, which seems to have become a norm that is taken for granted by Norwegian staff. All embassies are required to perform an assessment of W&GE as one of seven sustainability criteria when writing an appropriation document, and this procedure ensures that gender equality is assessed routinely.

The country cases illustrate the potential for achieving results when staff members prioritise gender equality and have expertise and experience in the W&GE field. Care should be taken so that the increased distance to projects and programmes resulting from the channelling of aid to trust funds, budget and sector support and the ending of direct relationships with individual CSOs do not reduce the up-to-date, in-depth knowledge of embassy staff members, thereby hindering their engagement in policy dialogue. Informants both inside and outside government were keen that those development cooperation partners who share their gender concerns and priorities continue to exert influence on government at the political level. It seems important that in-depth knowledge about the sectors in which Norway is involved be combined with knowledge about tools and instruments on how to promote gender equality.

In the past, gender issues have been central to the dialogue process with the governments of Bangladesh and Zambia. With the new aid modalities, the policy dialogue process has become complex. Norway is a party to multi-stakeholder dialogue processes comprised of government, donors and civil society representatives that have yet to find a way of representing numerous and often conflicting interests adequately. The PRSP processes have become crucial processes that both donors and national gender groups have attempted to influence with some success. The process in Bangladesh seems to have been more responsive to women’s concerns than in Zambia, where gender appeared late on the PRSP agenda. As a consequence, no gender analysis was undertaken in the PRSP, and resource allocation was lacking. Women’s groups were active as part of comprehensive civil society lobbying efforts in both Bangladesh and Zambia.

Partner governments are not monolithic entities. Politicians and civil servants respond to gender issues in numerous ways. It is suggested by civil servants that donors should pursue alliances with staff members whose attitudes towards gender are positive, and by working with them, build on gender sensitive policies that have been adopted by governments. For example, in Zambia, Norway successfully contributed to institutionalising the government’s gender-related efforts.

*Targeting.* In Bangladesh and Zambia, Norway has played a leading role among donors on gender equality issues. Norway has been instrumental in forming and supporting institutional innovations, such as the GIDD and NGOCC in Zambia, and in supporting women’s NGOs in



Zambia and Bangladesh. In Afghanistan, Norway has not targeted women, either through support to institutional structures or to civil society organisations.

In Bangladesh, Norway funds influential, national NGOs working on a wide range of women's rights issues. In Zambia, Norway has provided long-term support to a national membership organisation mandated to undertake networking, advocacy and capacity-building for women member organisations. Norway initiated an innovative NGO fund managed by the NGOCC. Even in a strongly discriminatory context such as in Afghanistan, partners of Norwegian NGOs have been successful in targeting women. The NGO partners assess their dialogue with the embassy as good and embassy staff as relatively accessible for dialogue, but overall the dialogue is not focused on gender issues. The strong message conveyed by stakeholders in the field is that targeting is necessary for building and sustaining a women's constituency that can advocate for women's rights. These organisations have demonstrated their influence in areas such as the PRSP processes.

*Mainstreaming.* Norway provides sector support to education in Bangladesh and Zambia. The evidence from the education sector and from other donors suggests that the introduction of measures to support gender equality efforts in line ministries coupled with incentives for women and girls to participate in programmes are two key measures at the disposal of donors. Some sector programmes also have gender-targeted sub-programmes. The use of gender disaggregated data has been used to some extent in some programmes. Gender budgeting is being explored in some ministries, but there is no agreement among donors on the benefits of this approach. A combination of policy alignment on gender issues, attention to gender at the highest policy levels, adequate resources, and staff knowledge, competence and attitudes are important contributing factors in successful mainstreaming.

Harmonisation is most advanced in Zambia, but gender as a cross-cutting issue has not been integrated into the PRSP document, and ways of reflecting gender in the Performance Assessment Framework were not found. Both in Zambia and Afghanistan, gender budgeting is being explored, but these efforts are controversial and do not have broad donor support. The experience from silent partnerships is that Norway disengages from a close dialogue, and it is left up to the partner-country to pursue gender and other policy issues.

The Afghanistan Fund for Reconstruction does not have a policy on gender, although gender analysis and gender indicators have been developed for some of the programmes. Resources have not been allocated to ensure gender mainstreaming or targeting of women, although there have been ongoing discussions about a programme for women administered under the trust fund.

Norwegian NGOs express a concern that although gender equality is articulated in policy, it is not translated into gender analysis or integrated into programming, monitoring and evaluation. They emphasize the importance of sensitising the staff members to gender issues and providing them with specific tools and instruments. The use of gender advisors is a common entry point to efforts on gender equality. Partner organisations of Norwegian NGOs are found to be engaged in human rights issues, increasing women's political participation and economic empowerment.

*Relevance of the gender strategy.* The relevance of a Norwegian gender strategy at the country level is questioned by the informants, except for the women's NGOs in Bangladesh. Both embassy staff in Zambia and Bangladesh, as well as local partners in Zambia suggested that efforts should be geared instead towards developing joint donor approaches that support the development and implementation of national gender strategies.

### 5.11 Conclusion: Implications for new aid modalities

The implications for promoting gender equality under a new aid regime that emerge from the country cases are:

*1. The need for continued political support for gender equality.* Norway is known for raising gender equality issues internationally and nationally. Supporters of gender equality both inside and outside government agree that donors need to engage in *policy dialogue* on gender issues. Broader arenas and processes for such engagement are being created and consolidated within the context of new aid modalities.

Norway needs to develop strategies for promoting gender issues with partner governments in collaboration with donors and civil society partners to ensure political and senior civil service level support from people who can provide direction, assign responsibility for achievement of policy objectives, and provide legitimacy for the advancement of gender equality.

There is also a need to examine the role of women in political parties in this context. Substantial support has been provided by donors to increase women's political representation. The potential for linking women's civil society organisations with politically active women should be explored, with the intention of creating an effective gender constituency that will increase nationally-owned accountability on gender issues.

*2. Substantial contribution to institutional change needs to be developed further.* Donors, including Norway, have made a significant contribution to creating new offices and appointing staff members responsible for gender equality, as well as exploring new ways of working on gender issues, i.e. gender budgeting. Within the context of new aid modalities, Norway needs to increase its focus on how to work with *line ministries* and *civil service reform*, with a special focus on identifying mechanisms and procedures that are barriers to gender mainstreaming and on developing tools and instruments for gender equality. It is relatively easy to set up new structures specifically focused on gender. Yet, the broader issue that needs to be addressed is why is it so difficult to work on *cross-cutting issues* and what is it about *gender equality* as a cross-cutting issue that leads people to respond with avoidance or resistance.

*3. Staff needs knowledge about tools and instruments.* Training to raise awareness of and sensitise staff to gender issues is a widely-used measure to ensure gender equality within governments. More emphasis should be placed on designing and developing technical training and on the application of specific tools and instruments to promote gender equality. Issues such as the continuity of staff and lack of seniority among staff in charge of gender issues are problems that hinder effective gender-related efforts. This point applies equally to staff in donor agencies, government and civil society organisations.

Effective work on gender requires not only an understanding of gender issues, but also of the technical issues at hand. Gender specialists are often generalists who may find it difficult to communicate with technical staff. Having the same technical background facilitates effective communication.

Provided that Norway wants to maintain its profile on gender equality issues, competence on gender equality issues at the embassies must be preserved and developed within this new and challenging context.

