Gender Management System Handbook

Commonwealth Secretariat

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GENDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SERIES

Reference Manuals
Gender Management System Handbook
Using Gender-Sensitive Indicators: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
Gender Mainstreaming in Development Planning: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
Gender Mainstreaming in Finance: A Reference Manual for Governments and Other Stakeholders
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Preface

The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development presents a vision of:

"a world in which women and men have equal rights and opportunities at all stages of their lives to express their creativity in all fields of human endeavour, and in which women are respected and valued as equal and able partners in establishing values of social justice, equity, democracy and respect for human rights. Within such a framework of values, women and men will work in collaboration and partnership to ensure people-centred sustainable development for all nations."

Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995d

In order to assist Commonwealth governments in realising this vision, Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs mandated the Secretariat to develop the concept and methodology of the Gender Management System (GMS), a comprehensive network of structures, mechanisms and processes for bringing a gender perspective to bear on all government policies, plans, programmes and projects. The success of the GMS depends upon a broad-based partnership in society in which government consults and acts co-operatively with other key stakeholders, who include civil society and the private sector.

The *Gender Management System Handbook* has been produced to assist member governments in meeting their commitment to implementing the Plan of Action. It is hoped that it will be used in conjunction with other publications in the Gender Management System Series, by development policy-makers, planners, field staff and others. The handbook is designed to be sufficiently flexible to allow users to adopt those elements of the GMS that are most appropriate to national circumstances and adapt others to their countries' specific needs.

The task of gender mainstreaming includes both technical and managerial dimensions, as well as the political and socio-cultural aspects of creating equality and equity between women and men as partners in the quest for social justice. The handbook is intended to serve as an accessible reference manual to aid users in setting up a GMS and managing problems encountered in advancing the goal of gender equality and equity. It is also available in an abridged form under the title *A Quick Guide to the Gender Management System*.

The development of the *Gender Management System Handbook* has been a collective effort between the Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender and Youth Affairs Division and many individuals and groups. Their contributions to the thinking behind the GMS are gratefully acknowledged. In particular, I would like to thank the following: Meetings of Women's Affairs Ministers which supported the development of the GMS and encouraged us to move the project forward; participants at the first GMS meeting in Britain in February 1997 and at the GMS Workshop in Malta in April 1998, who provided valuable input and feedback; and the Steering Committee on the Plan of Action (SCOPA). I am also most grateful to: the various consultants who , contributed inputs drafted and edited the handbook in collaboration with the staff of the Gender and Youth Affairs Division, including Daniel Woolford, Consultant Editor for the GMS publications, Audrey Ingram Roberts, and Carol Miller; and the staff of the Gender Affairs Department, Gender and Youth Affairs Division, particularly Ms Eleni Stamiris, former Director of the Division, who took the lead in

formulating the GMS concept and mobilising the various stakeholders in its development, Dr Judith May-Parker who provided substantive editorial input, and Dr Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen, Project Co-ordinator of the Gender Management System Series, who guided the project through to publication.

We hope that this resource series will be of genuine use to you in your efforts to mainstream gender.

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1 Introduction and Overview

Gender Mainstreaming

Despite considerable progress in some areas of women's lives since the UN named 1975-1985 as the Decade for Women, gender inequality/inequity persists in all areas of life and all countries of the world. The 1995 UN Human Development Report, which had a particular focus on gender, indicated that no country treats its women as well as its men, and in almost all countries of the world women are over-represented among the unemployed and those living in absolute poverty. The gaps between women and men have closed over the last 20 years in terms of educational enrolment, literacy and life expectancy. But women still lag behind in terms of political and economic participation. And gender inequality under the law and violence against women are stark indicators of "the low status accorded women in societies everywhere" (UNDP, 1995).

The proportion of women in decision-making positions in governments worldwide, although it has increased in some countries, still falls far short of the 53 per cent that would represent the female proportion of the world's population, and indeed the target of 30 per cent endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government and by the UN Economic and Social Council. In 1995, the proportion of women MPs in parliaments globally was estimated at 11.6 per cent (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997: 3), and in the Commonwealth the proportion was even lower – just 7.2 per cent (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995a: Appendix 9). Decisions on issues that affect women's lives, sometimes quite drastically, are still for the most part taken by men, without consultation with the women who often pay the price of such decisions through reduced economic circumstances, limited access to education, health and other services, inadequate access to resources, or infringements of their fundamental human rights.

The Commonwealth is committed to taking action to bring about gender equality. The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development sets out a series of strategies and measures for governments to work towards gender equality. Gender mainstreaming, one of the key strategies advanced in the Plan of Action, is the process of bringing a gender perspective into the mainstream activities of government at the policy, programme and project levels. Gender mainstreaming involves a number of activities:

+ forging and strengthening the political will to achieve gender equality and equity, at the local, national, regional and global levels;
+ incorporating a gender perspective into the planning processes of all ministries and departments of government, particularly those concerned with macroeconomic and development planning, personnel policies and management, and legal and constitutional affairs including the administration of justice;
+ integrating a gender perspective into all phases of sectoral planning cycles, including the analysis, development, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects;

> ♦ using sex-disaggregated data (see Appendix) in statistical analysis to reveal how policies impact differently on women and men;
> ♦ increasing the numbers of women in decision-making positions in government and the public and private sectors;
> ♦ providing tools and training in gender-awareness, gender analysis and gender planning to decision-makers, senior managers and other key personnel to ensure that they know how to integrate a gender perspective into their work; and
> ♦ forging linkages between governments, the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders to ensure a co-ordination of efforts and resources.

Because gender mainstreaming is a broad-spectrum strategy that cuts across government sectors and other social partners, it requires strong leadership and co-ordination. The Commonwealth approach to providing the necessary leadership and co-ordination is through the Gender Management System (GMS), which is designed to facilitate all aspects of gender mainstreaming.

Purpose and Scope of this Handbook

This handbook is a guide to the establishment of a Gender Management System. It is primarily intended for use by governments at the national level, but may also be used by inter-governmental agencies, provincial and local governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic institutions, professional associations and the private sector. It is designed to be flexible, presenting a menu of options that governments can adapt to suit their own national circumstances.

The handbook provides a brief overview of the history and basic concepts of gender and development, but does not seek to review in depth the various theoretical approaches to understanding gender and advancing gender equality that have been developed globally. Rather, it draws upon elements of several of these approaches to present a practical system whereby governments and other organisations can take concrete steps to advance the cause of gender equality and equity through gender mainstreaming.

The handbook is part of the Gender Management System Series, which consists of a series of publications presenting the concept and methodology of the Gender Management System, with sector-specific guidelines for mainstreaming gender in key government ministries and supporting materials/tools for gender mainstreaming. The GMS differs from many previous frameworks for gender mainstreaming in that it takes a holistic as well as sectoral approach, with both general and sector specific guidelines and tools for analysis and planning.

National Women's Machineries

Strong leadership in gender mainstreaming should be provided by National Women's Machineries (NWMs), which usually take the role of the Lead Agency in the setting up and running of a Gender Management System.

NWMs were set up in response to the UN Decade for Women, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, the 1987 Commonwealth Plan of Action, and ensuing international programmes. The NWM is the body or system of bodies recognised by the government as the institution dealing with the promotion of the status of women. NWMs may be Ministries Responsible for Gender or Women's Affairs, Women's Bureaux, or other government ministries or departments set up to

address gender and/or women's issues. By 1990, NWMs had been established in some 44 Commonwealth countries (CIDA, 1990).

Considerable differences exist in the status, structure and functioning of NWMs in the Commonwealth. Some are separate government ministries or departments with their own minister, some are located within the office of the Head of State or Government, others are small units in diverse ministries or departments such as employment, health, or community development. In general, a marginal location has a negative effect on the NWM's status within government and the wider society, its access to resources, and its ability to influence mainstream policy-making.

Definition of a Gender Management System

A Gender Management System (GMS) is a network of structures, mechanisms and processes put in place within an existing organisational framework, to guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender into all areas of the organisation's work, in order to achieve greater gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development.

A GMS may be established at any level of government, or in institutions such as universities, inter-governmental or non-governmental organisations, private sector organisations or trade unions. The Gender Management System as presented in this handbook is designed primarily for governments.

Mission, goal and objectives

The mission of a Gender Management System is 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 goal of a Gender Management System is the mainstreaming of gender into all government policies, programmes and activities.

The objectives of a Gender Management System include the following:
+ to assist government and non-state actors in implementing the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development, The Beijing Platform for Action, and other gender-aware international mandates;
+ to strengthen National Women's Machineries (NWMs);
+ to strengthen the capacity of NWMs, core and sectoral government ministries, development NGOs, the private sector and other non-state actors in civil society, to make gender-aware development policies, plans and programmes at all levels, and to facilitate partnership-building among these actors so as to create a broad-based national constituency committed to effecting gender equality and equity of outcomes; and
+ to create an enabling environment which takes into account the various factors that enhance and/or inhibit the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-aware plans and programmes.

The GMS approach to mainstreaming

The Gender Management System adopts a stakeholder approach to gender mainstreaming. This is based on the recognition that the state is not the only player in efforts to achieve gender equality and equity, and must work in partnership with other social partners or stakeholders. The key stakeholders in a GMS are the

National Women's Machinery, other government ministries and departments, NGOs, the media, academic institutions, professional associations, inter-governmental organisations and donor agencies, and women and men in the broader civil society.

Within the stakeholder framework, the GMS is based on three broad principles: empowerment, integration and accountability.

Empowerment

Empowerment means having control over the decisions and issues that affect one's life. In particular, it means having representation in decision-making bodies and control over the distribution of resources. Where women are underrepresented in decision-making fora, the GMS recommends action to redress the imbalance. Participation in planning and decision-making processes has the additional benefit of increasing a sense of commitment to and ownership of the plan's objectives. At the personal level, commitment means more than individual men and women espousing gender equality/equity as a personal belief; it means that equality will inform the choices they make in defining gender roles and responsibilities expressed at home, in the work place and in community life. Therefore the widest possible participation in gender planning is desirable.

Integration

The GMS adopts a systemic, holistic approach to mainstreaming, aiming not merely at *ad hoc* piecemeal interventions, but at the transformation of the structures within societies that create and perpetuate gender and other inequalities. This entails a high degree of analysis, co-ordination and integration of effort. The GMS is structured to operate in a co-ordinated way at different levels and in different sectors of government and society. Such integration is necessary if the GMS is to reflect the diversity in society; 'women' and 'men' are not homogeneous categories, but include other constructs such as race/ethnicity, class/caste, age and disability. Gender inequalities cannot be addressed adequately unless the inequalities arising from these other variables are also addressed.

Accountability

Creating change within an organisation and within society requires action to motivate people to effect the necessary changes. The systems that motivate change can be of two kinds: incentive systems, which provide rewards for the achievement of specific goals; and boundary systems, which define what behaviour is unacceptable, set minimum standards of achievement and impose sanctions if these standards are not attained.

GMS structures

At each stage, a successful process of gender mainstreaming involves decision-makers at senior levels in government ministries, non-governmental developmental organisations (NGOs) representing gender equality interests, the private sector and other non-state actors in civil society. In other words, the management of the process of gender mainstreaming is everybody's business.

Enabling all these stakeholders to participate effectively in the mainstreaming of gender into governments' policy and programming requires the establishment and/or strengthening of formal institutional arrangements within and outside government. These arrangements can be summarised as follows:
+ a **Lead Agency** (usually the Ministry of Gender or Women's Affairs or other National Women's Machinery), which initiates and strengthens the GMS

institutional arrangements, provides overall co-ordination and monitoring, and carries out advocacy, communications, media relations, and reporting;

◆ a **Gender Management Team** (consisting of representatives from the Lead Agency, key government ministries and civil society), which provides leadership for the implementation of the GMS; defines broad operational policies, indicators of effectiveness, and timeframes for implementation; and monitors its performance;

◆ an **Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee** whose members are representatives of the Lead Agency and the Gender Focal Points (see below) of all government ministries, and which ensures that gender mainstreaming in government policy, planning and programmes in all sectors is effected and that strong linkages are established between ministries;

◆ **Gender Focal Points** (senior administrative and technical staff in all government ministries), who co-ordinate gender activities (e.g., training), promote gender mainstreaming in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all activities in their respective sectors, and sit on the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee;

◆ a **Parliamentary Gender Caucus** (consisting of gender-aware female and male parliamentarians), which carries out awareness-raising, lobbying, and promoting the equal participation of women and men in politics and all aspects of national life, and bringing a gender perspective to bear on parliamentary structures and

Figure 1   The Gender Management System

Enabling Environment
◆ political will
◆ adequate human and financial resources
◆ legislative and administrative framework
◆ women in decision-making positions at all levels
◆ active involvement of civil society

GMS Processes
◆ setting up GMS structures and mechanisms
◆ developing and implementing a national Gender Action Plan
◆ mainstreaming gender in the National Development Plan and sectoral ministries

GMS Structures
◆ Lead Agency
◆ Gender Management Team
◆ Gender Focal Points/Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee
◆ Parliamentary Gender Caucus
◆ Gender Equality Commission/Council

GMS Mechanisms
◆ Gender Analysis (communication and awareness levers)
◆ Gender Training (awareness lever)
◆ Management Information System (communication lever)
◆ Performance Appraisal System (incentive/boundary lever)

procedures, and matters under debate; and

✦ representatives of **civil society** (a National Gender Equality Commission/Council, academic institutions, NGOs, professional associations, media and other stakeholders), who represent and advocate the interests and perspectives of autonomous associations in government policy-making and implementation processes.

GMS processes

This handbook outlines three interrelated Gender Management System processes: setting up a GMS; developing and implementing a national Gender Action Plan; and mainstreaming gender in the National Development Plan and other government policy-making, planning and programme activities.

Setting up a GMS

The process normally begins with a feasibility study and stakeholder analysis. This should include a review of the status of women nationally, any GMS-related mechanisms already in place, and recommendations on what structures, process and mechanisms need to be put in place and, where appropriate, on the appointment of a technical expert to work with the government in setting up the GMS. The feasibility report is presented to the NWM which tables it in Cabinet. Once it is approved, the NWM or Lead Agency co-ordinates the process, which includes the following steps:

✦ reviewing the national Gender Action Plan or developing such a plan if none exists;

✦ reviewing the National Development Plan to determine its gender-awareness;

✦ setting up the GMS structures;

✦ strengthening the National Women's Machinery;

✦ developing a gender training programme;

✦ building gender analysis and planning expertise in the various government sectors;

✦ establishing or strengthening linkages between the NWM and other stakeholders;

✦ establishing monitoring and evaluation and reporting mechanisms;

✦ developing a programme of public awareness through the media; and

✦ networking with donors and other agencies to seek resources for the GMS and gender mainstreaming.

