# Definitions of key concepts and terms

Compiled by Oliva D. Kinabo, MSTCDC

*Gender* refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). Gender roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Systems of social differentiation such as political status, class, ethnicity, physical and mental disability, age and more, modify gender roles. The concept of gender is vital because, applied to social analysis; it reveals how women's subordination (or men's domination) is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever.

*Sex* describes the biological differences between men and women, which are universal and determined at birth.

*Gender Analysis* is the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated information. Men and women both perform different roles. This leads to women and men having different experience, knowledge, talents and needs. Gender analysis explores these differences so policies, programmes and projects can identify and meet the different needs of men and women. Gender analysis also facilitates the strategic use of distinct knowledge and skills possessed by women and men.

*Sex-Disaggregated Data* is data that is collected and presented separately on men and women.

*Gender Equality* means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development.
Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences of men and women, and the roles they play. It is based on women and men being full partners in their home, their community and their society.

*Gender Equity* is the process of being fair to men and women. To ensure fairness, measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Equity is a means. Equality is the result.

*Empowerment* is about people -both women and men- taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems and developing self-reliance. No one can empower another: only the individual can empower herself or himself to make choices or to speak out. However, institutions including

international cooperation agencies can support processes that can nurture self-empowerment of individuals or groups.

*Gender Division of Labour is* the result of how each society divides work among men and among women according to what is considered suitable or appropriate to each gender.

*Women in Development (WID)* The WID approach aims to integrate women into the existing development process by targeting them, often in women-specific activities. Women are usually passive recipients in WID projects, which often emphasize making women more efficient producers and increasing their income. Although many WID projects have improved health, income or resources in the short term, because they did not transform unequal relationships, a significant number were not sustainable. A common shortcoming of WID projects is that they do not consider women's multiple roles or that they miscalculate the elasticity of women's time and labour. An other, is that such projects tend to by blind to men's roles and responsibilities in women's (dis)empowerment.

The biggest difference between WID and GAD is that WID projects traditionally were not grounded in a comprehensive gender analysis. The GAD approach is gender-analysis driven.

There is definitely a need for women-specific and men-specific interventions at times. These complement gender initiatives. Research shows that the success of both sex-specific and gender activities is directly linked with the depth of the gender analysis that informs them.

*Gender and Development (GAD)* The GAD approach focuses on intervening to address unequal gender relations which prevent inequitable development and which often lock women out of full participation. GAD seeks to have both women and men participate, make decisions and share benefits. This approach often aims at meeting practical needs as well as promoting strategic interests. A successful GAD approach requires sustained long-term commitment.

*Practical Needs* refer to what women (or men) perceive as immediate necessities such as water, shelter and food.

*Strategic (Gender) Interests*. Interventions addressing strategic gender interests focus on fundamental issues related to women's (or, less often, men's) subordination and gender inequities. Strategic gender interests are long-term, usually not material, and are often related to structural changes in society regarding women's status and equity. They include legislation for equal rights, reproductive choice, and increased participation in decision-making. The notion of "strategic gender needs", first coined in 1985 by Maxine Molyneux, helped develop gender planning and policy development tools, such as the Moser Framework, which are currently being used by development institutions around the world.

<u>NB:</u> The purpose of introducing such distinctions between needs is to alert the programme specialist to the importance of addressing the structural challenges to women's empowerment. It is not to lock women's realities and experiences into rigid and pre-set notions of what is a strategic need versus what responds to a practical need. For, in many instances, changes in women's practical conditions of life have an effect on power relations between men and women within the community.

***Gender-mainstreaming*** is a process rather than a goal. Efforts to integrate gender into existing institutions of the mainstream have little value for their own sake. We mainstream gender concerns to achieve gender equality and improve the relevance of development agendas. Such an approach shows that the costs of women's marginalization and gender inequalities are born by all.

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

***Gender-responsive objectives*** are programme and project objectives that are non-discriminatory, equally benefit women and men and aim at correcting gender imbalances.

***Literacy Gender Parity Index (GPI)*** is the ratio of the female to male adult literacy rates which measures progress towards gender equity in literacy and the level of learning opportunities available for women in relation to those available to men.  It serves also as a significant indicator of the empowerment of women in society.

**Gender Justice**
Goetz (2007) defines gender justice as:

> 'the ending of — and if necessary the provision of redress for — inequalities between women and men that result in women's subordination to men. These inequalities may be in the distribution of resources and opportunities that enable individuals to build human, social, economic, and political capital. Or, they may be in the conceptions of human dignity, personal autonomy and rights that deny women physical integrity and the capacity to make choices about how to live their lives. As an outcome, gender justice implies access to and control over resources, combined with agency'.

Seeing gender justice as both outcome and process helps differentiate between what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved. 'Gender justice' as an outcome implies access to and control over resources, combined with agency (the ability to make choices). As a process, gender justice highlights accountability and the responsibility and answerability

of those social institutions set up to dispense justice. The constitution of gender injustices can be read from basic contracts (formal or implicit) that shape membership in a range of social institutions — the family, the community, the market, the state, and even religious institutions. In one way or another, these institutions are supposed to settle disputes, establish and enforce legal rules, and prevent the abuse of power. Understanding the ideological and cultural justifications for women's subordination within each arena can help identify how to challenge patterns of inequality.

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