## 6. Conclusions

### *1. Institutional resources.*

- Human resources has been in decline in Norad in the period 1997-2005 for implementation of the Strategy and support for W&GE efforts. Norad abolished its full time position as gender advisor in 2001. Gender advisor capacity in Norad needs to be strengthened in macroeconomics and gender, and in the PRSP and poverty analysis, as well as in mainstreaming in new aid modalities in general.
- In the MFA, human resources have remained intact, and were strengthened last year with the addition of a temporary junior desk officer. Substantial efforts have been carried out in the period 1997-2005 on multilateral development cooperation, but much less attention has been given to bilateral assistance. These resources might not be adequate today as bilateral state-to-state cooperation, including dialogue with the embassies on development policies, has been moved to the MFA.
- Organisational arrangements have not been effective for W&GE efforts during the period. An internal network was established in Norad from 2002-2004, but this never proved to be very effective. No new W&GE network was established in 2004, when several new thematic networks between the MFA and Norad were established in response to the latest reorganisation of the development cooperation administration. It is up to the embassies to decide whether to have gender focal points. Many of them do have this position, either as a national employee or as the desk officer managing support to the NGOs.
- Responsibility and accountability for gender mainstreaming at HQ is currently weak. This is a situation that Norway shares with other donors. No proper accountability systems are in place, and the W&GE reports in Norad have had little strategic value and do not function as watchdog reports. Even when reports identify weaknesses these are not acted upon.
- There is low visibility in programming and activity plans. There is a tendency to under-report actual support to efforts targeting women and to gender mainstreaming. W&GE is only systematically addressed in relation to support to education, but it is also frequently addressed in support to HIV/AIDS and health, and human rights; in other areas it often seems to be missing. Several embassies support women's NGOs. There seems to have been a decline in support to gender secretariats in government.
- A Handbook on Gender and Empowerment Assessment was published in 2000. Little analytical work has been carried out in Norad on how to mainstream gender concerns and work on W&GE in the new aid structure and new aid modalities. So far no work has been done on how to operationalise gender as a cross-cutting issue.
- There is no earmarked funding for analytical, proactive W&GE efforts. Non-earmarked resources are available in general budget lines for more proactive support for targeting and mainstreaming W&GE, but this funding opportunity does not seem to translate into activities.
- Training in gender issues of diplomatic and development staff, at HQ and embassies, has been reduced.

## ***2. Gender perspective reflected in other key policies and strategies.***

- The administration has been receptive to gender mainstreaming in policy goals and in mentioning gender as a cross cutting issue in important programme and country documents. The administration has been much less receptive to institutionalising this concern, and the balance between mainstreaming and targeting has not been systematically addressed.
- Moving W&GE from a main goal to a secondary goal has caused concern among many stakeholders. It is the assessment of the Evaluation Team that the commitment is still strong. W&GE is addressed in all policy papers and strategies. The main challenge is to move from policies and goals to translating W&GE into country level dialogue, programming and operations.
- Norway still has a good reputation for its active W&GE efforts, and it is well known for its active national W&GE efforts at home. It has a history of being an active partner on W&GE efforts in many countries.
- W&GE efforts in Norwegian development cooperation are affected not only by the Strategy, but also by the general development on W&GE in society; the partner countries' own policies and institutional structures, and lessons learned and adaptations made during projects and programme activities. The results we have observed, and that people refer to in interviews, are a result of overall W&GE efforts in Norwegian development cooperation. The Strategy has assisted in this work, and been an important reference for improved W&GE efforts.

## ***3. Interaction with partners.***

- W&GE efforts do not seem to have any central place in a dialogue with partner countries. Currently, the most important country dialogue in many partner countries seems to be held on macro economic issues, budget support and public expenditure reviews. W&GE issues seem to be conspicuously absent from this dialogue.
- Norway has been an active partner in supporting gender secretariats and women's NGOs in several countries. This support has moved well beyond financial support, and it has developed into partnership relations that support the active use of institutional structures and policies and has assisted in solving organisational problems and in setting up functional units. However, such relationships are vulnerable and heavily dependent upon dedicated and competent individual staff.
- Many Norwegian NGOs function as a channel for funds to W&GE efforts. This also seems not to have been done in a systematic way, except for gender specific actions, such as FGM and trafficking.

## ***4. Lessons learned from mainstreaming and targeting.***

- There is no evidence that Norway is at the forefront of mainstreaming and integration of gender in all its programmes and projects. It is difficult to document good practices of mainstreaming, except in sectors where W&GE issues are well integrated, such as support to the education sector. It is remarkable that W&GE is not mainstreamed into the programme support in Afghanistan, where the situation of women was one of the primary reasons for support to the country.
- Targeting is mainly done through support to gender state machineries and women's NGOs. Violence against women, and women and conflict are new areas gaining increasing attention.

### **5. *Harmonisation with other donors.***

- Harmonisation has not been sufficiently reflected in gender policy, and gender policy has not been little reflected in harmonisation efforts. Work does not seem to have been initiated on this important topic, neither in Norad nor the MFA.
- The embassies in our three case countries, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Zambia, as well as many other embassies, are active members in development partner groups on W&GE. However, these W&GE groups seem to lack a strategic focus in several countries, and they seem to have problems addressing mainstreaming and working with other thematic donor groups.

### **6. *New aid modalities.***

- The implementation of the gender strategy has not been adapted to the context of changing aid modalities. Hardly any analytical work has been done on this, and W&GE was almost totally absent from the new policy development in Norad in 1999-2003.
- Much work does exist globally on the gendering of the PRSPs and MDGs. Less work seems to have been done on sector and budget support; and gender budgeting work does not seem to be moving forward. Norway supports many of these efforts internationally, but it does not seem to bring the lessons learned back to its own organisation and work. Norway is not a leader in these efforts, and few Norwegian resources, either in the administration itself or the external resource base, are allocated to such activities.
- The new aid modalities, sector concentration and harmonisation open up few possibilities for putting forward many policy issues. A harmonised donor dialogue focussing on macro economic questions and related to GBS might easily become overloaded, and both partner countries and donors are concerned about this. W&GE may easily suffer from this and be left out of the policy dialogue. At the same time, the new aid modalities offer the possibility of addressing W&GE at a higher national policy level. Little use is made of this opportunity today, and specific work needs to be done in the administration on how to open up these possibilities and in what format the dialogue on W&GE issues should take in the new aid modalities.

## 7 Recommendations

### *1. Continued political commitment and support for women's rights and gender equality*

- Political commitment expressed in goals and objectives need to be translated into a political commitment to making W&GE an active and visible part of country dialogue, programming, and reporting. For this to happen, a new understanding and operationalisation of gender mainstreaming needs to be developed, in which active efforts to promote W&GE are the rule.

- It is recommended that MFA and Norad address W&GE as a cross-cutting issue at all levels: in policies, methods, tools and programming. To the extent possible, such efforts should be carried out in cooperation with other donors, but this also requires the MFA and Norad to do “their homework”. There is also a need to analyse the implication of W&GE as an overarching (overordnet) issue versus a cross-cutting (tværgående) issue.

### *2. Country-level W&GE efforts and the embassies*

- W&GE needs to be more visible in Norway's dialogue with countries, and specifically in the dialogue on macro economic issues. Care should be taken to address W&GE in new aid modalities and its dialogue. Approaches to this as well as tools and methods, need to be developed in cooperation with other donors and key partners whenever possible.
- Norway should continue to step up its support to gendering of the PRSPs. Norway already supports some of this work, but these efforts need to be more actively supported and incorporated actively into the country dialogue, whether it be in bilateral or multi-donor dialogue with partner countries.
- Norway should continue to support implementation and active use of the new national institutional and legal structures and policies for W&GE in partner countries.
- It is recommended that MFA and Norad do a stocktaking of their experiences with support to gender secretariats and women's NGOs. Embassies should be more systematic in their support to gender mainstreaming in national planning and women's NGOs so as to make local/national gender strategies operational. This is generally valid when providing general budget support, and likewise relevant at sectoral level when supporting sector programs, SWAPs or sector budget support.
- In particular, support to women's NGOs offers a unique opportunity for access to information and knowledge about national and local social and economic development. Attempts to form umbrella organisations should be reconsidered. Alternative options in the form of gender funds might be considered. In the event of establishing a gender umbrella organisation, the embassies should take care not to miss out on an active partnership and dialogue with civil society on W&GE. A call for concentration and new aid modalities should not crowd out such partnership efforts on W&GE.
- The embassies should actively contribute to making the Development Partner Groups efforts on gender work more effectively. They should also step up their work on strategic partnerships with other donors in their support to gender mainstreaming in national planning and policy work, and to women's NGOs. Many of the embassies are already doing so, but this could be done more systematically at the country level, and best practices could be shared.