Developing and implementing a national Gender Action Plan

A central element of successful gender mainstreaming is the creation and implementation of a national Gender Action Plan. The Gender Action Plan should include an analysis of the status of gender equality/relations in all sectors of society, a proposal for setting up or strengthening the GMS structures and mechanisms, and plans for enhancing all ministries' capacity for gender-sensitive policy development and planning.

Mainstreaming gender in the National Development Plan and sectoral ministries

The mainstreaming of gender into the National Development Plan as well as the regular policy, planning and implementation cycles of all other ministries of government is a key GMS process. The National Development Plan is often the central planning instrument from which all sectoral activities emanate, and is therefore of strategic importance in advancing gender equality and equity at the national level. It is therefore essential to review this Plan and take steps to ensure it is gender-sensitive, i.e., that it seeks to transform existing gender relations into those of equality and equity by redistributing resources, power and responsibilities more evenly between women and men.

Planning processes can be seen as cyclical, with five main phases. A gender perspective needs to be integrated at all phases of the cycle: analysis and diagnosis; policy development and appraisal; planning; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation.

GMS mechanisms

There are four principal mechanisms for effecting change within an organisation using a GMS:

✦ **Gender analysis:** This involves the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data which reveals the differential impact of development activities on women and men, and the effect gender roles and responsibilities have on development efforts. It also involves qualitative analyses that help to clarify how and why these differential, roles responsibilities and impacts have come about.

✦ **Gender training:** many of the stakeholders in a GMS will require training in such areas as basic gender-awareness and sensitisation, gender analysis, gender planning, the use of gender-sensitive indicators, and monitoring and evaluation. Since the GMS aims at the gradual transformation of organisations and a realignment of the belief systems, power structures and policy and planning processes within them, training may also be required in conflict prevention and resolution, and the management of change.

✦ **Management Information System:** this is the mechanism for gathering the data necessary for gender analysis, and sharing and communicating the findings of that analysis, using sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators. The Management Information System is much more than just a library or resource centre; it is the central repository of gender information and the means by which such information is generated by and disseminated to the key stakeholders in the GMS.

✦ **Performance Appraisal System:** based on the results of gender analysis, the GMS should establish targets in specific areas (for example, 30 per cent of those in decision-making positions within government and the public and private sectors should be women by the year 2005; 25 per cent of decision-makers in this department should be women by the next planning cycle). The achievement of these targets should be evaluated both at the individual and departmental level, through a gender-aware Performance Appraisal System. This should not be separate from whatever system is already in place for appraising the performance of employees – rather the present system should be reviewed and overhauled to ensure that it is gender-sensitive. The Performance Appraisal System should also take into account the level of gender-sensitivity and skills (e.g., as acquired through gender training or field experience) of individuals. The Gender Management Team should work in partnership with the central personnel office of government and sectoral personnel departments to ensure that the Performance Appraisal System in place reflects these concerns.

Given that there is usually a scarcity of and competition for financial and human resources within government, it may not be possible to create all of the GMS structures and mechanisms, especially in the initial phase. It is therefore advisable to prioritise them according to which are the most compatible with existing structures and most appropriate to national circumstances.

What Does a GMS Achieve?

A Gender Management System can have the following beneficial impacts:

✦ development policies and programmes that work because they take into account the realities of more than half of the world's population;

◆ a fair and equitable distribution of power, resources and decision-making between women and men;

◆ government ministries that are able to respond to the needs of both women and men within their respective sectors;

◆ staff who are trained and experienced in addressing issues from a gender perspective; an efficient and effective mechanism for meeting reporting requirements under international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Box 1 **A Gender Perspective on Government Policies, Plans and Programmes**

A gender perspective focuses not only on women but on the social relationships between women and men and how societies are structured along gendered lines. It is concerned with:

◆ women's involvement, concerns, needs, aspirations as well as those of men;

◆ the differential outcomes of policies, plans and projects on women, men and children;

◆ assessing to whom financial and other quantitative and qualitative benefits accrue and in what ways;

◆ eliminating discrimination and taking positive action to achieve equal outcomes;

◆ differences among women;

◆ possible alliances which can be formed between women and men to address inequality; and

◆ the process of gender planning.

2 | Conceptual Background

From Women in Development to Gender and Development

Gender mainstreaming, as a strategy, has developed out of a major shift in the focus of efforts to promote gender equality and equity in recent years. This shift in focus has been away from the women in development (WID) approach, towards the gender and development (GAD) approach.

The WID approach began with an uncritical acceptance of existing social structures and focused on how women could be better integrated into existing development initiatives. Targeting women's productive work to the exclusion of their reproductive work, this approach was characterised by income-generating projects for women which failed to address the systemic causes of gender inequality. It tended to view women as passive recipients of development assistance, rather than as active agents in transforming their own economic, social, political and cultural realities. A key outcome was that women's concerns were viewed in isolation, as separate issues, leading to their marginalisation in the state system and other social structures.

Box 2	From Women in Development to Gender and Development

The Commonwealth Plan of Action summarises the shift of focus from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) as follows:

"WID policies aim to integrate women into existing structures and address women's specific needs and concerns. The focus is on how women must change to fit into an essentially 'man-made' world. GAD, on the other hand, seeks to integrate gender-awareness and competence into mainstream development to account for the different life courses and different impacts of development policies on women and men. It emphasises that development activities may affect women and men differently and calls for appropriate 'gender planning' to address them. It also calls attention to 'outcomes', and the need to take the necessary steps to ensure that the resulting conditions and outcomes are equitable, rather than being preoccupied with giving only identical treatment. In summary, the GAD approach focuses not only on the differences between men and women but on the inequalities that emanate from these differences: women and their allotted roles have been historically undervalued and continue to be so up to the present time".

Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995a: 14

Barriers to equality are socially constructed and maintained by a complex array of historical, ideological, cultural, economic and religious influences which are difficult but not impossible to change. Gender roles, relations and inequalities vary across cultures and through different times in human development; thus they are amenable to change.

A GAD framework is more likely to result in:

✦ the recognition that women and men have different and special needs;

✦ the recognition that women cannot be effectively treated as a homogeneous group because race/ethnicity, class, age, disability and sexual orientation, among other factors, create differences among women and between women and men;

✦ the recognition that women tend to be disadvantaged relative to men in terms of their welfare and their access to and control over the means of production, but also that in inequitable class societies, and in the present international economic order, some women are more privileged than men;

✦ the recognition of the systemic and structural nature of inequality;

✦ the commitment to a process whereby development interventions work towards women's and men's increased empowerment and equality (adapted from Longwe, 1991: 150); and

✦ the recognition that gender differences can also result in men being disadvantaged. For example, the recent phenomenon of male under-achievement in Caribbean education systems is beyond the scope of the WID approach, but can be addressed through a gender-aware approach to development. Tracking gender equality in sector-specific data makes it possible to examine the comparative positions of women and men in relation to, for example, health, education, family structures, the labour market and earnings/income. 'Gender equality tracking' is thus a type of gender analysis that is useful in enabling appropriate policy interventions to be made in a timely manner to promote gender equality and equity in either direction.

The gender mainstreaming approach focuses on the fact that women and men have different life courses and that development policies affect them differently. It addresses these differences by mainstreaming gender into development planning at all levels and in all sectors, focusing less on providing equal treatment for men and women (since equal treatment does not necessarily result in equal outcomes), and more on taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure equal outcomes. It recognises that the empowerment of women can only be achieved by taking into account the relationships between women and men.

The GMS and Organisational Development

The GMS is designed to bring about fundamental and long-lasting changes within an organisation, within a government, and within society as a whole. Organisational Development, the science of producing and managing planned change within an organisation, has given rise to a number of models of the change process (Huse and Cummings, 1985). A simple model of planned change, based on the model originated by Kurt Lewin (Huse and Cummings, 1985) envisages the process in four steps:

1 **diagnosis**: analysis of the current situation; identification of the desired goal and the problems faced in attaining it;

2 **unfreezing**: reducing the forces that maintain the status quo or that perpetuate undesirable behaviours or attitudes within the organisation;

3 **moving**: action to shift behaviours and attitudes to the desired state; and

4 **refreezing**: stabilising the new situation so that it becomes the norm in the organisation.

In reality, organisations are more complex than this model suggests, and change occurs gradually over time, often through a cyclical (or iterative) process in which incremental improvements are made with each repetition of the cycle. Therefore, the last step of the cycle, rather than being a final 're-freezing' is more likely to be a new round of diagnosis, unfreezing and moving to a more desirable state.

Levers of change

In order to accomplish the change process, a number of *levers of change* are needed. These can be classified in three main areas: the communication lever, the awareness lever, and the incentive/boundary lever.

The communication lever

The GMS depends upon the timely flow of accurate information about gender differentials both within the organisation and in the broader society it serves. Information systems should be both diagnostic and interactive (Simons, 1995). In other words, they should be able to provide the raw information necessary to undertake analyses of the current situation, in order to determine appropriate goals and interventions to achieve them, and they should continue to provide information that can inform ongoing strategic decisions at all levels, based on the changing gender needs within the organisation and in the broader society. Gender analysis and the Management Information System, which serve as the 'communication levers' of the GMS, emphasise the use of gender-sensitive indicators to provide both these kinds of information.

The awareness lever

The awareness lever is necessary to change the institutionalised practices that maintain the status quo of gender inequalities. This entails transforming the belief systems commonly held in society and in organisations, regarding gender roles, what women and men are capable of, what is appropriate for them, and so on. As well as gender analysis and the interactive flow of gender information provided by the Management Information System, the GMS emphasises the importance of ongoing gender training as an essential 'awareness lever' to bring about the required change in consciousness.

The incentive/boundary lever

Many governments in the Commonwealth and elsewhere are engaged in extensive processes of public service reform. Generally the trend of this reform is towards a performance-based public service, with a performance appraisal system to gauge the success of staff members in achieving the goals of their governments and ministries. Incentives motivate staff by offering rewards for positive achievements; boundary instruments define limits beyond which behaviour is unacceptable and institute sanctions if those limits are crossed.

The boundary and incentive lever of the GMS consists of the Performance Appraisal System, which is not a stand-alone system, but rather a modified version of whatever system is currently in place for appraising the performance of employees in the public service. There may be one system managed by the central personnel office, or each ministry may have its own system. In either case, gender mainstreaming involves making the system gender-sensitive. It should include specific items applied specifically to the achievement of the goals of the Gender Action Plan. This ensures accountability is the basis of decisions on what incentives or sanctions can be applied in each case.

Through the appropriate use of these three types of lever, a cyclical process of planned change can be created. Gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved in a single movement; neither can the gender equality and equity it seeks to create. Both processes are cyclical, with each repetition of the cycle bringing the organisation closer to the desired goal.

Some Useful Concepts in Gender Analysis

Practical and strategic gender needs

Because men and women have different roles and responsibilities, they also have different needs – gender needs. These can be further divided into practical and strategic gender needs.

Practical gender needs emanate from the actual conditions women experience due to the roles ascribed to them by society. Often, these needs are related to women's roles as mothers, homemakers and providers of basic needs. Projects can meet the practical gender needs of both men and women without necessarily changing their relative position in society.

Examples of actions that address practical gender needs:
+ reducing women's workload, e.g., the convenient location of stand-pipes and hand-pumps, providing grinding mills, developing fuel-efficient stoves;
+ improving health, e.g., primary health centres, clean water supply, child spacing/family planning advice;
+ improving services, e.g., primary schools, housing infrastructure, transport facilities; and
+ increasing income, e.g., skills training, credit initiatives, access to markets.

Strategic gender needs are what is required to overcome the subordinate position of women to men in society and relate to women's empowerment. Such needs vary according to the economic, political, social and cultural context. Most governments now acknowledge the need to create opportunities which enable women to address their strategic needs. Examples of actions that address strategic gender needs:
+ improving education opportunities, e.g., adult literacy classes, female teachers provided as role models, gender-aware textbooks;
+ improving access to productive assets, e.g., legal status on land ownership, rights to common property, bank accounts;
+ enabling women to take part in decision-making, e.g., participation in elections; representation at the local, provincial and national levels; establishing and supporting women's groups; and
+ promoting equal opportunities for employment, e.g., equal pay for comparative jobs (even if there is a gender division of labour), increasing women's access to jobs traditionally done by men.

It is sometimes said that 'women in development' projects address practical gender needs, while 'gender and development' projects address strategic gender interests. However, the reality is more complex, since both types of gender needs may be addressed from either the WID or GAD approach. Nevertheless, the distinction between practical and strategic gender needs serves as a useful means of evaluating the extent to which a particular policy or intervention may further the goals of the GMS.

Women's triple roles

Analysis of the gender division of labour has revealed that women typically take on three types of roles in terms of the paid and unpaid labour they undertake (Razavi and Miller, 1997: 14). These three roles can be described as follows:
+ **the productive role**: this refers to market production and home/subsistence production undertaken by women which generates an income (whether financial or 'in kind');
+ **the reproductive role**: this refers to the child-bearing and child rearing

responsibilities borne by women – which are essential to the reproduction of the workforce; and

✦ **the community management role**: this refers to activities undertaken by women to ensure the provision of resources at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role (Razavi and Miller, 1997: 14).

An understanding of these three roles can inform gender-aware planning that takes into account the differential impact of programmes and projects on women and men because of women's triple role. Table 1 shows how such an understanding illuminates the analysis of policy interventions designed to impact upon practical gender needs and strategic gender interests.

