

Glossary of Terms

Aggregate demand The total demand for a country's output, including demands for consumption, investment, government purchases, and net exports.

Aggregation The combining of two or more kinds of an economic entity into a single category. Data on international trade necessarily aggregate goods and services into manageable groups. For macroeconomic purposes, all goods and services are usually aggregated into just one.

Balance of payments The balance of payments accounts record all a country's international transactions. The sale of exports and national investments by other countries are entered as a credit, while purchasing imports or national companies investing abroad are entered as a debit. The overall account is called the balance of payments because the total of outflows is supposed to be equivalent to (balance) the total of inflows.

Budget The budget is the annual announcement of the government's fiscal policy changes. It announces the tax changes proposed for the following tax year, and also how the government plans to spend that revenue.

Budget deficit When government expenditure exceeds government income.

Budget surplus When government income exceeds government expenditure.

Crowding out A situation in which the government is borrowing heavily while businesses and individuals also want to borrow. The former can always pay the market interest rate, but the latter cannot, and is crowded out.

Depreciation A fall in the value of a country's currency on the exchange market, relative either to a particular other currency or to a weighted average of other currencies. The opposite of 'appreciation'.

Exchange rate The price at which one country's currency trades for another, typically on the exchange market.

Exchange rate regime The rules under which a country's exchange rate is determined, especially the way the monetary or other government authorities do or do not intervene in the exchange market. Regimes include floating exchange rates, pegged exchange

rate, managed float, crawling peg, currency board and exchange controls.

False economies A 'false economy' is where an attempt to reduce or contain financial costs in one sector in fact transfers or perpetuates actual costs in terms of time use for individuals and groups, and lowers their overall productivity. Hence there are no actual savings for these individuals and groups, particularly women

Fiscal policy The use by a government of its expenditures on goods and services and/or tax collections to try to influence the nation's level of economic activity. The government can cut taxes and increase government expenditure to encourage more spending and boost the economy (expansionary or reflationary policy) or increase taxes and cut expenditure to reduce the level of demand in the economy and help to reduce inflation (contractionary or deflationary policy).

Gender The notion of gender as distinct from sex refers to the socially constructed roles and socially learnt behaviour and expectations associated with males and females. Women and men differ biologically, but all cultures interpret and elaborate these innate biological differences into a set of social expectations of what behaviours and activities are appropriate and, consequently, what rights, resources and powers men and women possess. While societies vary in terms of their expectations from women and men, they nonetheless all have gender asymmetries that are deeply entrenched (though not static).

Gender-blindness means ignoring the different socially determined roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of men and women. Gender-blind policies are based on information derived from men's activities and/or assume those affected by the policy have the same (male) needs and interests.

Gender-disaggregated data Identifying and generating gender statistics is a complex process, which extends beyond the simple disaggregation of indicators into the categories of women and men. Gender-disaggregated data focus on issues of particular relevance to women and men, girls and boys, and their different roles and positions in society. Statistics on household distance from water or fuel, for example, have different implications for women and men since it is usually the former who spend time collecting these necessities when they are not readily available.

Gender focal point A Gender Focal Point is a designated member of staff in an organisation, ministry, department or division who is the main agent for facilitating, on a day-to-day basis, the integration of gender issues into the policies, programme and projects being undertaken within the institutional structure.

Gender mainstreaming 'Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.' (Agreed conclusions of the UN Economic and Social Council 1997/2).

Gender management system (GMS) The GMS is an integrated network of structures, mechanisms and processes put in place in an existing organisational framework in order to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender into all areas of an organisation's work. It is intended to advance gender equality and equity through promoting political will; forging a partnership of stakeholders including government, private sector and civil society; building capacity; and sharing good practice. The Commonwealth Secretariat is encouraging the establishment of gender management systems at the national level.

Gender neutral Gender neutral policies are not specifically aimed at either men or women and are assumed to affect both sexes equally. However, they may actually be gender-blind (see above).

Gender responsive budget (GRB) GRB is increasingly being adopted as the name for a variety of processes and tools such as a 'gender sensitive budget', 'gender budget', 'women's budget' and 'women's budget statement'. These processes aim to assess the impact of government budgets, mainly at national level, on different groups of men and women, through recognising the ways in which gender relations underpin society and the economy. Although the focus of these exercises has been on determining the impact of budget expenditure on women and girls, they are not separate budgets for women. They include analysis of gender targeted allocations (e.g. special programmes targeting women); they disaggregate by gender the impact of mainstream expenditures across all sectors and services; and they review equal opportunities policies and allocations within government services.

Good governance While good governance is defined in different ways, it is primarily considered to be a process of improving opportunities for the delivery of goods and services to the people in a fair, just, effective and responsible way. Key features are transparency, accountability and participation.

Gross domestic product (GDP) The market value of all final goods and services produced in a given time period, usually a year.

Gross national product (GNP) The market value of all final goods and services produced by national residents, no matter where they are located.

Inflation A general rise in the average level of all prices. It can be measured either monthly, quarterly or annually.

Macroeconomics The study of the behaviour of the overall economy, including inflation, unemployment and industrial production. It focuses on the level of income or output of the economy, including the level of employment, aggregate investment, total consumption and the money supply.

Microeconomics The study of the behaviour of small economic units, such as that of individual consumers, households or companies. It focuses on the determination of the prices that induce these agents to act, including wages for labour and return rates of investment funds. These concerns cover issues of demand and supply, welfare and distribution.

Monetary policy Monetary policy is the control of the money supply and interest rates by a government in order to achieve its economic objectives, in particular the restraining of inflation.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) An NGO is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organised on a local, national or international level. NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to governments, monitor policies and encourage political participation at the community level. Some are organised around specific issues, such as human rights, the environment or health.

Reproductive sector The reproductive sector is concerned with caring for the present and future labour force, and the human population as a whole, including providing food, clothing and shelter in the household. Elson refers to it as the 'care economy'. The reproductive sector is generally unpaid and usually excluded from national accounts. Reproductive labour is mainly performed by women, and takes up an extremely high proportion of their time allocation.

Stabilisation policy The use of monetary and fiscal policies to stabilise GDP, aggregate employment and prices.

Stabilise To reduce the size of fluctuations in an economic variable over time. Examples include stabilising exchange rates by exchange market intervention, stabilising the price of a commodity by operation of a buffer stock and stabilising GDP by macroeconomic stabilisation policy.

Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) SAPs are intended to restore a sustainable balance of payments, reduce inflation and create the conditions for sustainable growth in per capita income. Typical measures are spending cuts in the public sector and tight monetary policy. At least 75 developing countries undertook SAPs in the 1980s, with loans from the World Bank and IMF. It has been argued that these policies have a disproportionate effect on women because they fail to take into account women's roles in the reproductive sector, the gender division of labour and inequalities in household allocations.

Supply response The increase in output as a result of changed incentives. There a variety of gender-related reasons that affect women's willingness, or ability, to increase their output, or to market their increased output. These include the burden of household work, lack of control over productive resources such as land and the fact that women may not receive the benefits of their own increased production.

Time budgets Also called 'time use studies' and 'time allocation studies', time budgets are used to investigate the allocation of time among different tasks (and leisure). Time budget surveys have revealed the failure of conventional labour statistics to capture the extent, range and complexity of activities in which individuals engage, particularly in developing countries and particularly among women, for whom multi-tasking is common.

Sources: Alexander, P. with S. Baden (2000); Baden, S. (1997); Biz/ed / Institute for Fiscal Studies (2001); Deardorff, A.V. (2000/2001); Elson, D. (1995); Sharp (1999) Institut für Volkswirtschaftstheorie und Politik.