- Norway needs to catch up internationally on gendering the PRSPs and MDGs. The embassies can function as a venue for access to country experience, and they should be requested to report on such activities. Efforts should also be made to disseminate best practices on this to other embassies and within the administration. More work needs to be done on W&GE issues in relation to sector and budget support.

### ***3. Increase human and financial resources - strengthen institutional capacity for W&GE efforts***

- Human and financial resources need to be strengthened. Gender advisor capacity in Norad needs to be strengthened in macroeconomics and gender, and in the PRSP and poverty analysis, as well as in mainstreaming in new aid modalities in general. Norad should create a proper, full-time gender advisor position with a mandate that includes an active role in mainstreaming. The gender advisor should be better positioned, perhaps reporting directly to the relevant director in Norad.
- It is recommended that MFA create a proper unit for W&GE that also has the capacity to address W&GE in bilateral development cooperation, and to work on synergies between bilateral and multilateral aid at the country level.
- Organisational arrangements need to be improved. It is recommended that a thematic network on W&GE in the MFA/Norad be established. All embassies should appoint a gender focal point person, and regular and relevant information should be shared within the system, including the embassies.
- There needs to be established stronger accountability structures for Norway's efforts in and support to W&GE in development cooperation. The gender advisor's mandate and status as watchdog for these efforts, both in Norad and the MFA, need to be strengthened.
- The reporting format for the W&GE reports, both in Norad and the MFA, needs to be changed and become more strategic, and lead to action to improve W&GE efforts.
- It is recommended that MFA and Norad consider to establish a separate time-limited fund for analytical work and catalytic activities for mainstreaming and innovative efforts on W&GE. This should not to be a fund for women's projects, but for strengthening W&GE mainstreaming in overall development cooperation, with an emphasis on innovative practices and with a special focus on new aid modalities. A carefully organised and managed gender fund could improve the mainstreaming of gender into planning, implementation and M&E of projects and programmes, including budget support. However, the Evaluation Team also recognises powerful arguments against a separate gender fund.
- A similar joint donor fund for innovative efforts in mainstreaming W&GE to reach the MDGs is being discussed in MFA. We support such an idea, which will go beyond the efforts that Norway supports in the individual development banks. In particular, such a fund should cover joint donors' initiatives at the country level.
- An improved training programme needs to be established upon the revision of the Strategy with W&GE integrated into core training programs.

### ***4. The revision of the Strategy***

- The status of a new strategy for W&GE should be made clear. There are grounds to argue that the strategy for W&GE should be given a higher status than many other strategies. W&GE is both a development objective in itself, but also an important instrument in order to reach other objectives, such as the Millennium Goals.

- The new strategy needs to be embedded firmly in the organisation and at all management levels. This requires that revision of the Strategy be carried out in a manner that includes a broad spectre of the development cooperation administration.
- The ambitions of the revised strategy should be adapted to a situation of new aid modalities, harmonisation and partnerships. It should be formulated in a language identifying ambitions and targets that the system can operationalise and report on to the Norwegian National Assembly.
- Points-of-view from the partner countries should be compiled as input to the revision of the Strategy.
- A revised strategy needs to be accompanied by the development of tools and methods for its implementation and for training purposes. Much work is being performed internationally on this. As much as possible, MFA and Norad should work in cooperation with other donors on this. The reestablishment of a Nordic network for gender advisors could serve as a focal point for this<sup>42</sup>. The MFA and Norad should also make active use of the OECD/DAC GENDERNET in these efforts. The embassies should be actively involved in these efforts to ensure that tools and methods are relevant to their activities in the partner countries.

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42) Such a network existed some years ago, and has been revitalised in the fall of 2005.

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UNIFEM

<http://www.unifem.org/>

CEDAW

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UN Committee for the Advancement of Women - DAW

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/index.html>

EC gender home page

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/human\\_social/pol\\_gender2\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/human_social/pol_gender2_en.htm)

UN Girls' Education Initiative – UNGEI

<http://www.ungei.org/index.html>



# Annex 1: Terms of Reference

## Terms of Reference

### Evaluation of "A Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation"

#### 1. Background

##### 1.1 Gender in Norwegian Development Cooperation

There is broad international consensus that gender equality is essential to development. Since the mid-1970s, Norway has been committed to promote the rights of women through its development cooperation. The development in this area has been parallel to the international trends, moving from a focus on Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD). Today there is a rather wide international consensus with regard to the gender mainstreaming strategy, mainly due to the Platform for Action agreed upon at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, followed by the definition of this strategy adopted by ECOSOC in 1997. The promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is moreover included as one of the eight major goals of the Millennium Declaration, which stresses the importance of addressing gender issues in order to combat poverty.

During the 1990s, one of the five main goals of Norwegian development cooperation has been "to contribute to the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all sectors of society"<sup>1</sup>. The Action Plan to fight poverty<sup>2</sup> stresses the importance of an increased focus on women and gender equality in Norwegian development cooperation. The magnitude of Norwegian support is reported to be rather substantial as "about one third of the Norwegian bilateral development assistance budget is allocated for activities that particularly target women and gender equality"<sup>3</sup>.

##### 1.2 A Norwegian Strategy for Women and Gender Equality

The current Norwegian strategy for women and gender issues was presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 1997, and is entitled "A Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation" (1997-2005).<sup>4</sup> The Strategy is to a large extent based upon the outcomes of the 1995 Beijing conference. The purposes of the Strategy are varied - serving as a guide to the administration of development cooperation, providing documentation of Norwegian priorities and information on how Norway may assist in the implementation of gender policies. The Strategy furthermore encompasses bilateral and multilateral development cooperation, as well as humanitarian assistance. A total of six priority areas are included: rights, participation in decision-making processes, economic participation, education, health, and management of natural resources and the environment.

Various principles which are central to Norwegian development cooperation are emphasised in the Strategy, such as dialogue, donor coordination and recipient responsibility. Examples of instruments to implement the Strategy are also provided, including financial contributions, knowledge and institutional development. The Strategy moreover advocates the use of gender impact assessments and gender impact analyses. Tools such as the "Handbook in Gender and Empowerment Assessment" have been developed in order to facilitate its implementation.<sup>5</sup>

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1) "A Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation 1997-2005" (p. 9), Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1997.

2) "Fighting Poverty: the Norwegian Government's Action Plan for Combating Poverty in the South towards 2015", Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002.

3) "Annual Report 2003 – Selected Areas", (p. 12), Norad 2004.

4) Hereafter referred to as the Strategy.

5) "Handbook in Gender and Empowerment Assessment", Norad 2000.

According to the Strategy, the goal of equal rights and opportunities for women and men will only be achieved through a dual approach which includes interventions targeting women and men, but also focuses on integrating gender equality into all aspects of development cooperation.<sup>48</sup> This approach is in line with the one adopted by the Beijing Conference. In 2005 the Strategy will be subject to a revision.<sup>49</sup>

### 1.3 Experiences gained

In accordance with the Strategy's reporting requirements, annual reports have been submitted to account for the activities implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norad. These reports summarise the activities that have been carried out in different areas, presenting how the gender perspective has been taken into consideration – either by mainstreaming ongoing activities or by implementing more targeted efforts.