Table 1	Women's Triple Role and Meeting Practical/Strategic Gender Needs				
Type of Intervention	**Women's Role Recognised**			**Gender Needs Met**	
	Reproductive	Productive	Community Management	Practical	Strategic
1 Employment Policy					
(i) Skill training	✦				
Cooking	✦			✦	
Dressmaking		✦		✦	
Masonry/carpentry		✦		✦	✦a
(ii) Access to credit					
Allocated to household		✦		✦	
Allocated to women		✦		✦	✦b
2 Human Settlement Policy					
(i) Zoning legislation					
Separates residence and work	✦				
Does not separate residence and work	✦			✦	
(iii) House ownership					
In man's name	✦			✦	
In woman's name	✦	✦		✦	✦c
3 Basic Services					
(i) Location of nursery					
Located in community	✦	✦	✦	✦	
Mother's workplace	✦	✦		✦	
Father's workplace	✦	✦		✦	✦d
(ii) Transport services					
Only peak-hour bus service		✦		✦	
Adequate off-peak service	✦	✦	✦	✦	
(iii) Timing of rural extension meetings					
In the morning		✦		✦	
In the afternoon/evening	✦	✦	✦	✦	

Source: Moser, 1993: 49
(a) Changing the gender division of labour
(b) Control over financial services
(c) Overcoming discrimination against women owning land, by law or tradition
(d) Alleviating the burden of domestic labour

Table 2   **Five Policy Approaches to Gender and Development**

	Historical Origins	Aims	Comments
Welfare	1950s–70s but still widely used. Linked to the residual model of social welfare introduced by colonial administrations where it was of a targeted and relief-oriented nature.	This approach focuses only on women's practical gender needs. The kind of projects for women deriving from this approach include maternal and child health schemes, nutrition, hygiene, education and food distribution programmes.	By targeting women as wives and mothers, other household members are helped, especially children. However, there is no attempt made to tackle gender stereotypes within this approach. These programmes have therefore been criticised for maintaining the status quo.
Equity	Attempts were made to adopt this approach during the UN Decade for Women, 1975–85.	This approach focuses only on women's strategic gender needs and advocates changing the unequal economic, legal, social and ideological realities of the female situation. Equity projects include consciousness-raising initiatives as well as practical action in areas such as legal rights and access to credit.	Sees underdevelopment, rather than gender subordination, as the main reason for inequality between low-income men and women. Projects therefore aim to improve the material conditions of women's lives – helping them to 'catch up' with men, e.g., income-generation and skills training, access to marketing outlets, credit, etc.
Anti-Poverty	A 'toned-down' version of the equity approach, the anti-poverty approach emerged from the 1970s onwards.	This approach achieved little support from governments and development agencies as it was seen as too politically sensitive. Its relevance has also been questioned, e.g., Moser observes that many third world activists felt that to talk feminism to women who have no water, food or home is to talk nonsense.	This approach addresses some of women's practical gender needs but overlooks their strategic gender needs, e.g., women's need to share the workload at home if they are to take advantage of increased earning capacity. Exclusive focus on women therefore means this approach has limited impact.
Efficiency	Post-1980, this approach is widely linked with the neo-liberal market-oriented policy framework which accompanied the debt crises and structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s.	This approach is interested in harnessing women's labour to make development more efficient, and assumes that women's increased economic participation will lead to increased equity. Women may be targeted as beneficiaries and participants which fulfil some practical gender needs.	Criticisms are that if women maintain their roles as primary care-givers in the home, inequalities may be intensified as women merely extend their working day. Interventions can therefore be seen as getting women working for development rather than vice versa.
Empowerment	From 1975 onward but accelerating during the 1980s, this approach built upon experience gained in the equity approach and has most in common with it.	This approach focuses on strategic gender needs but defines them by mobilising around practical gender needs identified by women at the grassroots. It is more concerned with changing practices and enabling people to define their own agendas than with changing laws, rules or frameworks.	Empowerment policies orient their efforts to providing resources and developing strategies which enable women to gain more control over their lives and allow them to determine gender relations which are more acceptable to them.

Source: Adapted from Moser (1993)

Policy approaches to gender equality

Over the years, a number of policy approaches have been adopted in efforts to address gender inequalities. Table 2 provides a summary of each of these approaches. The GMS draws upon a number of aspects of the equity, anti-poverty and empowerment approaches, while taking them a stage further by advocating a system-wide gender mainstreaming strategy which engages the entire state machinery in partnership with non-state stakeholders.

Gender-sensitive policies

Government policies may fall into one of three possible types: gender-neutral, gender-specific or gender-aware/redistributive/transformative. These can be distinguished as follows (adapted from Kabeer, 1994):

◆ **Gender-neutral policies** are those that are seen as having no significant gender dimension. However, government policies seldom if ever have the same effect on women as they do on men, even if at first sight they may appear to exist in a context where gender is irrelevant. Thus policies which may appear to be 'gender-neutral' are often in fact 'gender-blind', and are biased in favour of males because they presuppose that those involved in and affected by the policy are males, with male needs and interests. *Example*: a policy to extend credit to small enterprises which does not address constraints women face in obtaining such credit.

◆ **Gender-specific policies** take into account gender differentials, and target women or men specifically, but leave the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact. *Example*: a micro-credit scheme that targets women.

◆ **Gender-aware/redistributive/transformative policies** seek to transform existing gender relations by changing the distribution of resources and responsibilities to make it more equitable. These policies are the most politically challenging, because they involve altering the existing balance of power between men and women, but they also go the furthest towards addressing not only practical gender needs but strategic gender interests as well (adapted from Kabeer, 1994).

3 The Enabling Environment

The establishment and operation of a Gender Management System requires an enabling environment. When the enabling environment is weak, a major task of the GMS is to strengthen it. There are a number of interrelated factors that determine the degree to which the environment in which the GMS is being set up does or does not enable effective gender mainstreaming:

+ political will and commitment to gender equality and equity at the highest levels;
+ commitment to such global and regional mandates as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development;
+ a constitutional and legislative framework conducive to advancing gender equality;
+ the presence of a critical mass of women in decision-making positions in the political, public and private sectors;
+ a well-developed and autonomous civil society and the role it can play in advancing gender equality; and
+ adequate human and financial resources, including donor aid and technical assistance.

This section looks in greater detail at these elements of the enabling environment.

Political Commitment

Political commitment at the highest levels among governments is an essential element of a strong enabling environment for gender mainstreaming and the setting up of a Gender Management System. Political commitment is manifested in a number of ways:

+ the implementation of globally and regionally agreed principles, frameworks and strategies for achieving gender equality (e.g., Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender Equality);
+ adequate resourcing of the National Women's Machinery and of programmes to promote gender equality; and
+ the placement of the NWM in a central location with a high level of political status and influence on policy and decision-making.

Where governments lack political will, the following tendencies can result:

+ placing the entire responsibility for change on women themselves;
+ treating the NWM as a token of good intentions rather than a serious element in the creation of gender-aware social justice and development;
+ expecting the NWM to be a programme delivery agency for 50 per cent of the population, despite meagre human and financial resources and in the absence of appropriate management and procedural measures;

- requiring the NWM to raise external funds to operate or continue to operate (Ashworth, 1994: 5); and
- significant disparities between women and men in a range of sectors within the country, including politics, law, finance, education, health, agriculture, trade, industry, information and communications, and others.

This can place a number of constraints on the operations of a NWM[1]:
- inadequate funding and dependence on international donor aid;
- lack of staff;
- inadequately trained staff;
- inability to meet demands;
- lack of co-operation with or understanding from other government ministries;
- no national advisory body on gender equality;
- unclear policy; and
- political pressure.

Where political will is lacking, it becomes the task of the NWM to promote and strengthen political will through lobbying, advocacy, and gender training and awareness raising. In these activities it should seek the collaboration of like-minded officials within government and of NGOs, the academic community and other stakeholders in civil society.

Lobbying and advocacy of this kind are greatly assisted by the availability of sex-disaggregated data that can form the basis of a gender analysis of existing conditions within the country. Lobbying is effective when it includes a clear statement of the problem, backed up by sound statistical data. This is one reason why the GMS emphasises gender analysis as a key mechanism.

The GMS is not a rigid system; it is designed to be adapted to suit national circumstances. Where the overall environment is not particularly favourable for gender mainstreaming, a GMS may be established in a particular ministry, department, or group of ministries which have a strategic advantage in terms of the enabling environment they offer. Identifying the best strategic entry points for the GMS is one of the tasks of the feasibility study and stakeholder analysis which begins the process of setting up a GMS (see Section 5).

Global, Regional and National Mandates

Commonwealth member states are parties and signatories to a number of international agreements that bear upon the issue of gender equality. One role of Gender Management Systems is to ensure, at the national level, the implementation of the gender equality components of these frameworks.

The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing provided a renewed global commitment to achieving gender equality and equity. The final clause of the Beijing Declaration states, "We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programmes." In the post-Beijing period, many governments are receptive to gender mainstreaming and the concept of a Gender Management System as a strategy for accelerating the attainment of gender equality. In effect, a GMS both helps to create enabling conditions for gender mainstreaming and enhances an enabling environment where it already exists.

Box 3	International Agreements Pertaining to Gender Equality and Equity

- ✦ the Beijing Platform for Action, and the Regional Platforms for Action;
- ✦ the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development;
- ✦ the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies;
- ✦ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- ✦ UNCED's Agenda 21 (Environment);
- ✦ the Vienna Declaration (Human Rights);
- ✦ the Cairo Programme of Action (Population and Development);
- ✦ the Copenhagen Plan of Action (Social Development); and
- ✦ the Istanbul Plan of Action (Housing and Settlements).

Resources

The effective implementation and monitoring of a Gender Management System requires resources. It should not be seen as primarily the responsibility of the National Women's Machinery to provide these resources. A GMS should be funded by the national government, guided by the Lead Agency in co-operation with the Gender Management Team and the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (see Section 4).

As with other aspects of the GMS, defining and securing resources requires planning. In planning resource needs, it is important to determine what are the gaps between requirements and availability, how those gaps will be filled and what it will cost to fill them. The main categories of necessary resources are human and financial, and secondary resources which include supplies, services, facilities and equipment.

Human resources

Key among the activities of a Gender Management System with implications for the use of human resources and other complementary resources are:

- ✦ **administration** – the planning, co-ordination, evaluation and management of the system. As a GMS will make different and additional demands on people's time, it is critical to put adequate administrative support in place.
- ✦ **training** – from gender-sensitivity training through to more specialised gender training programmes, e.g., Gender and Macroeconomic Planning, Training for Policy-Makers, or Gender and Health training will require a range of gender expertise and training materials, facilities, equipment and supplies. A Training Needs Analysis is crucial to the establishment of an appropriate programme to build capacity.
  So as to develop local resources and build sustainability, the training of trainers should be carried out. This will enable wide coverage of all sectors of the population in gender-awareness.
- ✦ research data/information – the collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of information for planning and advocacy will require personnel with the appropriate skills. In some situations, redeployment may be a workable approach.

The Lead Agency requires basic office equipment and technology such as computers, a fax machine, a photocopier, telephone lines and storage of information relating to a Gender Management System. Access to a meeting room should also be ensured.

These resources may be procured from government and from arrangements with international development agencies. The GMS may play a catalytic role in attracting funding or technical inputs from other international agencies. When the services of outside experts are required by the Lead Agency, an important aspect of the experts' work should include local counterpart training or mentoring to build a residential capacity. Gender or Women's Affairs units will also be utilising resources of other ministries and departments, such as the Statistics Office, tertiary educational/training institutions and other organisations.

Financial resources

A budget should be allocated to the Lead Agency. Extra-budgetary funding sources external to government may be secured from international sources. Line ministries should also make provisions from their own budgets for gender-awareness training and to cover the additional responsibilities of Gender Focal Points.

Ideally, financial resources should be sufficient to ensure that gender training can be undertaken for a wide range of sectors within the population, including parliamentarians, public sector personnel, young people, and as many group and organisational leaders as possible.

Legislative Framework

An enabling environment includes the existence of a legislative framework which contains no unfair gender-discriminatory provisions and promotes women's rights as human rights. In some countries, the task of a Gender Management System will include putting in place the desired legislative framework.

Legal and statutory frameworks can empower NWMs to function legitimately and to stake a claim to budgetary resources for the discharge of their roles, mandates and duties. They also underscore the fact that political, economic, social and cultural arrangements are entwined with public policy. A GMS has the task of placing gender analysis within the legislative and policy process and, by so doing, enabling not only the NWM but all agencies of government to address gender needs and interests, and ensure that gender-sensitive public policies are developed. If a GMS is to enable a complex set of policy responses based on assessment of the different impacts that policies have on women and men, then one of its primary functions must be to address the problem that in many countries, the legislative authority for NWMs is virtually non-existent or at best, weak and ineffective.

Of even greater importance is the existence of a legal framework which includes equal employment opportunities Acts, anti-sex discrimination laws which include provision of day-care facilities and other support services, laws on violence against women, ownership of land and property, inheritance, etc.

This legitimises the efforts of social partners working towards gender equality and equity, and also creates a mechanism for corporate, state and individual accountability. The legal framework establishes a rights perspective and renders women as claimants rather than as beneficiaries. It sets standards and delineates categories of people or institutions who are obligated to fulfil these rights and entitlements. It enables women to negotiate their rights at the personal and societal levels.

Critical Mass of Women in Decision-Making Positions

The position of women in decision-making at the highest levels in political institutions, government and the public sector is another critical factor that can impact on the functioning of a Gender Management System. Where institutions are heavily male-dominated, it is more difficult to create the culture needed to advance gender equality.

In the Commonwealth, the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women stood at 7.2 per cent in 1995, well below the global average of 12.1 per cent. No Commonwealth country has reached the critical mass of 30 per cent women in national parliaments. In 1996, more than half of Commonwealth countries reported that their Cabinets comprised less than 10 per cent women. The statistics for local government were more encouraging, with some countries having 30 per cent or more women (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996).

By the year 2005, at least 30 per cent of those in decision-making roles in the political, public and private sectors should be women. That target, recommended by Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers in 1996, was endorsed by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1997, and is consistent with the target set by the UN Economic and Social Council.

An important task of a Gender Management System is to help increase the participation of women in decision-making. A Gender Management System should address the question of women's relative lack of power in the public sphere, and their low representation in the highest institutions of political power and decision-making, i.e., national, provincial or state, and local government.

Civil Society

The changes that the Gender Management System is designed to bring about affect not only the government but every element of the broader civil society. For example, women's rights to choice and decision-making in the private sphere are indivisible from women's rights in the public sphere. A woman's status within the family and her right to personal choice will determine her economic, social and political participation in the public sphere.

The GMS therefore does not exist in isolation. It seeks to build a partnership between government and a wide range of stakeholders in civil society, including academic institutions (such as women's studies or gender and development departments), NGOs and professional associations, and the media. Many of these stakeholders will be represented in the National Gender Equality Commission/Council or similar body, which plays a key role in advocacy and monitoring on the progress of advancing gender equality, and should where possible have a representative on the Gender Management Team.

The extent to which gender equality is accepted within civil society and the influence and credibility enjoyed by women's groups are key factors that determine how easy it will be to set up and operate a GMS. At the same time, civil society contributes to the operation of the GMS through the National Gender Equality Commission/Council and partnerships between the government and non-state stakeholders at the sectoral level.

The Role of the Commonwealth Secretariat

The Commonwealth Secretariat has an important role to play in creating the enabling environment for gender mainstreaming, through its consultative mechanisms and processes, including:

 ◆ consensus building on gender equality/equity at meetings at the highest level of the Commonwealth, including Heads of Government Meetings, and Meetings of Ministers responsible for Education, Finance, Health, Law, Women's Affairs and Youth; Senior Officials Meetings; etc.;

 ◆ institutionalising new structures and mechanisms within the Secretariat in order to mainstream gender into the programmes and activities of all divisions, e.g., the Gender Steering Committee made up of Divisional Directors; Gender Focal Points;

 ◆ co-operation between Secretariat Divisions and their counterparts in Commonwealth government ministries; and

 ◆ developing and piloting new methodologies and hosting regional and international symposia on a number of cutting edge issues, e.g., engendering national budgets, promoting the human rights of women, engendering local and national politics, and conflict prevention and resolution.

As gender mainstreaming is a long-term strategy which requires long-range planning and expertise, it is advisable that National Women's Machineries without the necessary capacity seek outside technical assistance, from multilateral, bilateral and other funding bodies.

Notes

1 These negative features were identified in a number of National Women's Machineries in Commonwealth Caribbean countries, where they were linked explicitly to an absence of political will towards gender equality (Gordan, 1984).

4 Gender Management System Structures and Mechanisms

The structure of a Gender Management System is a network of various bodies and their interrelationships. The mechanisms of a GMS consist of the various roles, responsibilities and functioning of these bodies. The structure and mechanisms of a GMS are sometimes collectively referred to as institutional arrangements.

The GMS puts in place a systemic and integrative approach to gender analysis. Through its structures, mechanisms and processes, it aims to ensure that the development, analysis and implementation of government policies and programmes are undertaken with an understanding of gender differences.

The structures presented here are intended not as a rigid prescription, but rather as a flexible model which governments can adapt to particular national circumstances. The actual structures set up by governments implementing a GMS will reflect those circumstances and the strengths and opportunities that exist at the national level. In some countries, structures similar to these may already exist and be amenable to adaptation along the lines of the GMS.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholders in a Gender Management System are groups, organisations and institutions which have a stake or interest in or are affected by the National Gender Action Plan. The key stakeholders are responsible for, or can significantly influence, the successful implementation of the Gender Action Plan. The GMS should ensure that relevant stakeholders are identified and consulted on an ongoing basis and not exclusively in the policy development stage.

Key state and non-state stakeholders include:
+ the National Women's Machinery;
+ all government ministries and departments, including but not limited to Finance, Development Planning, Public Service, Agriculture, Health, Education, Energy, Environment, Foreign Affairs, Legal Affairs, and Trade and Industry;
+ development NGOs representing women's interests;
+ university-based gender and development departments;
+ inter-governmental organisations and donor agencies; and
+ women, men and young people in the broader civil society.

Other stakeholders may include:
+ politicians;
+ the judiciary;
+ the media;
+ law enforcement officials;
+ trade unions;

◆ the private sector;
◆ professional organisations;
◆ religious organisations; and
◆ youth organisations.

Efforts to include a broad-based group of stakeholders in the implementation of the GMS are important for a number of reasons:

◆ **participatory goals** – past experience suggests that involving stakeholders in consultative processes creates a greater likelihood that the policies, programmes and projects will be devised to meet the real needs and interests of beneficiaries.

◆ **societal goals** – the Commonwealth vision of advancing gender equality and equity concerns all of society; the realisation of this vision demands a broadly-based national constituency committed to effecting gender equality and equity of outcomes in all government policies and programmes.

◆ **efficiency goals** – efficient use of existing resources and successful policy implementation depends upon those who are most affected having a stake in and feeling committed to government policies, programmes and projects. Supported by the mechanisms and structures of the GMS, stakeholder analysis – involving the participation of key stakeholders themselves – will enable key stakeholders to acknowledge both shared and divergent interests, and will facilitate a process of consensus-building around the goal of gender equality and equity.

The Gender Management System recognises the strategic importance of building partnerships with social actors at all levels. Key stakeholders should be allowed to articulate their perceptions, needs and priorities; gender balance in interest representation should be sought, taking into consideration that women and men may have unequal access to and control over appropriate resources to participate in decision-making structures.

Consultation with key stakeholders should take place not only at the project level, but also in connection with national level dialogues on government policies and programmes. Such partnerships are necessary to ensure the co-ordination of the various stakeholders' approaches to gender concerns, and the widest possible participation; to share skills, experience, expertise, responsibility and accountability; and to avoid duplication and wastage of resources. Partnerships increase the outreach of the Gender Action Plan, and capture the diversity that exists within society.

In addition to consultation with state and non-state actors within the country and Commonwealth contexts, co-operation and co-ordination with bilateral agencies, the UN system, and financial institutions should be increased. Such actors are potentially important partners in the support and promotion of gender equality, and efforts should be made to ensure that all collaborative initiatives are informed by gender analysis.

Further, partnerships and teamwork instil a shared commitment to change and ownership of outcomes among government, international organisations and non-state partners. Commonwealth governments need to inform development partners about the Gender Action Plan and the GMS and to update themselves on the policies and programmes of other agencies. There should be complementarity between the various partners at every stage of the policy development, planning and implementation process in order to co-ordinate efforts, expand resources, increase influence, and avoid duplication.

Lead Agency

Success in setting up and implementing a Gender Management System is contingent upon having an influential Lead Agency which can initiate dialogue with the key

stakeholders on the need for a gender mainstreaming strategy to accelerate the achievement of gender equality. In most governments, gender issues fall within the purview of a National Women's Machinery (NWM). This can take the form of a ministry, a department, a bureau, a desk, or an individual. Whatever the case, the NWM is almost certain to be best placed to lead the setting up and operating of a Gender Management System.

Functions

The Lead Agency initiates and strengthens the institutional arrangements of the Gender Management System and is responsible for the overall co-ordination and monitoring of the GMS. It advocates for change and works to impact upon policy decision. It plays a strategic and catalytic role, introducing critical gender concerns into the policies, plans and programmes of the core and sectoral government agencies, ensuring that key targets and indicators on the status of women are agreed upon and met, managing the flow of information on gender issues and communicating policy changes and results.

The NWM is also best placed to spearhead programmes and activities at the cutting edge of the gender and development field, for example, increasing women's participation in political decision-making; exploring issues of democracy, human rights and sustainable development; holding government accountable for the implementation of international commitments; and monitoring the impact of these measures.

A strong National Women's Machinery is important for gender mainstreaming because it must be able to function as a strategic and co-ordinating unit with the required experience and expertise in the areas of gender integration, gender planning and project management. A strong and effective NWM will have personnel with technical expertise in gender issues, skilled in administration/co-ordination, project management, training, research, information management and dissemination, and evaluation.

A strong NWM may be identified through the following features:
+ a clear and achievable mandate, with sufficient scope and flexibility to address a broad range of issues;
+ explicit political legitimacy, management scope and authority, and a central and stable position within the structure of government, such that the Minister for Women's Affairs (or equivalent) participates directly in mainstream policy and decision-making processes;
+ the allocation of sufficient funds, human resources, training and information; and
+ a broad internal structure, with strong and formal linkages with other ministries and agencies of government (Ashworth, 1994: 5).

National Women's Machineries within the Commonwealth take a range of different forms and reflect varying levels of strength or weakness. The first step in setting up the institutional arrangements of a Gender Management System is therefore to assess the institutional capacity of the NWM in a given country. The second step may be the strengthening of the NWM, if necessary.

The strengthening process focuses initially on analysing internal development and structure, and the scope for forming partnerships with other branches of government and with the wider civil society. However, as national machineries strengthen themselves and become more systemic, integrating gender through interactive planning rather than merely 'adding on' women-in-development projects to existing

plans, their role becomes more that of synthesising ideas relating to gender in policy formulation and implementation, and communicating them to other parts of the overall government system.

Gender Management Team

The core government ministries which are of strategic importance to achieving gender equality and equity are the Executive Office of the President or Prime Minister and the ministries of finance, planning, public service, and legal affairs. Their strategic importance justifies their membership on the Gender Management Team. Sectoral ministries that are of particular importance in the national context, or that are strategically placed to effect change, may also be included on the GMS team for the same reason.

The Gender Management Team could therefore comprise the Permanent or Principal Secretaries of the National Women's Machinery and the ministries of finance, planning, public service, justice/legal affairs, and any other ministries that are considered to be of key strategic importance. Where possible the Gender Management Team should also include a representative of civil society, such as the Chair or other senior member of the National Gender Equality Commission or similar body.

The identification of individuals to serve on the Gender Management Team needs to be done strategically. Where possible individuals should be selected who:
+ believe in and care about the advancement of gender equality and equity;
+ understand the power and gender dynamics within society and within government;
+ have sufficient political clout and influence to produce real change; and
+ have access to sound, high-quality empirical data.

Functions

The Gender Management Team's responsibilities include developing the GMS concept in the national context, thus providing the Gender Management System with broad operational policies, indicators of effectiveness and timeframes for implementation. The Team should seek to expand the scope of gender mainstreaming throughout the various sectors of government. Consensus regarding conflict resolution and problem-solving procedures, mechanisms and ethics should also be determined by the Team.

Other functions of the core ministries include identifying, in collaboration with the Lead Agency, what are the required results from gendered policies and relating these to the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action and the Commonwealth Plan of Action; identifying points in the mainstreaming process where technical assistance will be required and determining the financial and material resources necessary for a Gender Management System.

Members of the Gender Management Team should receive training in gender-sensitivity, analysis and planning as appropriate. An orientation to the role and responsibilities of the Gender Management Team should include information on the outcomes of Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers' Meetings. The Team should also test the assumptions underlying its work, regarding such issues as the reliability of information systems, democratic styles of management, and concepts of participation, among others.

Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee

The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee comprises senior staff from the National Women's Machinery and the Gender Focal Points of all other ministries (see below). Its exact composition is determined by the specific allocation of portfolios within the country. Chaired by a representative of the core government ministries, the committee reports to the Gender Management Team. This committee represents a broad-based, second level management team. Even so, sectoral representatives should be high enough in the hierarchy to influence policy.

Functions

The role of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee is to ensure that the goal of gender equality and equity is taken up in all ministerial programmes. Its responsibilities include setting sector goals regarding gender mainstreaming. Regular meetings to review sector performance as an aspect of monitoring should generate reports on gender integration which should include opportunities, obstacles and lessons learned. The members of this Committee should, like those of the Gender Management Team, be oriented into their role through gender training.

All sectoral ministries, without exception, should be represented on the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee. Table 2 shows some of the key gender issues in a number of sectors. The work plans of these and all ministries should reflect gender goals.

Gender Focal Points

Gender Focal Points are designated senior members of staff within each ministry/department/division, who are either directly involved in, or able to influence, their sector's planning process.

Functions

The responsibilities of Gender Focal Points include the following:
+ sitting on the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee;
+ providing support for the development of gender-sensitive policies and programmes;
+ serving as in-house gender advocates, experts or resource persons, sharing information with their colleagues and advocating the implementation of the Gender Action Plan within their ministry/department/division;
+ conducting sector-specific, quantitative and qualitative analyses of gender disparities;
+ collecting and disseminating information and best practices;
+ in collaboration with the National Women's Machinery, supporting the functioning of the Management Information System; and
+ in collaboration with the Gender Management Team, assisting in monitoring and evaluating progress in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

The Gender Focal Point is often the main agent for facilitating gender mainstreaming on a day-to-day basis within an institutional structure. Supported by the structures and mechanisms of the GMS, and the political commitment to gender equality represented by the Gender Action Plan, the Gender Focal Point plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the GMS.

In order to strengthen the capacity of the Gender Focal Points, efforts need to be made to:

◆ ensure that Gender Focal Points in all ministries/departments/divisions are senior staff;

◆ provide Gender Focal Points with gender training that is both general and sector specific, to increase their competence in gender analysis and to provide the analytical tools necessary to engender their ministry/department/division's policy and planning processes and programme implementation;

◆ provide Gender Focal Points with skills/expertise in the area of monitoring and evaluation;

◆ support Gender Focal Points, especially in larger departments, by either employing additional gender experts with sector-specific skills or engaging qualified external gender experts; and

◆ ensure that the work of Gender Focal Points is not carried out on an *ad hoc* basis but written into their terms of reference (job descriptions) and reflected in resource allocation.

An important aspect of the work of Gender Focal Points is the socialisation of gender knowledge and experience, which should be seen not as static, but as continually advancing. It should therefore be communicated through regular meetings and other means such as newsletters as part of the ongoing process of promoting gender-awareness. Thus a key feature of the methodology of training and development of Gender Focal Points is the sharing and documentation of experiences.

In some countries, it may be appropriate to group Gender Focal Points in the larger ministries into a Gender Unit for that ministry. For example, the Ministry of Public Works in a particular government may consist of several thousand staff members. The process of mainstreaming gender in such a ministry and addressing the gender needs of its staff cannot be achieved by one individual alone, but requires the resources of a fully staffed Gender Unit.

Gender Caucus in National Parliament and Local Government

Although some countries have too few women at parliamentary and local government levels to effectively promote a gender mainstreaming strategy, many other countries do have adequate numbers. It is anticipated that as countries seek to address the objective of increased access to power and decision-making by women, the new millennium will see more women in national parliaments, provincial and local governments.

A Gender Caucus is a useful structure if a good number of gender-sensitive women and men are in parliament or local government. In parliament, the Caucus serves to introduce a gender perspective on issues being debated. Members of the Caucus can lobby support among their colleagues, articulate issues in parliamentary debates and generate public support through the media, political parties, NGOs and other entities.

The Caucus may act as a catalyst for affirmative action in the political arena by: reviewing laws that discriminate against women or that are insensitive to gender interests; lobbying to bring about action on specific issues of concern to female constituents; and campaigning to have 'safe' seats allocated to women.

At the local government level, the Caucus may consider such steps as: undertaking gender audits of local government structures and programmes; promoting mentoring programmes for women who are active in the political arena; and ensuring a gender balance in committees and community meetings.