Over the years a number of studies and evaluations have been carried out which focus on a range of aspects relevant to the present evaluation of the Strategy.<sup>50</sup> The Norwegian Auditor General is currently carrying out a performance audit of the integration of the gender perspective in Norwegian development cooperation. The audit will review in particular if the planning and implementing of selected projects in Nicaragua and Uganda are in accordance with the strategies and objectives for gender equality in Norwegian development assistance, and what results have been achieved for these projects. Gender issues were also included in the recent DAC Peer Review of Norway.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, a rather vast amount of research has been carried out during recent years, documenting the importance of considering the gender dimension in development cooperation. The DAC Working Party on Evaluation finalised in 2003 a meta-evaluation of gender evaluations carried out by international donors, gathering the experiences made by these various organisations.<sup>52</sup> Some of the efforts which recently have been made to evaluate specific gender strategies include evaluations by Sida<sup>53</sup> and the European Commission.<sup>54</sup> The findings from these evaluations point to some of the common challenges which these organisations face when implementing their respective mainstreaming strategies, such as the gap between policy and practice, and they make suggestions as to how to overcome these challenges. The difficulty in assessing what has actually been achieved is also pointed to, since there is often a lack of clear goals and measurable indicators.<sup>55</sup>

In connection with the revision of the Strategy, Norad's Evaluation Department will also be commissioning a review of how the gender perspective has been reflected in evaluation reports published by the MFA during the period 1997-2004. This review is also meant to serve as input to the current evaluation of the Strategy.

## 2. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is twofold. Firstly, the purpose is to provide knowledge about certain central aspects connected to the implementation of the Strategy. The availability of adequate and sufficient institutional resources will to a large extent determine the extent to which the implementation of the Strategy has been successful. This holds true with reference to both mainstreaming and targeted approaches. Thus, the evaluation must focus on the available capacity, tools and training, and assess their adequacy and how they have been employed. Another aspect of mainstreaming in particular is the degree to which the gender perspective has been reflected in other key policies and strategies, and this will also form an

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6) The approach described as "integration" in the Strategy, will be referred to as gender mainstreaming in the present ToR.

7) "Report No. 35 to the Storting (2003-2004)", Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004.

8) See for example "Evalueringsrapport 6/86: Virkning for kvinner av norske bistandstiltak", Utenriksdepartementet 1986; Rita Morvik: "Kvinnerettet bistand – integrasjon eller illusjon? En studie av Norads arbeid med å integrere kvinner i norsk tosidig bistand"; Hovedoppgave i Administrasjon og organisasjonsvitenskap, Universitetet i Bergen 1991.

9) See [www.oecd.org/dac/peerreviews](http://www.oecd.org/dac/peerreviews)

10) "Review on Gender and Evaluation", Final Report to DAC Working Party on Evaluation, October 2003. Juliet Hunt and Ria Brouwers.

11) "Mainstreaming Gender Equality", Sida Evaluation 02/01.

12) "Thematic Evaluation of the Integration of Gender in EC Development Co-operation with Third Countries".

13) "Reflection on Experiences of Evaluating Gender Equality", Sida Studies in Evaluation 03/01.

important part of the evaluation. In addition to providing an assessment of past achievements, the findings of this part of the evaluation should also form the basis for recommendations in relation to the upcoming revision of the Strategy.

Secondly, the Strategy is a framework for communicating Norway's policies regarding women and gender equality. The purpose of this evaluation is thus also to learn more about the process by which partners and Norway interact about women and gender equality and to some extent also the outcomes of these partnerships. The evaluation shall assess the process by which Norway and partners have attempted to promote women in development and gender equality, focusing on lessons learnt from applying the gender mainstreaming approach and targeted interventions, with a view to how Norway in partnership can play an active role in promoting gender equality.

The evaluation is intended to have a strong learning element, and this should be reflected in both the methodology as well as the reporting of this evaluation. Thus, in addition to evaluating the Strategy and selected aspects of its implementation in the past, the evaluation should emphasise lesson-learning, be forward-looking rather than purely an assessment of past results, and should to some extent also cover new ground, including focus on new aid modalities (see below). Recommendations from the evaluation will feed into the revision of the Strategy, as well as generally to the policy dialogue within MFA/Norad in international forums and dialogue with partners on gender issues.

### **3. Scope**

The evaluation shall mainly cover the period 1997-2005. However, in order to achieve a fuller understanding and secure learning, experiences gained in preceding years may also be included to the degree deemed relevant and necessary. Moreover, this period has seen relatively major changes within the field of international development cooperation, not least with the appearance of what is commonly referred to as the new aid modalities, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans (PRSPs), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sector and Budget Support. In addition to the possible implications these may already have had for the implementation of the Strategy, the new aid modalities will also have a bearing on the directions of a revised strategy, the evaluation must therefore also focus on these very contemporary issues.

The main focus of the evaluation shall be on bilateral cooperation, this choice reflects that knowledge about Norwegian gender work is more limited in the bilateral than the multilateral area.<sup>14</sup> The evaluation shall focus on cooperation with partner governments, but in those cases where an important aspect of the cooperation has been directed towards local and international NGOs, these must also be included. Humanitarian assistance generally falls beyond the scope of this evaluation, an evaluation within this area would require a different approach than the one chosen for the present evaluation.

The evaluation shall focus on the priority areas rights, decision-making processes and economic participation. The selection of these three areas is partly a reflection that more knowledge already exists about Norwegian efforts within areas such as education and health.

Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Zambia have been chosen as the main cases for the evaluation. These countries are all important development cooperation partner countries for Norway, at the same time they are very different in terms of a range of issues, including the duration and degree of the Norwegian involvement (also with regard to gender issues), main arenas for gender cooperation, and political and cultural dimensions to mention but a few.

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56) See for example Evaluation Report 1/99: WID/Gender Units and the Experience of Gender Mainstreaming in Multilateral Organisations, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999. Norway is also cooperating with the evaluation departments of several multilateral organisations, as well as participating in multidonor evaluations, and is seeking to emphasise the gender perspective also through these channels of cooperation. Furthermore

The evaluation shall consist of the following major components and underlying evaluation questions:

### **3.1 Implementation of the Strategy: Institutional Resources**

#### *3.1.1 An Institutional Analysis of the Capacity, Tools and Training chosen to Implement the Strategy*

To what extent is the capacity, in terms of human and financial resources committed to address gender issues within Norwegian development cooperation, adequate and sufficient to secure the implementation of the Strategy? Are existing organisational arrangements appropriately designed and resourced to meet Norway's aims in the gender area?

How has capacity under different organisational arrangements (gender unit, gender focal points at headquarters and embassies, annual seminars on women and gender equality, allocation of gender mainstreaming responsibility, special funds for women and gender equality, informal networks) influenced the outcomes of interventions relevant to the Strategy?

How receptive has the Norwegian development cooperation organisation at different levels been to incorporate the gender mainstreaming approach? To what extent has gender mainstreaming been institutionalised? How is the relationship and balance between mainstreaming and targeted approaches?

How has responsibility and accountability for mainstreaming been secured at headquarters? What is the significance of factors such as leadership responsibility, incentives, monitoring and accountability and committed individuals for the implementation of the mainstreaming approach?

To what extent are gender issues addressed at embassy level and in the implementation of programmes in the field?

How well are diplomatic and development staff (at headquarters, relevant embassies and delegations to the UN) trained in gender equality issues, how is training on key policy issues provided to locally-engaged staff? How and to what extent is the private sector and NGOs supported and briefed on Norway's policy priorities in this field?