Table 3 **Gender Issues in Sectoral Ministries**

	Issues
Finance	Points of entry for gender mainstreaming in the finance sector include: ongoing macroeconomic management, including the annual budget cycle, the fiscal deficit, external and internal debt, and the balance of payments; structural reforms to improve the efficiency of resource use and support poverty alleviation, particularly in approaches to deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation; and the specific context of credit liberalisation and the provision of micro-credit. Barriers to gender mainstreaming include: insufficient analytic clarity regarding the Ministry of Finance's work and its changing role as a result of globalisation and economic liberalisation; lack of clear understanding of how gender is linked to that role; non-conducive institutional structures and ethos of Ministries of Finance; and insufficient capacity among women's organisation to engage effectively in macroeconomic policy debate.[a]
Development Planning	Planning processes that are partial and anti-cyclical have tended to contribute to increasing gender inequalities and the 'feminisation of poverty'. Development needs to be understood as human development, i.e., in terms not only of economic development but also of health and education, and needs to be measured using gender-sensitive indicators. Mainstreaming gender in the development planning process entails integrating a gender perspective in each of the main planning cycles of government – the macro/sectoral policy cycle, the annual budget cycle, the aid cycle and the project cycle – in order to produce a gender-sensitive medium-term development plan. The planning process should include the participation of the beneficiaries.[b]
Public Service	The three strategic points of entry for gender mainstreaming in the management of public service personnel are the Public Service Commission, the central personnel office, and the line departments. Between them, these institutions are responsible for appointments and promotions, setting terms and conditions of employment, discipline, and staff training. Policy issues in this area include: eliminating gender-based discrimination as regards pay; ensuring an adequate gender balance in decision-making roles; determining equitable conditions of employment; ensuring disciplinary measures are devised and applied equitably; eliminating sexual harassment; providing gender-awareness training at all levels; ensuring equity in the availability of all training options; establishing partnerships with NGOs and the academic community; providing incentives for good performance and sanctions for practising gender discrimination; and adopting, where possible, a broad-based multi-pronged equal employment opportunities policy to address these issues.
Agriculture	Agriculture, a major sector of the economy in many developing countries, is heavily populated by women in subsistence farming, market vending and informal trading. Although both women and men are employed in this sector, the norm of unwaged work for women, men and children needs to be addressed in the context of gender roles and responsibilities, access and control of resources and counting unwaged work in national accounts. Issues relating to global and regional free trade agreements which include restructuring the agricultural sector and the impact of such restructuring on women and men also need to be addressed by the GMS. In terms of gender equity, there is a particular need for advances to be made in three areas: land tenure, access to credit and technology, and the equal participation of women and men in policy-making and planning processes.
Trade and Industry	Traditional perceptions of the capacities of women can hamper their equal access to trade and management training, entrepreneurial development credit and finance. Many women lack the personal confidence as well as technical skills experience and financial resources to enter aggressively into the business environment. Gender imbalances in the staffing of Ministries of Trade and related bodies need to be addressed; the Ministry of Trade should offer incentives to encourage private sector businesses and parastatal enterprises to take up gender as a priority issue and to increase recruitment of women into management level posts. Legal, administrative and policy issues include: the constitutional and legal aspects of commercial operations; property rights, licensing, and company registration; access to credit and financing; and trade-related human resource development, including equal access to training.[c]
Health	There is growing recognition of the need to acknowledge the different health experiences and health care needs of women and men. Priorities should include objectives emanating from the International Conference on Population and Development in such areas as reproductive health and the empowerment of women. STDs and HIV/AIDS require special gender focus, as do primary health care services. Countries in which structural adjustment policies have eroded health services, causing additional burdens on women to provide health care at the household and community levels, should factor this reality in the renewal processes of the health sector. Many Ministries of Health include environmental management and population policies in their portfolio. The relationship of these areas to gender should be reflected in sector plans and programmes.

Table 3 *continued*   **Gender Issues in Sectoral Ministries**

	Issues
Education	Educational institutions are agents of socialisation, therefore all factors relating to the socialisation process need to be analysed from a gender perspective. In most developing countries, more women than men comprise the human resources of this sector, especially at the level of classroom teachers. However, at the level of policy-making and senior management, typically there are more men. Integrating gender into education policies and plans should address such issues as literacy, enrolment, access to education, attainment, legal and administrative frameworks, the organisation of schools and classrooms, increasing the numbers of women managers, policy-makers and decision-makers, teacher training, curriculum development, textbook-stereotyping, and male marginalisation in some areas.
Information/ Communications	The governmental information service should serve as the GMS's state-level media on gender affairs. Efforts to raise the gender-awareness of writers, reporters and editors need to focus on the following critical areas: *Language*: authors and editors need to examine current conventions, use non-sexist language to avoid perpetuating questionable attitudes and assumptions about gender roles, and substitute more precise usages. *Stereotyping*: Women in positions of influence are often tagged with stereotypical labels, or described in terms of their physical appearance, while male colleagues are described in terms of achievements. This delegitimises the achievements of such women. *Story selection*: Many stories about women are never told because they are not given importance, or because there is no effort to find out what women are doing or what their views are. Questions that need to be asked by media practitioners include: Who gets coverage? From what angle? Through which lens? Are stories helping to advance women's place in society or are they angled in ways that uphold traditional inequalities? Are women's concerns being separated from those of society in general?[d]

a Sen, 1999
b Taylor, 1999
c O'Regan-Tardu, 1999
d Ross-Frankson, 1999

Gender Equality Commission/Council

The building of effective partnerships between the National Women's Machinery and non-state actors in civil society is essential to the functioning of a Gender Management System. This partnership with civil society's key stakeholders can take a number of forms, one of the most useful of which is a national Gender Equality Commission or Council.

The Gender Equality Council provides a direct link between the National Women's Machinery and the constituency representing the interests of gender equality in the wider civil society, through its representative on the Gender Management Team.

The Council should include representatives of a cross-section of organisations which support the goals of the Gender Management System:
 ✦ development NGOs representing women's/gender interests;
 ✦ university-based gender and development centres;
 ✦ labour unions and professional associations
 ✦ political parties and groups;
 ✦ national private sector organisations, (e.g., Chambers of Commerce);
 ✦ the media (which may be represented by the government information service and/or leading private media organisations);
 ✦ other key groupings within civil society, such as religious organisations; and
 ✦ inter-governmental donor organisations.

This membership reflects the need for critical advisory support for the GMS, the exchange of experiences and the sharing of skills, expertise and other resources in order to facilitate the process of mainstreaming. It will also help promote the interests of non-state actors in the policies, plans and programmes of government ministries.

GMS Mechanisms

The GMS structures are between them responsible for implementing all the processes and mechanisms of the GMS. In particular, the Lead Agency, the Gender Management Team and the Gender Focal Points are responsible for ensuring that the GMS applies the appropriate mechanisms to achieve its goals. These mechanisms apply the communication, awareness, boundary and incentive 'levers of change' that will produce real changes within an organisation.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is the process by which the differential impact on women and men of development policies can be discerned. It involves the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data which reveals the different status, conditions, roles and responsibilities of women and men. This data is fed into the policy process, to enable assessments of the differential impact of existing policies and programmes on women and men. Gender analysis also involves assessing how gender-inequitable power relations may impact on the achievement of a range of development goals including the goal of gender equality and equity.

Gender analysis needs to be both quantitative and qualitative. The use of gender-sensitive indicators in such areas as demographics, patterns of human settlement, households and families, education, health, economic activity, access to land and credit, legal rights, gender-based violence, and macroeconomics can provide useful quantitative data which should be complemented by qualitative data including historical and socio-cultural analyses that help to clarify the 'why' as well as the 'what' of gender differences in a given society, and put forward concrete strategies for change.

Gender training

Gender training is necessary in order to build capacity in gender analysis and gender planning, to raise levels of gender awareness and to increase gender sensitivity.

A number of measures should be taken to improve the quality and scope of gender training:
+ capacity-building in gender awareness and gender analysis should be undertaken throughout government structures, not only in the social sectors;
+ gender training should include both more general gender-sensitisation exercises and substantive, sector-specific training exercises directly related to knowledge gaps identified by policy-makers themselves;
+ gender training should be regular and ongoing;
+ gender training should include briefing on the GMS, explaining its mainstreaming aim and its component parts;
+ since the promotion of gender-awareness is a cumulative process, gender training should not be seen as a 'one-off' exercise but should be provided at regular intervals in an ongoing programme.

Management Information System

The Management Information System is the repository and clearing house for all information relating to the establishment and functioning of the GMS. Its function is to gather, synthesise and disseminate information on the goals, activities and achievements of the GMS and on other topics relating to gender mainstreaming and the advancement of gender equality and equity.

The Management Information System is normally the responsibility of the National Women's Machinery, which sets it up and maintains it in collaboration with the Gender Focal Points. However, in cases where the NWM is not strong enough to develop and maintain a Management Information System, support should be provided from the Gender Management Team (from one of the core government ministries). The Management Information System works closely with the government statistical agency or census bureau. It promotes and develops the use of sex-disaggregated data based on gender-sensitive indicators to provide material for gender impact analysis, policy appraisal, and monitoring and evaluation.

The Management Information System also works closely with the government information agency and with media contacts to disseminate information regarding gender mainstreaming and the GMS. This may be achieved through a periodical (monthly or quarterly) information sheet, bulletin or newsletter. Information that should be made available includes:
+ relevant gender analysis methodologies;
+ gender checklists and tools;
+ best practices and relevant research findings;
+ gender training materials;
+ information and guidelines on gender-sensitive indicators and data collection;
+ sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data;
+ information on project management and monitoring;
+ regularly updated information on staff arrangements for and functioning of the GMS.

Innovative methods for collecting, documenting, storing, retrieving and disseminating such information should be devised. Appropriate resources should be made available for such efforts, which play a key role in transforming the institutional belief systems and organisational culture.

Performance Appraisal System

In collaboration with the government's central personnel office (Ministry of Public Service or Public Service Commission) and sectoral ministries, a gender-sensitive performance appraisal system should be set up to measure changes in individual and departmental standards of achievement of the goals of the Gender Management System. In particular, it should measure the extent to which individual staff members have acquired gender awareness (e.g., through training) and have applied such awareness in their work (e.g., through the achievement of gender goals or the institution of gender-specific programmes). This information should form part of the criteria for career advancement.

Incentives do not necessarily have to be financial; for example, gender-awareness awards of merit, publicised through the Management Information System, could help to transform the institutional culture to one that is more gender-aware and more supportive of gender equity goals.

5 Gender Management System Processes

This section sets out three interrelated processes in a Gender Management System:
+ establishing a GMS;
+ developing and implementing a national Gender Action Plan; and
+ gender mainstreaming and engendering the National Development Plan.

Table 4   **Establishing a GMS**

	Important Interventions
1	Feasibility Study/Stakeholder analysis, including assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the enabling environment
2	Feasibility Study Report tabled in Cabinet
3	Review of National Gender Action Plan – integrate a gender mainstreaming perspective into the Plan in consultation with key stakeholders, and seek approval at Cabinet level through the NWM
4	Engendering of the National Development Plan through the implementation of mechanisms defined in the National Gender Action Plan (refer to Taylor, 1999)
5	Setting up of GMS Structures: + Gender Management Team + Gender Focal Points/Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee + Gender Caucus in Parliament + Gender Equality Commission/Council + Management Information System
6	Strengthening of the National Women's Machinery to act as Lead Agency in implementing the GMS
7	Development of a gender mainstreaming training programme in collaboration with higher education/training institution(s) at the national or regional level
8	Building of gender analysis/planning expertise in the different sectors in government, towards engendering their sector plans
9	Establishment/strengthening of linkages between the NWM and other state and non-state stakeholders: + parliamentarians + NGOs, academic institutions, media, etc.
10	Establishment of monitoring and evaluation, and reporting mechanisms
11	Development of a programme of public awareness through the media
12	Networking with donor agencies (inter-governmental, other multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the private sector), to find resources for the GMS and gender mainstreaming

These processes are interdependent and overlapping. Since each country has its own gender priorities, needs and circumstances and has attained its own degree of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the GMS does not prescribe a single procedure to

be used in all countries. The processes described in this section are designed to be adapted according to individual country circumstances.

Establishing a GMS

The process of setting up a GMS is normally initiated by the National Women's Machinery. The main steps in the process are shown in Table 4.

Feasibility study and stakeholder analysis

The first step in setting up a Gender Management System is to carry out a feasibility study. This may be carried out by the Lead Agency or by a technical expert hired on a consultancy basis or provided through an international donor agency.

The feasibility study should include an analysis of the situation regarding gender equality and equity in all sectors. It should review government decision-making structures, mechanisms and planning processes and identify the major links between government and non-state actors. It should identify what elements of the enabling environment for a GMS are present, and in what strengths. In particular, it should examine the resources available to determine the degree to which establishing a GMS is feasible in the particular national context. If the enabling environment is not strong enough to support a complete GMS across all ministries and sectors, the feasibility study should attempt to identify specific ministries/sectors that could provide strategic entry points for gender mainstreaming.

The study should include an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the National Women's Machinery, and make recommendations on strengthening it to act as the Lead Agency in a GMS. It should also identify existing GMS-related structures and propose how they may be strengthened and integrated into a GMS.

A stakeholder analysis provides valuable information for the feasibility study and for the ongoing functioning of a GMS. A list of stakeholders and their interests should be drawn up, to identify who should take part in ongoing consultation processes throughout the GMS. A stakeholder analysis will determine the extent to which there are gender-aware decision-makers and the gender balance of groups represented in the GMS structure. It will also help ensure that the GMS process includes a representative group of state and non-state actors.

Stakeholders may have different 'stakes' based on gender differences or socio-economic status. There will be both 'winners' and those who experience or perceive 'losses' as an outcome of gender mainstreaming. The GMS accepts the reality of power imbalances among different stakeholders – particularly power inequalities based on gender – and provides structures and mechanisms to decrease the social distance between stakeholder groups and to redefine issues so as to create new perspectives on gender equality.

The following checklist of questions can help identify and clarify stakeholders' interests:
+ What do the stakeholders expect of the Gender Management System?
+ What benefits are there likely to be for stakeholders?
+ What resources will the stakeholder wish to commit or avoid committing to the GMS?
+ What other interests does the stakeholder have which complement or conflict with the GMS?
+ What is the relationship between the stakeholder and the other GMS stakeholders?

The sustained success of a GMS depends, in part, on the capacity of its stakeholders to acknowledge and accommodate the various objectives to be met in the process of mainstreaming gender without losing sight of the mission and the goal of gender equality. Hence, a stakeholder analysis will help to define the most appropriate strategy for implementing a GMS.

Prioritising goals

The pursuit of gender equality objectives is a dynamic process beginning from existing circumstances and moving towards the ideal. A Gender Management System seeks to remove the problem of gender inequities by altering the environment in which such inequities are created and sustained. Past experience has shown that piecemeal solutions to gender inequality are not sufficient; therefore, the GMS seeks to place gender on the agenda at all levels, targeting gender-based discrimination and injustice on all fronts simultaneously.

However, the systemic and structural change sought by the GMS will not be achieved overnight. It is necessary to prioritise goals carefully, and to aim for what is achievable. The accomplishment of a relatively modest goal will yield greater results than the failure to achieve a goal that was set unrealistically high.

The task of prioritising goals will be made considerably easier by the use of a stakeholder analysis and by analysis of the comparative status of women and men in all aspects of the life of the country. Once that information has been compiled, decisions can be taken as to the strategic points of entry for gender mainstreaming where success is most likely to be achieved.

An examination should be made of the GMS structures, mechanisms and processes as described in this handbook to determine which are the most useful and appropriate in the national context, and the easiest to establish, or to adapt from existing structures. This will inform the decisions as to which structures and mechanisms to prioritise in establishing the GMS. A simple approach is a SWOT analysis – identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats inherent in each area where the GMS is expected to have an impact, and prioritising the areas accordingly.

A similar analysis, based on the findings of the feasibility study, stakeholder analysis, and other information about gender differences within the national population in all sectors, should be applied to conditions in the broader civil society, so as to determine what are the most critical problems that need to be addressed in order to advance gender equality and equity. For example, two critical problems might be discrimination against women in the legal framework and constitution, and women's lack of political participation. Both of these would ultimately need to be addressed through the GMS, but it might be considered that, for example, the former problem is easier to address than the latter. It should therefore take the higher priority in the Gender Action Plan.

A further example is that of a country in which there is a high level of resistance to gender mainstreaming in government because of a general lack of awareness of the nature and extent of gender inequalities within the country. In that case, gender analysis and gender training can be identified as the priority mechanisms for bringing about the required change in awareness.

Points of entry for gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming should ideally be undertaken in all government ministries and departments. However, where political will or resource availability does not permit

this, it may be possible to mainstream gender within particular ministries or sectors, according to strategic national priorities.

For example, the Commonwealth Secretariat is assisting a national government in the mainstreaming of gender in the health sector, in a case where health was considered to be of particular strategic importance for the advancement of gender equity. Another strategic point of entry may be finance and macroeconomic planning.

In most cases, regardless of the specific national priorities, the National Development Plan is a key strategic point of entry for gender mainstreaming. Since this document informs sectoral planning and decision-making, it can, if made gender-aware and responsive to differing gender needs, be of cross-cutting influence in promoting gender mainstreaming within the various sectors (refer to Taylor, 1999).

Setting up or strengthening GMS structures and mechanisms

The setting up or strengthening of the GMS structures and mechanisms may include the following concrete steps:

+ institutionalising the GMS through identification of the Lead Agency; making appointments to the Gender Management Team and designing its work schedule; ensuring that sectoral ministries nominate their Gender Focal Points and determining the meetings schedule of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (e.g., quarterly);
+ liaising with the Gender Equality Commission Council or similar body (or establishing such a body if none exists) to identify their representative for a Gender Management Team;
+ ensuring that stakeholders represented in GMS structures meet regularly (i.e., not just in the policy developing and planning stage, but also throughout the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and in its monitoring and evaluation);
+ setting and meeting targets for women in decision-making roles in the political, public and private sectors; and
+ ensuring that all the members of the GMS structures (particularly the Gender Management Team and the Gender Focal Points) receive gender training.

Senior staff have heavy demands on their time, and that there may be resistance to getting involved with activities that some may regard as of lesser importance. It is important to emphasise that gender mainstreaming is as much about 'doing the same things differently' as it is about 'doing different things'.

Organisational and management culture

The leadership, culture and management practices of institutions should support gender equality and equity. These affect how gender concerns are institutionalised as well as the opportunities for organisational change. If the leadership and management style is gender discriminatory and insensitive to gender power relations, then implementation of policies and projects to address gender inequalities will be subverted. The extent to which senior managers are able to change their own management style and transform the culture of their organisations will depend on the success of gender-awareness training and the application of the three levers of change – the information lever, the transformational lever and the boundary/incentive lever (see Section 2).

The following administrative measures will support the aims of the GMS:

+ ensure the implementation of any existing government policy on gender balance in staffing, particularly in senior management posts;

◆ ensure that the performance appraisal system used by the central personnel office includes indicators to measure performance on implementing the goals of the GMS;

◆ ensure that as many staff as possible receive gender-awareness training, and include gender awareness as a criterion for promotion and recruitment to key posts; and

◆ implement work practice changes to promote a more family-friendly environment for all staff.

The Gender Action Plan

The structures, mechanisms, and processes of a GMS should be seen as an integrated network. The Gender Action Plan – an important indicator of a government's commitment to gender equality – is a central component of this network. In countries where a national Gender Action Plan exists, the GMS should help to ensure that the plan is effectively implemented; this may involve revising and further developing the plan to promote a gender mainstreaming approach. In countries that are in the process of developing a national Gender Action Plan, the GMS may be equally helpful as a means of giving shape to the plan.

The Gender Action Plan is designed to ensure that concrete measures are taken at the national level to achieve the goals set in the policy development process. The Gender Action Plan should act as a complement to the National Development Plan and to other ongoing initiatives to make government decision-making processes more equitable including, for example, Commonwealth efforts to integrate gender into national budgetary processes. The Gender Action Plan should also include provisions for the engendering of the National Development Plan.

Gender analysis

The starting point for the Gender Action Plan is gender analysis. The feasibility study and stakeholder analysis carried out at the beginning of the process of establishing a GMS should include much of the significant analysis that is necessary for the formulation of the Gender Action Plan.

A Gender Action Plan is more than a technical, rule-driven exercise. It sets in motion a process that is socio-political in nature, challenging traditional planning assumptions, and providing consistent guidelines on how to mainstream gender issues effectively. The Gender Action Plan should include:

◆ a policy statement and sectoral plans to mainstream gender in all policies, plans and programmes in all sectors of government;

◆ a policy statement with clear goals and objectives, including sectoral targets, which reflect national priorities in relation to international and Commonwealth action plans and which include such critical areas as women's economic empowerment, the participation of women in political decision-making, and women's rights as human rights;

◆ a strategy and timetable for the revision of existing policies and administrative procedures to bring them in line with the goals of the Plan. This may include legislative or administrative instructions or procedures from the highest political authority and accountability measures to elicit and sustain effective participation at all levels in the implementation of the Plan;

◆ broad guidelines on engendering macroeconomic and sectoral government policies and programmes, which reflect the priorities of the Plan and outline how to put them into operation;

◆ a strategy and timeframe for the review of national legislation and practices to

eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex, and to adopt necessary legislation for promoting and protecting women's human rights; and
+ a strategy for the mobilisation of resources – human, technical and budgetary – to support the priorities of the Plan.

More specifically, the Gender Action Plan should provide clear guidelines on measures to be taken in each of the following areas:
+ setting up or strengthening the GMS structures and mechanisms;
+ engendering the work plans of all government ministries;
+ timeframe for implementation; and
+ indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

Implementing the Gender Action Plan

The following initiatives are important for the successful implementation of the Gender Action Plan through the Gender Management System:
+ securing political and administrative commitment at the highest level, including that of the President, Prime Minister, Cabinet, individual ministers or equivalent office holders, and senior managers;
+ putting in place integrated structures and mechanisms, and appropriate administrative processes and procedures, including accountability measures, to implement the Plan;
+ securing partnership and collaboration among the key stakeholders; and
+ developing an effective monitoring and evaluation process.

Other initiatives in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan include:
+ designing and implementing a programme of training which combines gender analysis with briefings on the management of change through the GMS;
+ research and information dissemination through the Management Information System; and
+ an effective communication strategy to raise public awareness about and support for the Gender Action Plan, particularly through partnerships with the media.

A timeframe should be established for the Gender Action Plan. This should be flexible, with phased targets and deadlines, preferably on a yearly basis to coincide with the national sectoral development planning process.

Promoting the Plan

Although extensive participation and consultation, as described above, is necessary in developing the Gender Action Plan, this will not suffice for the promotional arrangements required to ensure that information about the Plan is disseminated throughout the country. Raising the public's awareness to the level of acceptance of the principle of equality and equity between women and men requires communications planning. This is critical to the success of a Gender Management System because the first step to awareness is visibility. Promoting gender integration as a national agenda to which government is actively committed sends a powerful message. It is only through effectively publicising the work of a Gender Management System that successes can be made visible, problem areas identified, effective strategies shared and replicated, and negative responses to the programme openly acknowledged and addressed.

The Management Information System will assist in developing a communications strategy which will launch timely and targeted communications campaigns on a regular basis to promote the objectives and goals of the Gender and Development Action Plan and convey the mission of the GMS to the media. The media are a

stakeholder in the Plan's development, and have a special role in promoting it.

The communication strategy should seek to:
+ inform public opinion of the need for gender mainstreaming;
+ build and promote the advocacy efforts of a Gender Management System;
+ keep women's concerns high on the national agenda and bring more women's voices into the national policy-making process;
+ create opportunities to address national priorities in the context of international and Commonwealth plans of action by sponsoring roundtables, workshops, strategy meetings and news bulletins to coincide with such events as International Women's Day; and
+ build a partnership with the media that will engender media sensitivity and ensure sustainable access by women's groups, Commonwealth Broadcasting Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs to the media and their technology. Long-term media programmes which consistently raise awareness of gender issues are preferable to short-term, sporadic interventions.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Gender Action Plan

The Gender Action Plan includes clear and measurable goals for gender equality, including sectoral targets, as well as concrete strategies to reach these goals. Once the plan has been developed, it can serve as a benchmark in tracking the country's success in achieving the goals identified. Monitoring and evaluation require the use of impact indicators to measure the outputs and performance of all government ministries and departments, and track the allocation of resources.

The Gender Management Team, in collaboration with the National Women's Machinery, should play a primary role in monitoring and evaluation. This will enable the range of representative GMS stakeholders to remain involved in the process and to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan on an ongoing basis. The National Women's Machinery, as the institutional home for the Management Information System, will be responsible for overseeing the collection and analysis of data on key gender-sensitive indicators which, in the first instance, should be reported quarterly to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, and annually to Parliament.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming involves the following areas:
+ re-evaluating the structures and functions of the Gender Management System;
+ reviewing key gender-sensitive indicators in all sectors, especially in the areas of macroeconomics, political decision-making, and the legal and social status of women in the national context, as well as health, education, agriculture and other sectors;
+ fulfilling reporting obligations under CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development; and
+ feeding findings into the next planning cycle.

The information requirements for monitoring and evaluation should be met by the full range of stakeholders in the GMS: the National Women's Machinery, the Gender Management Team, Gender Focal Points, government ministries and non-state organisations. The Management Information System's role is to co-ordinate the necessary information flows, to enable the Gender Management Team to collate and synthesise the results into an evaluation of the progress of the GMS of gender mainstreaming within government, and of the advance towards gender equality and equity in the national setting.

Evaluating the GMS

This is largely the responsibility of the Gender Management Team. Questions that need to be asked include:

+ Are all the GMS structures in place and functioning correctly?
+ How often do they meet?
+ Are the desired results being achieved and do they satisfy the indicators of effectiveness?
+ To what extent are these results furthering the long-term goals of the GMS?

The information should be collected by the team leader and reviewed with the team. If progress falls short of what was planned, corrective actions should be taken. This information should be stored in the information system for retrieval when monitoring intervals come around.

During the setting up of the GMS, provision should be made for external evaluation. This should be repeated at regular intervals, perhaps every three to five years, in line with the national development planning cycle. Evaluation should deal with all aspects of programme preparation, design, background, objectives and results, assumptions and risks, implementation, operation and impact. Recommendations should be made concerning either the programme itself or similar programmes in future.

Mainstreaming Gender in the National Development Plan and Sectoral Ministries

The following schema provides guidelines on methods to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in each stage of the planning cycle. The guidelines can be applied to planning cycles in all sectors. It is particularly important to apply them to the National Development Plan.

Figure 2 shows the main stages in the preparation of a gender-sensitive National Development Plan in the medium term. The preparation of gender-sensitive macro and sectoral papers is dependent upon the use of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis.

Planning cycles can generally be seen as having five stages, as shown in Figure 3. The inclusion of a gender perspective in the different stages of each planning cycle will help to create gender-aware policies, plans, programmes and projects.

Using gender analysis

The GMS emphasises the importance of gender analysis in government decision-making, procedures and actions. This involves analysis of the differential impact on women and men of the National Development Plan and other government policies, plans and programmes.

In the first instance, gender analysis should be undertaken by the National Women's Machinery and by Gender Focal Points in all ministries and departments. Their findings will be reported to the GMS Management Information System and acted upon by the Gender Management Team on an ongoing basis.

Through its various resource materials, the Gender Management System Series provides a set of guidelines for gender analysis and mainstreaming within specific government ministries and sectors. These resource materials are underpinned by an understanding of the potentially differential effects of government policies,

Figure 2   **The Main Stages in Preparing a Gender-Aware Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP)**

1	**Approval by Cabinet of initial approach and timetable for Development Planning Process**	The need for promoting gender equality through the MTDP should be explicitly stated.
2	**Preparation of initial macro framework**	Using available sex-disaggregated data to assess recent performance and current status of the economy and social development in the country, prospects for the medium and longer term, and their implications for government expenditure targets. This is viewed against social needs and pressure points that could cause political and economic turbulence. Gender status and analysis is critical in this framework, which should be developed in close consultation with NGOs, other civil society partners and the private sector.
3	**Macro Issues Paper to be considered by Cabinet**	A short paper to: ◆ brief Cabinet (and senior officials) on the economic and social situation, and the comparative position of women and men. ◆ present alternative scenarios for the country's economic performance over the MTDP, with corresponding scenarios for public expenditure to address gender inequality. ◆ identify main macroeconomic and sector policy issues that the next MTDP needs to address. Mainstream strategic gender interests into these or prepare a paper on Gender and the Macro Framework. Cabinet reactions to the macro issues paper are reflected in drafting gender-sensitive guidelines for sector papers.
4	**Sector Issues Papers to be considered by Cabinet**	To be prepared by the sector concerned including women's/gender sector. Papers should be very short, alerting Cabinet to the main sector issues and its impact on gender relations and gender inequalities and the important trade-offs that must be considered.
5	**Detailed Macro Framework Paper with expenditure guidelines**	In the light of reactions to the initial macro paper and to the sector issue papers, Cabinet is presented with a detailed macroeconomic and development paper which proposes overall economic and public expenditure projections for the MTDP period and also proposes a sectoral allocation of resources to serve as the framework for drafting of sectoral chapters and expenditure proposals for the MTDP. This paper should include a gender focus – addressing inequalities and promoting gendered planning in respect of resource allocations.
6	**Preparation of draft chapters, expenditure proposals and proposed projects**	Drafts to be prepared initially by the sector ministries. Development planning departments/agencies should assess objectives in terms of mainstreaming gender into all plans, policies and outcomes and refer back to sectors if gender analysis is missing.
7	**Review of draft chapters, preparation of consolidated expenditure programmes**	Co-ordination between central resource agencies (Planning, Finance, Personnel) in reviewing sector proposals and preparing consolidated expenditure programme. Expenditure programme and review process to be co-ordinated with annual budget preparation. Ensure that tools are built in at this stage to monitor and evaluate the impact of the programmes in promoting gender equality and equity.
8	**Approval of full draft by Cabinet**	Overall editing by Planning Agency and submission of full draft to Cabinet for final approval. Prioritise gender, class, race/ethnicity as criteria to assess relevance of proposals. Cabinet to have a set of guidelines to measure proposals within criteria.
9	**Presentation to Parliament**	MTDP submitted to Parliament for full debate and approval. Parliament to understand the criteria (gender, race/ethnicity, income inequalities) and guidelines used to approve policy/plan.