There are a number of tools that are considered useful in relation to securing a gender perspective in development cooperation. These tools include gender-disaggregated data and analyses, context specific gender analyses and gender impact assessments, gender differentiated statistics and reporting, best practice dissemination, gender-balanced staffing, the employment of simple, understandable language and the organisation of advocacy events to keep issues visible. Are such gender related tools known, recognised and applied and are they reflected in training? In cases where they are employed, how effectively and accurately are they used, and how useful are they to the implementation of the Strategy?

#### *3.1.2 Integration of the Gender Perspective in Other Key Policies and Strategies*

According to the strategy of mainstreaming, the gender perspective should be integrated into all relevant policy papers, annual work plans, budget documents, strategies, handbooks, manuals etc. Has the gender strategy influenced the perspective of other key documents, with reference to the bilateral, the multilateral and the humanitarian effort? Is it possible to detect a change with regard to how and to what extent the gender equality goal has been reflected in key documents issued before and after the gender strategy?

### **3.2 Implementation of the Strategy: Partnerships**

#### *3.2.1 Relevance of the Strategy to Partner Needs*

Whose needs and interests are reflected in the Strategy? How does Norway engage in dialogue with partner governments about the purpose, contents and operations of the support

which Norway is providing for making local/national gender strategies operational?

Which stakeholders, in Norway and amongst the partners, have played an active role in developing the gender strategy? How well do the partners know the strategy, and what are their views regarding its utility in supporting national gender strategies?

Which channels have been central to the Norwegian engagement at country level? What has been the rationale for and strategy behind the focus on particular channels, such as local or central government, local or international NGOs or multilateral organisations' local offices? What implications have the various channels had in terms of breadth, depth and sustainability of the Norwegian engagement?

### *3.2.2. Partner Responsibility: Approach followed by Partner regarding Gender Equality*

Norway is emphasising ownership and the placing of more responsibility for development results with partner governments. How is the principle of partner responsibility integrated into the Strategy, and how has it been followed up? To what extent do conflicting views, interests and approaches characterise the cooperation between Norway and the partner governments? How and to what extent are these acknowledged and resolved? To what extent is awareness of and adjustment to the partners' context an element of the Norwegian approach?

Is there any evidence that the Strategy could have contributed to changing institutional arrangements relevant to gender issues, in partner countries? Is there any evidence that the Strategy have played a role in changing gender policy in partner countries?

How are the relations between Norway and partner governments regarding Norway's role in encouraging, facilitating, supporting "partner responsibility" concerning women and gender equality, as regarded from partners' point of view?

What are the views of the partners regarding the general sustainability of achievements within the gender area? What measures are undertaken to secure sustainability?

### *3.2.3. Alignment with Partners and Harmonisation with Other Donors*

New aid modalities require alignment between donor policies/approaches and those of partners in gender equality; to what extent has this been focused upon in current policy and practice? What lessons can be drawn which are relevant for an update of the Strategy? How can alignment be secured in the process of revising the Strategy? What challenges does alignment pose regarding the implementation of the Strategy?

There is also currently a strong international focus on the principle of harmonisation of donor policies and programmes, also within the Norwegian aid administration. How has this principle been reflected in Norwegian gender policy so far, and how can a revision of the Strategy take this approach into account?

### *3.2.4. New Aid Modalities (PRSPs, MDGs, Sector and Budget Support)*

How can Norway effectively implement a gender equality strategy in the context of changing aid modalities? How can donor policies in the area of women and gender equality be seen in relation to key policies such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans, Millennium Development Goals, Sector and Budget Support? Change towards new aid modalities will lead to more emphasis on political dialogue as opposed to technical issues, how is this likely to affect the gender agenda?

## **5. Methodology**

While for component 1 of the evaluation the majority of data gathering can take place in Norway, component 2 requires the team to travel to some of Norway's partner countries to gain further insight into how Norway and the partners have cooperated to implement the



Strategy. For this evaluation the partner countries Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Zambia have been selected for field visits. Furthermore, of the six priority areas listed in the Strategy, this evaluation should focus primarily on rights, decision-making processes and economic participation. Some of these areas and the corresponding sub-areas are more relevant to one or two of the selected partner countries, thus the focus in each country should be chosen accordingly. The evaluation shall focus primarily on bilateral cooperation, but multilateral cooperation at the national level and cooperation with local and international NGOs should also be included whenever relevant.

In order to answer the evaluation questions above, the evaluation team shall apply social science methodology. The methods for this evaluation will include at least the following:

#### **4.1 Desk review**

A review of relevant policy documents, plans, handbooks, project and programme documentation, relevant statistical information, relevant evaluations, reviews etc.

#### **4.2 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire should be administered to development cooperation Embassies, relevant delegations and selected partners in the respective countries. The questionnaires should complement and supplement the information gathered through interviews and focus group discussions, and should be distributed relatively widely to a representative selection of respondents.

#### **4.3 Interviews**

In-depth interviews should be conducted among key stakeholders in the MFA, Norad, relevant Embassy staff, representatives for partner government and central institutions and staff working for local and international NGOs. An effort should also be made to interview former staff (including former women/gender equality advisers) at various levels both in the MFA, Norad, the relevant embassies and amongst central partners.

#### **4.4 Focus group discussions**

To obtain more in-depth information on issues connected to gender equality at the local level, discussion with focus groups consisting of key actors shall be carried out in the selected countries. Focus group discussions are useful in raising issues, also sensitive issues, and require skilful facilitation.

### **6. Evaluation Team**

The team should consist of at least four members. Qualifications needed include a professional background from social science and experience with conducting evaluations, including extensive experience with social science methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The evaluation team must possess advanced knowledge of, and experience with gender analysis and gender equality issues in development cooperation, in addition to documented knowledge in the areas of rights, political and economic participation. The team leader must document relevant experience with managing and leading complex evaluations.

### **7. Reporting**

The evaluation will present findings and conclusions along with a set of detailed recommendations. An *inception report* outlining the methodological approach and a detailed work plan shall be submitted to the Evaluation Department for approval before initiating the evaluation. A *draft report* is to be submitted to the Evaluation Department for comments. Lastly, a *final report* is to be handed over to the department. The final report should not exceed 40 pages (excluding annexes), including an executive summary. The reports shall be written in English.

Throughout the process, the Evaluation Department will consult with the reference group which has been established for this evaluation.



## Annex 2: Gender equality policy markers 1999–2004

*Total Norwegian development cooperation, gender equality policy markers 1999-2004  
Observe that a project may have multiple objectives (other objectives: human rights/good governance, HIV/AIDS, environment, research)*

Disbursed (1000 NOK) PM - Gender and equality	Year		2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	1999	%	2000	%	2001	%	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%
Principal	371 831	3,5	369 684	3,3	372 726	3,1	424 959	3,1	315 590	2,2	377 296	2,5
Significant	781 190	7,3	797 508	7,2	876 592	7,2	1 252 710	9,2	1 405 970	9,7	1 876 485	12,7
Not an objective	9 527 070	89,2	9 947 954	89,5	10 854 439	89,7	11 866 647	87,6	12 735 200	88,1	12 563 638	84,8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10 680 091</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11 115 146</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12 103 756</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13 544 316</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14 456 760</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14 817 419</b>	<b>100</b>

*Total Norwegian development cooperation: Target group gender/not gender 1999-2004  
Observe that a project may have multiple target groups (other target groups: children, indigenous peoples, refugees, disabled)*

Disbursed (1000 NOK) MTG – Women	Year		2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	1999	%	2000	%	2001	%	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%
Not target group women	9 706 076	90,9	10 107 056	90,9	11 101 628	91,7	11 994 432	88,6	13 174 050	91,1	13 563 869	91,5
Main target group women	974 014	9,1	1 008 089	9,1	1 002 128	8,3	1 549 884	11,4	1 282 710	8,9	1 253 550	8,5
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10 680 091</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>11 115 146</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12 103 756</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13 544 316</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14 456 760</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14 817 419</b>	<b>100</b>

*Development cooperation DAC-sector 420- WID (mutually excluding numbers) 1999-2004*

Sum of Disbursed (1000 NOK) DAC Main sector (code+name)	Year		2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
420 - Women in development (WID) 73 276			70 900		82 926		80 539		104 592		101 039	

## **Annex 3: Summary of the Strategy for Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation**

### **Summary**

#### ***Rights:***

Development assistance is to contribute towards formal gender equality.