Source: Taylor, 1999.

programmes and legislation on women and men that are often obscured by the assumption that policies are gender-neutral. Effective policy development, planning, implementation and evaluation is based on accurate information and incisive analysis of the heterogeneity of the people involved in and affected by government policy.

The comparative strength of the GMS lies in the possibility it offers of incorporating gender analysis as an integral part of the development of policies, programmes and legislation, in a participatory process involving a range of stakeholders. The GMS brings together representatives from constituencies of women and men most affected by government policies with decision-makers from core economic ministries whose commitment to gender mainstreaming is crucial for the successful implementation of the Gender Action Plan. Particular emphasis is placed on gender analysis of:
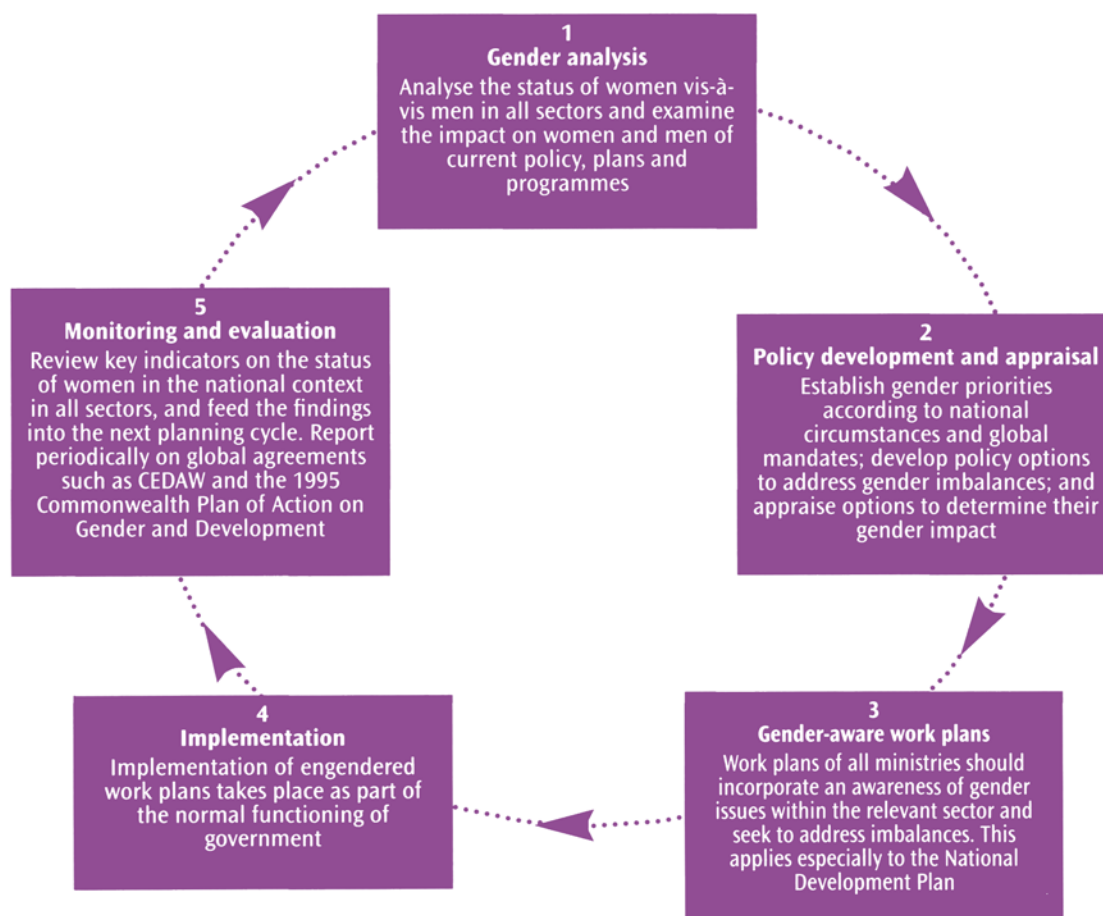
+ macro-economic policy and national budgetary processes;
+ development planning;
+ constitutional and legal provisions;
+ public sector reform and public service personnel management; and
+ sectoral policies.

Using GMS structures for policy development

The interrelated processes of policy development, planning and implementation can be described as follows:

+ policy-making is the process of social and political decision-making about how to

Figure 3   **Promoting Gender Awareness at Each Stage of the Planning Cycle**

1
Gender analysis
Analyse the status of women vis-à-vis men in all sectors and examine the impact on women and men of current policy, plans and programmes

2
Policy development and appraisal
Establish gender priorities according to national circumstances and global mandates; develop policy options to address gender imbalances; and appraise options to determine their gender impact

3
Gender-aware work plans
Work plans of all ministries should incorporate an awareness of gender issues within the relevant sector and seek to address imbalances. This applies especially to the National Development Plan

4
Implementation
Implementation of engendered work plans takes place as part of the normal functioning of government

5
Monitoring and evaluation
Review key indicators on the status of women in the national context in all sectors, and feed the findings into the next planning cycle. Report periodically on global agreements such as CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development

allocate resources for the needs and interests of society which ends in a policy strategy;

+ planning is the process of implementation of the policy, with the end being a clear plan; and

+ implementation is the process of administrative action to deliver the programme designed, often resulting in a completed product (Moser, 1993: 6, quoted in Taylor, 1999).

This section describes the GMS approach to policy development. The challenge of the GMS is to help close the gap between commitments to gender equality articulated in gender policy statements and the full attainment of these goals.

An overall framework for gender-aware policy development is provided by the commitments, obligations, and guidelines of:

+ CEDAW;

+ the Beijing Platform for Action; and

+ the Commonwealth Plan of Action.

The Management Information System seeks to ensure that government policy, programmes and legislation reflect the commitments embodied in these international agreements. Information about globally and regionally agreed principles, frameworks and strategies for achieving gender equality will therefore be a central resource of the GMS.

The GMS makes the assumption that the process of policy development and implementation is as important as its content. The ongoing participation and input of representative stakeholders is a key element in the making of gender-sensitive policy. It is through partnerships nurtured by the GMS structures that ownership can be developed and political commitment maintained and translated into resource allocation or other administrative decisions, including securing the accountability of key stakeholders. If policy is not formulated through a participatory process involving key decision-makers and social actors within and across sectors, there may be insufficient commitment to its implementation and goal attainment.

One of the key roles of the Gender Management Team is to guide policy development. The development of a gender-aware National Development Plan and a Gender Action Plan should be undertaken with the full consultation of all stakeholders, particularly those in the Ministries of Planning and Finance.

The GMS also provides a means of integrating gender concerns into sectoral policy-making processes, an essential component of any serious attempt at gender mainstreaming. The members of the Gender Management Team, assisted by their respective Gender Focal Points, should strive to ensure that policy-makers in sectoral line ministries are gender-aware and, if necessary, receive gender training.

The national development plan sets the overall macro-economic objectives, sectoral emphases and budgetary allocations for the country. Gender planning should not be seen as a separate, parallel process to mainstream development planning, but should be designed to reorient development planning such that it addresses the needs of women and poor people generally through an economically, physically, environmentally and socially sustainable process in a progressive manner (Taylor, 1999).

Engendering macroeconomic planning: A major point of entry for mainstreaming gender into macroeconomic planning is through the national budgetary process. National budgets are policy documents that consolidate a country's approach to economic growth, redistribution and human development (Bakker, 1997). A gender-

Box 5	**Stakeholder Involvement in Policy Development**

Special efforts should be made to include minority or marginalised groups in policy consultations. In many countries, grassroots women and their organisations form the backbone of the productive sector but are frequently and easily overlooked in the formulation of such plans. Steps to involve them should include:

✦ workshops at the community level, such that women's situations and time constraints are taken into consideration;

✦ support to women's organisations and local NGOs in the form of resources, capacity development and advocacy skills;

✦ use of local languages;

✦ use of participatory processes and networking; and

✦ ongoing collaboration with NGOs active at the local level.

The involvement of a broad range of stakeholders at the very early stages of the policy development process should help to overcome some of the problems associated with earlier attempts to integrate women in mainstream development plans – namely that the integration of women led to an 'add-on' approach to existing policy frameworks rather than a critical analysis of the political, social and institutional framework that underpinned gender inequality and a recognition of the need for transformative policy initiatives.

neutral approach to the budget may lead to lower economic efficiency, lower output, lower development of people's capacities and lower well-being. Integrating gender into national budgets, and into macro-economic policy, involves taking into account the unpaid work done by women, which is vital to the smooth running of the economy but is not generally measured in economic statistics such as GNP. Expertise in the collection of time-use data and the valuation of unpaid work will need to be developed, supported by the Lead Agency and statistical bureaux, to ensure that the GMS effectively supports efforts to engender the national budgetary processes. The policy implications in terms of budget transfers will need greater attention by gender experts.

There are two other important points of entry for gender mainstreaming in macroeconomic policy: one is at the level of structural reforms to improve efficiency and reduce poverty, especially in the areas of deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation; the other in the specific area of credit liberalisation and the provision of micro-credit (Sen, 1999).

Gender-aware work plans

The GMS structures and mechanisms are designed to facilitate an integrative approach to gender planning. Through the Gender Management Team and the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, key decision-makers and stakeholders in the development of the National Development Plan and macro-economic and sectoral policies and plans will be brought together on a regular basis.

One outcome of the implementation of the GMS should be that the National Development Plan and the individual work plans of all government ministries should be gender-aware and work to redress gender imbalances.

Monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan and sectoral work plans

The monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan and sectoral plans should incorporate a gender perspective. This requires the use of gender-sensitive

Box 6	Tools for Gender Integration into Macroeconomic Policy

The Commonwealth Secretariat is developing a series of policy options for integrating gender into national budgetary policies in the context of economic reform. The policy options centre on six possible tools:

✦ **sex-disaggregated beneficiary assessments** – a research technique whereby groups of women are asked how, if they were the Finance Minister, they would slice the national budgetary pie; the results are compared with the existing budget to see how closely it reflects women's priorities

✦ **sex-disaggregated public expenditure incidence analysis** – this involves analysing public expenditures in such areas as health, education and agriculture to see how such expenditures benefit women and men, girls and boys to differing degrees

✦ **gender-aware policy evaluation of public expenditure** – evaluating the policy assumptions that underlie budgetary appropriations, to identify their likely impact on current patterns and degrees of gender differences

✦ **gender-aware budget statement** – a modification of the Women's Budget; this is a statement from each sectoral ministry or line department on the gender implications of the budget within that sector

✦ **sex-disaggregated analysis of the impact of the budget on time use** – this looks at the relationship between the national budget and the way time is used in households, so as to reveal the macroeconomic implications of unpaid work such as caring for the family, the sick and community members, collecting fuel and water, cooking, cleaning, teaching children and so on

✦ **gender-aware medium-term economic policy framework** – medium-term macroeconomic policy frameworks are currently formulated using a variety of economy-wide models which are gender-blind. Approaches for integrating gender could include: disaggregating variables by gender where applicable; introducing new variables incorporating a gender perspective; constructing new models that incorporate both national income accounts and household income accounts reflecting unpaid work; and changing underlying assumptions about the social and institutional set-up for economic planning.

indicators to compare actual achievements at various levels against the objectives, as well as qualitative analysis of the gender impact of plans, programmes and projects, on both practical and strategic gender needs. The findings of such monitoring and evaluation exercises should be made available to the GMS Management Information System, to enable cross-sectoral analysis.

Feeding findings into the next planning cycle

Monitoring and evaluation should not be seen as isolated activities that exist solely for the purpose of determining how successful a policy, programme or project has been. The findings of monitoring and evaluation exercises should feed back into the policy analysis and development phase of the next cycle. The Gender Management System, by virtue of its network of participants connecting the National Women's Machinery to other government ministries, provides links by which such feedback can be established.

Reporting on CEDAW and the Commonwealth Plan of Action

International agreements such as CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development include mechanisms for governments to report to the respective intergovernmental organisations on a range of gender-related indicators. This process helps governments to retain a focus on the gender issue and maintain the thrust towards gender equality. The fulfilment of reporting requirements under CEDAW provides an opportunity for governments to examine progress in gender

mainstreaming in such areas as empowerment and political decision-making, violence against women and women's human rights, and legal and cultural matters.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's mechanisms include the Secretary-General's Reports on the Implementation of the Plan of Action on Gender and Development. to Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings, Senior Officials' Meetings, Women's Affairs Ministers' Meetings, meetings of the Steering Committee of Senior Officials, etc. These reports are based on responses to questionnaires sent to National Women's Machineries.

6 Gender Mainstreaming at the Commonwealth Secretariat

This section reviews the gender mainstreaming arrangements in place at the Commonwealth Secretariat. While such arrangements necessarily change in the course of time, they stand as experiences which can provide input into future efforts towards gender mainstreaming.

Within the Commonwealth Secretariat, a multi-pronged strategy is being used, the key components of which are as follows:

Political Will

Heads of Government

The 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development was endorsed at the highest level by the Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Auckland (CHOGM, 1995). It had previously been adopted by Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs (WAMM) at the Beijing Conference. A review of the progress made on the implementation of the Plan of Action is now a permanent item at CHOGM, WAMM and meetings of Senior Officials.

Ministerial meetings

Engendering the agendas of Commonwealth ministerial meetings (Finance, Health, Education, Law and Youth) is a requirement of the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development. For example, the Health Ministers' Meeting (South Africa, December 1995) focused on the theme of Women and Health, which included workshops on Health for Women and Women for Health, field visits and agreed upon a comprehensive action plan. Regional or sub-regional governmental meetings, such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), need to be encouraged to insert gender as a permanent agenda item.

Structures/Processes

The structures set in motion within the Secretariat to facilitate gender mainstreaming include the following:

Women's Affairs Ministers' Meeting (WAMM)

A progress report on the implementation of the Plan of Action is submitted by the Secretary-General to the triennial meeting of the Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs (WAMM). On the eve of WAMM, the Steering Committee on the Plan of Action (SCOPA), consisting of Heads of National

Women's Machineries, meets to review the Progress Report of the Secretary-General and to propose strategies and interventions to WAMM to take the agenda forward.

Gender and Youth Affairs Division

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Gender Equality Programme, formerly one of 15 programmes became in 1996 one of four overarching sections under which all Secretariat activities are addressed (the others being political, developmental and administrative). As the administrator of the Programme, the Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD) therefore has a unique cross-cutting role within the Secretariat.

Under the Plan of Action, GYAD has been allocated the central role in the Secretariat in all matters affecting gender equality. These include:
- co-ordinating the 1995 Plan of Action and facilitating its implementation by both governments and the Secretariat;
- providing reporting and monitoring mechanisms on the implementation of the Plan of Action for governments and the Secretariat;
- providing advice on gender mainstreaming and cutting-edge gender issues to governments, the Secretariat, international and regional multilateral organisations, Commonwealth organisations and NGOs;
- planning and implementing special projects relating to the priority areas of the Plan, in collaboration with relevant Divisions of the Commonwealth Secretariat. This involves developing tools and methodologies, piloting them in the four regions of the Commonwealth, and fine-tuning them for world-wide dissemination. It also involves training and capacity-building, primarily at the regional and pan-Commonwealth levels;
- organising programmes at the cutting edge of emergent new gender issues, building Commonwealth consensus and developing policies, strategies and approaches to be adopted by Commonwealth governments; and
- representing the Secretariat in major regional, national and international meetings on issues of concern to women.

Gender Steering Committee (GSC)

This Steering Committee, made up of Directors of Divisions and chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General (Economic and Social Affairs), was established to meet on strategic Gender and Development issues within the Secretariat. The GSC is responsible for gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the Plan of Action throughout the Secretariat.

The Committee meets bi-annually to review the performance reports of Divisions submitted to the Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD). This review process entails analysis of performance evaluation, perusal of outcomes achieved, assessment of obstacle met, distilling of lessons learned, and proposing new solutions, approaches and strategies to move forward. Following this, a progress report is presented to the Management Committee and the Secretary-General by the Chairperson of GSC.

One of the biannual meetings of GSC takes place prior to the meeting of the Steering Committee for Senior Officials (SCOSO) to which the GSC submits a written progress report through the Secretary-General.

Gender Focal Points

Under the Plan of Action, Directors of Divisions are responsible for the integration of gender in their programmes and sub-programmes. Towards this end, they have

appointed Gender Focal Points (GFPs) – professional staff specially trained in gender planning – to assist with the monitoring and implementation of the Plan of Action within their Divisions. GFPs provide critical assistance to Directors in achieving Division-wide understanding and consensus on integrating gender into their work plans and ensuring the integration of the nine Secretariat-wide measures into their programmes.

Each division nominates one of their Gender Focal Points at the level of Deputy Director. In addition, the three Senior Executive Assistants to the Deputy Secretaries-General, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) Regional Centres and the Development Advisers' Office in South Africa, are all incorporated into the Gender Focal Points system to support the integration of gender into their respective functions and programme activities. The GFPs meet quarterly.

Strategic Planning and Evaluation Unit (SPEU)

SPEU is responsible for the ongoing evaluation of Secretariat activities and for gender planning and evaluation training. SPEU has encouraged Divisions to plan strategically on gender issues by including a gender focus in the strategic planning process for the three-year Secretariat Work Plan 1997-2000. It also includes a gender perspective in the terms of reference for evaluation studies and in Secretariat monitoring procedures.

Administration Division

Administration in collaboration with GYAD reviews the recruitment process of the Secretariat to identify strategies to increase the participation of women in the diplomatic and professional staff grades. Strategies being implemented include:
+ specifying that female applicants are particularly welcome and that the Secretariat is an Equal Opportunity Employer in advertisements for Secretariat vacancies;
+ expanding the list of gender experts on the Secretariat Roster;
+ circulating advertisements for Secretariat vacancies to National Women's Machineries; and
+ including women on interview boards.

Equal Employment Opportunities Policy

The Secretariat has reinforced its commitment to the Plan of Action with the preparation of an Equal Employment Opportunities Policy. Issues of importance to gender include:
+ the use of positive and affirmative action where necessary in recruitment and selection (including promotion);
+ reviewing relocation and induction packages;
+ responding to claims of harassment; and
+ providing practical support to women and men with dependants.

Gender training

Gender training within the Secretariat is being approached through collaboration among three Divisions (SPEU, GYAD and Administration) and includes the following:
+ gender planning workshops for senior and middle management – Deputy Secretaries-General, Heads of Division and Heads of Department;
+ gender policy, evaluation and planning seminars for professional staff and Gender Focal Points; and
+ gender-awareness training for support staff.

This programme is being complemented by a process of Division-specific gender training and skills enhancement introduced by GYAD.

Technical assistance

The General Technical Assistance Services Division (GTASD) is responsible for general technical assistance to Commonwealth governments. GTASD also facilitates the process of setting up Gender Management Systems in member governments. The Gender and Youth Affairs Division reviews proposals received by GTASD on gender projects and proposes appropriate gender-aware consultants. The other Divisions under the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC) – namely the Management and Training Services Division (MTSD), the Export and Industrial Development Division (EIDD) and the Economic and Legal Advisory Services Division (ELASD) – also provide sectoral technical assistance to member governments. National Women's Machineries of Commonwealth governments are encouraged to take advantage of gender-sensitive technical assistance available through the CFTC. Lists of experts submitted to governments by the CFTC for the purpose of selecting suppliers of technical assistance always include at least one woman.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At the level of the Secretariat

There is monitoring and evaluation of the gendered policies, plans and programmes of all divisions within the Secretariat, to ensure equality and equity of opportunities and outcomes. All policies and procedures relating to Human Resources will be monitored, e.g., equal employment opportunities, recruitment and selection procedures, training, promotion, transfers, etc.

At the level of Commonwealth governments

By request, the Secretariat monitors the implementation of Gender Management Systems through the following means:

✦ use of the Secretary General's Report on the Implementation of the Plan of Action on Gender and Development – reflecting levels of implementation of the Plan in Commonwealth countries;

✦ governments should include reports of progress on the implementation and achievements of Gender Management Systems and the effectiveness of the co-ordinating role of the Lead Agency to Women's Affairs Ministers' Meetings. This information would subsequently be incorporated into the Secretary-General's Report to Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meetings on the Plan of Action;

✦ reports from NGOs and the private sector on the progress of gender mainstreaming in their respective organisations and sectors should be encouraged in the monitoring process. Salient aspects of these should also be incorporated into national reports;

✦ questionnaires submitted by the Commonwealth Secretariat to NWMs; and

✦ field visits by Secretariat staff and/or consultants.

Technical assistance from sectoral divisions to member governments should include, in their terms of reference, tasks relating to an evaluation of the use, application and impact of the Gender Management System.

At the level of the National Women's Machinery, taking into consideration components discussed earlier, the Women's Bureau should take a leading role in co-ordinating the monitoring and evaluation of the Gender Management System by:

✦ providing regular reports on the progress of implementing the GMS;
✦ assessing the impact of the different actors involved in the GMS on their constituencies; and
✦ collecting sex-disaggregated data and statistics.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's assistance in developing an initial operational strategy may include developing sector specific instruments/tools for:
✦ engendering policies, plans and programmes;
✦ development of indicators for the collection of gender-disaggregated data;
✦ monitoring and evaluation of the different sectors; and
✦ inter-agency (ComSec/UNDP/UNIFEM) collaboration, making use of comparative advantage in gender training; in the design and development of methodologies and modalities; in project monitoring and evaluation. For example, one agency may take the lead on the design and delivery of gender training at different levels for specific sectors in consultation with policy-makers at national and sub-regional levels, as appropriate. Another agency may develop methodologies to support sub-regional sharing of experiences and lessons learnt in implementing a GMS and may design modalities of strategies and best practices. The design of monitoring instruments and evaluation techniques and tools may be the undertaking of another agency.

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Appendix 1 *Glossary of terms*

Activities

Work undertaken during a project or programme to obtain results.

Evaluation

Objective assessment (during or after project) of the background, objectives, results, activities, and means used with a view to drawing lessons that may be more widely applicable.

Gender

Gender can be defined as the set of characteristics, roles and behaviour patterns that distinguish women from men which are constructed not biologically but socially and culturally. The sex of an individual is biologically determined, whereas gender characteristics are socially constructed, a product of nurturing, conditioning, and socio-cultural norms and expectations. These characteristics change over time and from one culture to another. Gender also refers to the web of cultural symbols, normative concepts, institutional structures and internalised self-images which, through a process of social construction, define masculine and feminine roles and articulate these roles within power relationships.

Gender analysis

Quantitative gender analysis is the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data which reveals the differential impact of development activities on women and men, and the effect gender roles and responsibilities have on development efforts. Qualitative gender analysis is the tracing of historical, political, economic, social and cultural forces in order to clarify how and why these differential impacts, roles and responsibilities have come about.

Gender-aware/redistributive/transformative policies

Gender-aware/redistributive/transformative policies seek to transform existing gender relations by changing the distribution of resources and responsibilities to make it more equitable. These policies involve altering the existing balance of power between men and women, addressing not only practical gender needs, but strategic gender interests as well.

Gender-inclusive language

This is language which challenges the assumption/tradition that masculine nouns, pronouns and adjectives include both male and female. Examples of gender-inclusive language are 'staff-hours' (rather than 'man-hours'), 'he or she' (rather than 'he'), and 'his or her' rather than 'his'. Gender-exclusive language, by subsuming the female in the male, acts as both a cause and an effect of the invisibility of women's contribution.

Gender mainstreaming

This term may be conceptualised in two different ways: on the one hand it is an integrationist strategy which implies that gender issues are addressed within the existing development policy, strategies and priorities. Hence, throughout a project cycle, gender concerns are integrated where applicable. On the other hand, mainstreaming also means agenda setting, which implies transformation of the existing development agenda using a gendered perspective. These two concepts are not exclusive and actually work best in combination.

Gender-neutral policies

These are policies that are seen as having no significant gender dimension. However, government policies seldom if ever have the same effect on women as they do on men, even if at first sight they may appear to exist in a context where gender is irrelevant. Thus policies which may appear to be gender-neutral are often in fact gender-blind, and are biased in favour of males because they presuppose that those involved in and affected by the policy are males, with male needs and interests.

Gender perspective

Gender perspective is a way of (a) analysing and interpreting situations from a viewpoint that takes into consideration the gender constructions in society (for women and men) and (b) searching for solutions to overcome the gaps.

Gender-sensitive indicators

An indicator is statistical measurements that show the change in a particular context over a given period of time. A gender-sensitive indicator is therefore a measurement of gender-related change over time. For example, a gender-sensitive indicator could show the change in the status of women in a particular area, relative to men and over a period of, say, a decade. Gender-sensitive indicators can therefore be used to measure the effectiveness or success of a GMS.

Gender-sensitivity

Gender-sensitivity refers to perceptiveness and responsiveness concerning differences in gender roles, responsibilities, challenges and opportunities.

Gender-specific policies

These policies take into account gender differentials, and target women or men specifically, but leave the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact.

Gender training

Gender training is a systematic approach to sharing information and experiences on gender issues and gender analysis, aimed at increasing understanding of the structures of inequality and the relative position of men and women in society. This goes beyond awareness building to actually providing people with the knowledge and skills that they need in order to change personal behaviour and societal structures.

National Women's Machinery

This is a single body or complex organised system of bodies, often under different authorities, but recognised by the government as the institution dealing with the promotion of the status of women.

Practical gender needs

These emanate from the actual conditions women and men experience due to the roles ascribed to them by society. Often, women's practical gender needs are related to roles as mothers, homemakers and providers of basic needs. Meeting the practical gender needs of women and men does not necessarily change their relative position in society.

Project cycle

The term 'project cycle' refers to the phases of a project: programming (idea/concept of a GMS); identification of enabling conditions (pre-feasibility); formulation (filling enabling gaps/feasibility); implementation and monitoring; evaluation (interim, end-of-project, ex-post).

Resources

These are the various inputs necessary to carry out planned activities. A distinction is drawn between human, material and financial resources.

Sex-disaggregated data

This is data collected – via questionnaires, observation or other techniques – that reveal the different roles and responsibilities of men and women. Having data disaggregated by sex is extremely important to being able to assess the impact of a project on women separately from its impact on men.

Strategic gender needs

These relate to women's empowerment and to what is required to overcome the subordinate position of women to men in society. Such needs vary according to the economic, political, social and cultural context. Most governments now acknowledge the need to create opportunities which enable women to address their strategic needs.

Sustainability

A project is sustainable when it can provide acceptable amounts of benefits to the target groups during a sufficiently long period after financial and technical assistance ends. In the case of a GMS, acceptable amounts of benefits include training, information, recognition, tools and instruments.

System

This is a scheme of action organised to integrate gender into all connected parts of a complex, whole structure.

Women's triple roles

Analysis of the gender division of labour has revealed that women typically take on three types of roles in terms of the paid and unpaid labour they undertake. These roles can be described as: the *productive* role: this refers to market production and home/subsistence production undertaken by women which generates an income; the *reproductive* role: this refers to the child-bearing and child rearing responsibilities borne by women – which are essential to the reproduction of the workforce; and the *community management* role: this refers to activities undertaken by women to ensure the provision of resources at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role (Razavi and Miller, 1997: 14).

Gender Management System Handbook

Gender mainstreaming is the current international approach to promoting equality between women and men.

It is based on the recognition that gender inequality operates at all levels and in all sectors of society, and thus needs to be addressed in the mainstream. It aims to ensure that women and men benefit equitably from all that society has to offer, and are equally empowered to affect its governance and decisions.

The Gender Management System (GMS) is a holistic and system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming developed by the Commonwealth, for the use of governments in partnership with other stakeholders including civil society and the private sector. The GMS is a comprehensive network of structures, mechanisms and processes to enable governments and other organisations to contribute to gender equality through all policy-making, planning and activities.

This reference manual has been produced to assist governments and other stakeholders in mainstreaming gender using the Gender Management System. It is also available in an abridged version under the title *A Quick Guide to the Gender Management System*.
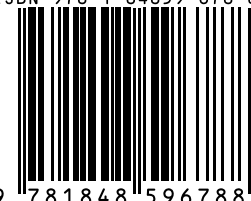
Other topics covered by publications in the Gender Management System Series include:

- Using gender-sensitive indicators
- Development planning
- Finance
- The public service
- Education
- Trade and industry
- Agriculture and rural development
- Information and communications
- Equal employment opportunities policy

Commonwealth Secretariat