Development assistance is to contribute to the accession by all countries without reservation to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Development assistance is to follow up the principle that women's rights are human rights.

Development assistance is to focus on measures to reduce violence against women.

Development assistance is to ensure that the discussion of women's rights is an obligatory part of Norway's dialogue with a partner country.

#### ***Decision-making processes:***

Development assistance is to stress the importance of women participating at every decision-making level in the development process.

Development assistance is to help to ensure that women are involved in the planning and implementation of development assistance projects.

Development assistance is to stress the importance of women being included in delegations to international conferences and that the proportion of women on the staff of international organizations increases.

Development assistance is to support the political participation of women so that new social systems are formed as much by women as by men and that women are included in local decision-making processes.

Development assistance must ensure that both women and men are mobilized to vote in elections.

Development assistance must document the constructive role of women in the efforts to create peace and avoid violent conflict.

#### ***Economic participation:***

Development assistance is to ensure that women are able to take part in economic development on an equal footing with men.

Development assistance must contribute towards safeguarding the gender perspective in the development of international trade regimes.

Development assistance is to play a part in acquiring more knowledge about the effect of the reform processes on women and men, and Norway gives priority to the task of ensuring that women's concerns are safeguarded in development programmes.

Development assistance is to support the development of a policy for trade and industry which ensures that women take part and to help to direct attention towards women's work and their use of time.

Development assistance is to contribute to efforts in the agricultural sector to give women rights to the land they cultivate and income from its yield, and access to agricultural advisory services, credit and public support schemes.

***Education:***

Development assistance is to focus primarily on ensuring that girls can exercise their right to basic education.

Development assistance is also to contribute towards ensuring that women receive higher education and vocational training.

Development assistance must increase women's literacy and counteract the marginalization of women by modern technology.

***Health:***

Development assistance must contribute towards the development of good primary health care, which is crucial to women's health.

Development assistance is to ensure that health cooperation includes a focus on women's reproductive health and to support the right of women to decide how many children they want to have and when to have them.

Development assistance must direct attention towards sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

***Management of natural resources and the environment:***

Development assistance is to safeguard the interests of women affected by environmental degradation and the negative impact of interference with the natural landscape.

Development assistance is to actively make use of women's traditional expertise with regard to nature and the environment.

Development assistance is to ensure that women's knowledge about local nutritional and health needs is preserved in the development process.

## **Annex 4: Gender assessments of policy documents, strategies and action plans**

### **White papers**

#### **St. meld. 35 (2003-2004), Fighting Poverty Together. A Comprehensive Development Policy**

The White Paper specifically states that its aim is to mainstream W&GE (pp. 9-10, 11, 95-96, 124-125), making these issues a cross-sectoral priority in combating poverty. W&GE is integrated into the problem description on poverty in several places. Moreover, mainstreaming is reflected in the incorporation of the MDGs as guidelines for Norwegian development policies (p.14). The efforts are to strengthen “countries’ capacity to meet these commitments” (p.13), as well as to support NGOs that work with human rights-based projects, in political dialogue, in support of a free press, and in the judicial sector (p.13).

In education, the strategy combines mainstreaming and direct targeting through bilateral support to national sector programmes on women’s and girls’ education (p.126). Moreover, in health, women are mainstreamed by prioritising follow-up of MDG no. 5 (on maternal health). However, no specific efforts are listed concerning maternal health. On HIV/AIDS, the document states that special attention should be given to “the rights of women and girls” (p.129), and this is to be done through dialogue with partners.

As regards women’s participation in decision-making (p.143), some general efforts are mentioned, such as providing financial and technical assistance to electoral processes, constitutional commissions and judicial reform, as well as monitoring the human rights situation, and using Norwegian NGOs as a partner for such work (p.182). The only effort listed that targets women is to ensure women’s participation in national PRSP processes (p.87). The document thus fails to outline in detail how women’s participation and representation in political institutions is to be ensured. The right of inheritance and property rights (land) are outlined as important measures for combating poverty. Other efforts include working for the formalisation of such rights by supporting the reform efforts of partners (p.176), and providing support to micro-finance projects, assistance to small-scale farmers, and assistance for developing independent cooperatives.

#### **St. meld. 19 (2002-2003), A World of Opportunities - The Age of Globalisation and its Challenges**

Only the sections on development in the document aim at mainstreaming W&GE. These sections comprise a small part of the document, and they mainly focus on combating poverty. The document states that the strategy on W&GE is to be incorporated into all policies on poverty. Five of the six priority areas of the women’s strategy are dealt with in the document. The document emphasises that work for human rights, including women’s rights, is to be integrated into all Norwegian development cooperation policies and support. The focus on rights thus represents a mainstreaming of W&GE. Moreover, W&GE is incorporated into educational efforts through declaring that education is important in the work for gender equality (p.72). At the same time, mainstreaming is combined with direct targeting efforts on W&GE (p.72). In health, W&GE is reflected through efforts within the education sector because these are to contribute to better health. Moreover, the document discusses sustainable use of natural resources, and it combines mainstreaming with a specific emphasis on women’s property rights and on local popular participation in decision-making processes on natural resource management. The document only deals with participation in decision-

making in the area of natural resource management, not in other decision-making institutions or processes, and this constitutes a weakness of the document.

All in all, W&GE is mainstreamed in those few sections of the document that discuss development aid and poverty. However, most of the efforts are multilateral ones.

### **Strategies**

#### **MFA (1999a), Strategy of Norwegian Support of Private Sector Development in Developing Countries**

The strategy aims to reduce poverty through support to private sector development in the poorest countries. A variety of measures at the macro and micro levels are listed. At the micro level, mainstreaming of women and direct targeting of women is a clear goal in the main areas of support to the agricultural sector and small-scale enterprises. In these sectors, the majority of workers are women. It is stated that one must give “special consideration” to women, as they are often “responsible for considerable economic activity” within these areas, while at the same time it is often difficult for them to partake in income generating activities in the private sector. A combination of direct targeting efforts and mainstreaming of W&GE is the solution sought to deal with this contradictory situation that women face.

In addition to the focus on W&GE in micro level activities, W&GE should be integrated into policies on private sector development along with human rights and environmental issues (p.8). The strategy states that mainstreaming will be combined with direct targeting efforts towards women, but that this has to be decided in each country, depending upon a country-specific analysis. (p.9). Despite this focus on W&GE, these issues are not listed among the main priorities of the strategy, which focus primarily on macro-level challenges, such as national trade. Moreover, when dealing with rights, the strategy does not mention women’s rights in particular. In the section on good governance (p.23-24), the strategy discusses the institutional framework needed in order to make private sector investment sustainable, such as labour organisations. Women’s participation in such organisations or in decision-making in central or local institutions is not mentioned. Nevertheless, in reporting on private sector development support, one of the main criteria includes women (p.35). All in all, the strategy manages to mainstream women.

We have assessed all the country level Private Sector Development (PSD/NIS) studies carried out in 2002-2003, and we find very little attention paid to W&GE. In the *Study on Private Sector Development (PSD) and Prospects for Norwegian Trade and Investment Interests in Nepal (phase 1)*, (Norad, 2002d), it is stated in the ToR that “The team shall make sure that possible gender differences in PSD (private sector development) are covered in the interviews and brought forward in the recommendations.” Gender differences are briefly addressed in the study, but only in general terms not related to PSD, and there is no mention of W&GE in the recommendations.

In the Malawi *Study on Private Sector Development (PSD) and Prospects for Norwegian Trade and Investment Interests in Malawi (phase 1)* (Norad, 2002b), the same emphasis is made on W&GE in the ToR. This study does present a more thorough analysis of women’s situation in PSD than the Nepal study, but it does not make any reference to W&GE in its recommendations. However, it does refer to the fact that gender is one of several cross-cutting issues mentioned in the PRSP, and it recommends that if a PSD programme were to be established in Malawi, it should include gender as a cross-cutting issue. This should have been evident for the team, however, as the Norwegian MoU with Malawi contains gender as one of several cross-cutting issues; the MoU is valid for all development cooperation during the MoU period. No PSD programme was established in Malawi.

The Uganda study (Norad 2002e) has a good analysis, and it is the rare case in which W&GE is also addressed in its recommendations. It does state that “The specific problems of women

entrepreneurs need particular attention, both because they are among the poorest, and because they have great potential if given the right environment. Unfortunately, some of the existing cultural and political constraints are difficult to address effectively. Access and rights to property and resources are fundamental issues” (p.33). The report recommends addressing the way in which the legal framework places women in a particularly disadvantaged situation, “particularly with regard to property rights”, and it recommends making this a “priority part of the governance reforms (for private sector development”. It also advises the embassy to conduct more analysis of the UNIDO support to women entrepreneurs before entering into cooperation with them.

It should also be noted that the summary report from the Private Sector Development Studies has very few references to W&GE, and it does not systematically address W&GE in its recommendations. This is even more surprising given that the ToR for all PSD studies includes such a requirement. We see this as more evidence of the way in which W&GE has been addressed during this period. It is a topic which is to be included, often added on in the ToR, but with little analytical work upfront regarding what should be included and at what level this should be addressed. Sanctions do not seem to be put on Study Teams that do not address this part of the ToR.

### **MFA (2003), Education - Job Number 1. Norwegian Strategy for Delivering Education for All by 2015**

This strategy mainstreams women in its human rights-based perspective by focusing on education for all, and with direct efforts targeting women and girls, based on the MDGs. Support to the literacy programme for women represents one such direct targeting measure.

Girls’ equal access to both basic and secondary education is firmly embedded in Norwegian development cooperation, and is referred to in White Papers, budget texts, education strategy, and other policy papers. Commitment at the policy level is followed up globally by Norad’s support to the UN Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI), with support to the UNGEI secretariat at UNICEF and an active dialogue with UNGEI by Norad’s technical department on social services, section on education. Girls’ education is also an important element in Norway’s support to Education for All (EFA) and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) for EFA. At the country level, Norway actively pursues equity in access to education. Such efforts are made both in the education SWAP in Zambia and through Norwegian support to education in Bangladesh. Girls’ access to education is also an important element in Norwegian support to the upcoming education sector programme under the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. Norway also supports education programmes in Tanzania, Nepal and Vietnam, and it is actively engaged in supporting girls’ access to education through these programmes.

### **MFA (1997a), A Strategy for Environment in Development Cooperation**

The strategy incorporates W&GE, arguing that this is necessary as women play a key role in managing natural resources (p.5). Moreover, it is a prerequisite to focus on women since they are among the poorest people in developing countries. Another premise for environmental aid, which also contributes to mainstreaming, is local participation in projects (p.5). One effort which combines these two premises is “... to combat poverty and emphasis on the role of women in economic development therefore require that women participate in planning and implementation of projects and planning” (p.5). Other efforts listed are to develop methods for involving women in decision-making on the use of natural resources and to ensure property rights and the right to use and inherit land for women. In conclusion, the strategy manages to mainstream W&GE in its problem description and in some of its recommendations. It also focuses attention on some of the themes identified by the gender strategy, such as economic participation, participation in decision-making and rights. Still, the strategy mentions only a few measures targeting women.



### **MFA (2004c), Peace building - A Development Perspective. Strategic Framework**

The strategy declares that mainstreaming W&GE is to take place in all policies and actions within the area of peace building (p. 9,38). The strategy deals with W&GE in several places and addresses four of the six areas listed in the women's strategy: health, rights, participation in decision-making, and education. Regarding rights, the document argues that "a special focus will be placed on women's and children's rights" (p.7). Participation in decision-making is also to be given a "special focus" (p.7), but the efforts within this area are general, such as electoral reforms (p.24). Turning to health and education services, the strategy emphasises the participation and securing of women's rights in these fields (p.31) by promoting efforts to "advocate and support policies against social discrimination", working through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. When it comes to economic participation, the strategy mainstreams this by emphasising the securing of property rights, good governance and equitable distribution of resources (p.32). The efforts are mainly to achieve "the formalisation of property rights", but the strategy does not mention measures to be taken on this matter (p.34). In addition to these areas, the strategy deals with Security Council Resolution 1325, this is to be followed up by an action plan.

All in all, the strategy deals with mainstreaming women and focussing on W&GE in four of the six priority areas. However, the efforts are vague and very demanding by aiming at radical social reforms in partner countries (such as working for the formalisation of property rights).

### **Action Plans**

#### **MFA (2004a), Fighting Poverty through Agriculture: Norwegian Plan of Action for Agriculture in Norwegian Development Policy**

This plan of action systematically integrates W&GE, and numerous references are made to these issues throughout the plan (p.5, 6). Of all the documents analysed, this plan is the one which manages to integrate W&GE best, and it has several direct efforts targeting W&GE. The document establishes a clear correlation between poverty reduction and agriculture, as well as between agriculture and W&GE. The main areas of concern within the agricultural sector are natural resource management and rights, but the issue of health, more specifically HIV/AIDS, is also discussed. The emphasis on women with regards to HIV/AIDS is due to the role of women as farmers/peasants, and HIV/AIDS, especially among young women, threatens the stability of agricultural production in developing countries. Participation in decision-making processes and women's participation in economic production are to be integrated in all efforts (p.6, 13). The argument is that women are responsible for 60-80% of all land cultivation in developing countries, but they are often hindered from participating in decision-making processes. Developing policies and establishing framework conditions that ensure women's equal participation are among the measures to be undertaken. Other efforts include ensuring that women's interests are taken care of in partner organisations (p.6), and developing aid that contributes to the empowerment of women. As in other documents analysed, the discussion on rights mainly focuses on property rights and the rights of inheritance for women. In conclusion, the action plan deals with all the priority areas in the strategy on W&GE and manages to combine mainstreaming and direct targeting efforts towards women. However, the efforts are demanding, and some of them may be very difficult to realise, such as the formalisation of property rights for women.

#### **MFA (2002a), Fighting Poverty. Norway's Action Plan 2015 for Combating Poverty in the South**

The action plan integrates W&GE in its problem description, stating that securing women's rights and GE is necessary for combating poverty since women comprise the majority of poor people. The document stipulates that a human rights-based approach is to be employed in all measures to fight poverty. Moreover, the plan mainstreams W&GE through using the OECD/DAC criteria as guidelines for Norwegian efforts in combating poverty (p.45). However, these criteria do not include any targeted efforts with respect to W&GE.

The action plan deals with the priority areas in the W&GE strategy in its problem description as well as in the efforts mentioned to fight poverty. Concerning the efforts within the six priority areas, W&GE is mainstreamed into all of them.

The plan integrates human rights in several efforts mentioned, and thus also women's rights. Efforts targeting women within the area of human rights includes creating democratic institutions and mechanisms (p.53). In dealing with health and education, the document integrates W&GE because most efforts within these fields focus on the fulfilment of the MDGs concerning health and education. Furthermore, the plan lists a number of efforts specifically targeting women and girls within health and education. Regarding economic participation, the plan states that focus should be placed on the agricultural sector and special attention given to W&GE by focusing on property rights and the right to inherit land for women (p.57). Regarding the environment and natural resources, the plan mainstreams W&GE by focusing on sustainable use of energy and development of alternative sources of energy. In relation to participation in decision-making, the action plan acknowledges that women and poor people in general are often hindered from participation. With regards to actions within this field, the plan focuses on women's participation in elections and institutions at different levels. All in all, the action plan manages to integrate W&GE into its problem description and efforts by focusing on all six priority areas identified in the W&GE strategy.

#### **Guidelines and policy papers**

##### **Norad (2003a), Cooperation for Development. Partnerships between Private Sector and Civil Society for Activities in Developing Countries**

This strategy mainly focuses on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which includes human rights concerns, and thus, it may be said that women are implicitly included through the rights-based perspective. However, the document does not suggest mainstreaming women into CSR projects, and it does not deal with women's rights or gender equality in the problem description or in efforts to be carried out. Thus, the document does not mainstream W&GE.

##### **MFA (2004b), Norway's Effort to Strengthen Support for Indigenous Peoples in Development Cooperation. A Human Rights-Based Approach. Guidelines**

The guidelines state that the objective of Norwegian development cooperation is to "ensure that gender equality and women are on the agenda in all Norwegian efforts to support indigenous peoples" (p.20), and thus, the document aims to mainstream W&GE. Moreover, the guidelines emphasise women's rights through its human rights- based approach in support for indigenous peoples, and several efforts are listed which aim to strengthen their rights. In addition, Norway is to work for the "empowerment and participation of individuals and groups" (p.11). Hence, the guidelines integrate participation of women, but they present few direct measures to follow this up with action. Regarding education and protection of the environment and natural resource management among indigenous peoples (p.15), some projects are mentioned. However, no reference is made to efforts in which women are mainstreamed or are directly targeted in the document. The document presents guidelines, but it is not an action plan, and therefore, one may expect the document to focus on overall policies rather than on concrete efforts.

## Annex 5: Important concepts underlying gender mainstreaming

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### IMPORTANT CONCEPTS UNDERLYING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

#### Gender

The concept of gender needs to be understood clearly as a cross-cutting socio-cultural variable. It is an overarching variable in the sense that gender can also be applied to all other cross-cutting variables such as race, class, age, ethnic group, etc. Gender systems are established in different socio-cultural contexts which determine what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman/man and girl/boy in these specific contexts. Gender roles are learned through socialization processes; they are not fixed but are changeable. Gender systems are institutionalized through education systems, political and economic systems, legislation, and culture and traditions. In utilizing a gender approach the focus is not on individual women and men but on the system which determines gender roles / responsibilities, access to and control over resources, and decision-making potentials.

It is also important to emphasize that the concept of gender is not interchangeable with women. Gender refers to both women and men, and the relations between them. Promotion of gender equality should concern and engage men as well as women. In recent years there has been a much stronger direct focus on men in research on gender perspectives. There are three main approaches taken in the increased focus on men. Firstly, the need to identify men as allies for gender equality and involve them more actively in this work. Secondly, the recognition that gender equality is not possible unless men change their attitudes and behaviour in many areas, for example in relation to reproductive rights and health. And thirdly, that gender systems in place in many contexts are negative for men as well as for women – creating unrealistic demands on men and requiring men to behave in narrowly defined ways. A considerable amount of interesting research is being undertaken, by both women and men, on male identities and masculinity. The increased focus on men will have significant impact on future strategies for working with gender perspectives in development.

#### Gender equality

Gender equality is the preferred terminology within the United Nations, rather than gender equity. Gender equity denotes an element of interpretation of social justice, usually based on tradition, custom, religion or culture, which is most often to the detriment to women. Such use of equity in relation to the advancement of women is unacceptable. During the Beijing conference in 1995 it was agreed that the term equality would be utilized. Gender Equality means that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of individuals will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Equality does not mean “the same as” – promotion of gender equality does not mean that women and men will become the same. Equality between women and men has both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect. The quantitative aspect refers to the desire to achieve equitable representation of women – increasing balance and parity, while the qualitative aspect refers to achieving equitable influence on establishing development priorities and outcomes for women and men. Equality involves ensuring that the perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of women and men (which can be very different because of the differing roles and responsibilities of women and men) will be given equal weight in planning and decision-making.

There is a dual rationale for promoting gender equality. Firstly, that equality between women and men – equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities - is a matter of human rights and social justice. And secondly, that greater equality between women and men is also a precondition for (and effective indicator of) sustainable people-centred development. The perceptions, interests, needs and priorities of both women and men must be taken into consideration not only as a matter of social justice but because they are necessary to enrich development processes.

#### Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The calls for increased gender mainstreaming in the Economic and Social Council (ESCSOC) Agreed Conclusions (1997/2) are not for increased gender balance within the United Nations but for increased attention to gender perspectives and the goal of gender equality in the work of the United Nations. Gender mainstreaming

does not entail developing separate women's projects within work programmes, or even women's components within existing activities in the work programmes. It requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all programmes. This involves making gender perspectives – what women and men do and the resources and decision-making processes they have access to – more central to all policy development, research, advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of norms and standards, and planning, implementation and monitoring of projects.

It is important to see the linkages between gender mainstreaming in the substantive work of the United Nations and the promotion of equal opportunities and gender balance within the United Nations itself. Organizational culture and organizational values are important in terms of creating work environments which are conducive to gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is easiest to implement in organizational environments which support approaches such as multi-disciplinary focuses, teamwork, creative thinking, flexibility and risk-taking.

Gender mainstreaming was established as an intergovernmental mandate in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, and again in the ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions in 1997. The mandate for gender mainstreaming was considerably strengthened in the outcome of the General Assembly special session to follow-up the Beijing Conference (June 2000). Gender mainstreaming is not being imposed on governments by the United Nations. Member states have been involved in the intergovernmental discussions on gender mainstreaming since the mid 1990s and have, in consensus, adopted mainstreaming as an important global strategy for promoting gender equality.

The mainstreaming strategy does not mean that targeted activities to support women are no longer necessary. Such activities specifically target women's priorities and needs, through, for example, legislation, policy development, research and projects/programmes on the ground. Women-specific projects continue to play an important role in promoting gender equality. They are still needed because gender equality has not yet been attained and gender mainstreaming processes are not well developed. Targeted initiatives focusing specifically on women or the promotion of gender equality are important for reducing existing disparities, serving as a catalyst for promotion of gender equality and creating a constituency for changing the mainstream. Women-specific initiatives can create an empowering space for women and act as an important incubator for ideas and strategies than can be transferred to mainstream interventions. Initiatives focused on men support promotion of gender equality by developing male allies. It is crucial to understand that these two strategies - gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment - are in no way in competition with each other. The endorsement of gender mainstreaming within an organization does not imply that targeted activities are no longer needed. The two strategies are complementary in a very real sense as gender mainstreaming must be carried out in a manner which is empowering for women.

#### **Empowerment of women**

The empowerment of women concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. The process of empowerment is as important as the goal. Empowerment comes from within; women empower themselves. Inputs to promote the empowerment of women should facilitate women's articulation of their needs and priorities and a more active role in promoting these interests and needs. Empowerment of women cannot be achieved in a vacuum; men must be brought along in the process of change. Empowerment should not be seen as a zero-sum game where gains for women automatically imply losses for men. Increasing women's power in empowerment strategies does not refer to *power over*, or controlling forms of power, but rather to alternative forms of power: *power to*; *power with* and *power from within* which focus on utilizing individual and collective strengths to work towards common goals without coercion or domination.

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