



GENDER & CHANGE

Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS

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Welcome to the first edition of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC) newsletter **GENDER & CHANGE**. In our commitment to promote gender equality in the Eastern European and the CIS Region, we have established this newsletter in order to share information on best practices and lessons learned with countries within the region as well as across other regions. Many interesting gender-related initiatives are happening these days in Eastern Europe and the CIS. We hope that through this bulletin, which we intend to produce regularly, we will be able to bring to your attention the work being done within the region, in gender, at the local, national and regional level. This work contributes to the achievement of the overall UNDP objectives to support democratic reforms and transition towards people-oriented development. We have chosen *Gender & Change* as a title, because we believe that it adequately captures the dynamics and close linkages between gender and development.

We intend to produce this Newsletter only in electronic format so far, and circulate widely within RBEC, but also share with other UNDP Bureaux, as well as the larger UN system, national and international NGOs etc... All those who will receive this Newsletter are kindly requested to share it with their respective networks, colleagues and professionals or other parties, not necessarily in the 'women issues' sector only. We hope that the RBEC Gender & Change Newsletter, by spreading a word, will at the end contribute its share in raising awareness in gender equality issues and getting more recognition to mainstreaming. We also have in mind further evolution of the contents of future publications to reflect analysis and concrete issues facing women and men in the region.

This first issue contains a glimpse of the results of the recent Regional Gender workshop held in Bratislava on 28-30 January 2003 and reflections on the next steps in gender programming at regional level. We would like also to draw your attention to the 'News from the fields' part with 'snapshots' of on-going activities at country level collected from recent inputs to the RBEC Gender electronic network. All those who receive this bulletin are most welcome to contribute to our next issues. This could be brief information about the work being done, announcements about upcoming events, even short articles related to problematic and gender-related issues. With this Newsletter, we intend to encourage information exchange, so please do write and share with us your achievements and news.



Plenary Session of the RBEC Gender Strategy Workshop, Bratislava - Photos: RSC Bratislava

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STRATEGIC RESULTS FRAMEWORK (SRF) - GENDER

Last year, the UNDP strategic result framework in the region suggests that many new activities have taken place under the different sub-goals to promote gender in Eastern Europe.

Many countries reported on strategic areas of support for Policy dialogue towards gender equality. The targets in relation to the outcome were clear upstream interventions focusing on the promotion of gender equality. **Azerbaijan** has integrated a Gender-in-Development Unit within its structures to build awareness and to mainstream gender.

Progress was noted in **Albania** where there was a 3% increase in the representation of women in local seats as a result of training and other capacity building initiatives. This progress was also visible in the private sector where women play a much more important role than before. However, a decrease in the number of women occupying parliament seats were noted which may be due to political orientation.

The emphasis on extreme policy advice was translated into many positive results in some countries. For instance four countries (**Albania, Georgia, Kazakstan, Turkey**) have provided excellent training opportunities for capacity building and both **Bulgaria** and **Georgia** undertook awareness raising activities in efforts to introduce gender at the parliamentary levels. UNDP continues to lead the process to establish an equal opportunity law with the convening of Government working group to discuss a national machinery for the advancement of women in **Bulgaria**; Also, where it did not exist, **Turkey** achieved the outputs of ICT for gender plan and has updated the State Institute for statistics databank for gender and expanded it for more user's access.

One of the best practices was registered in **Kazakhstan** where gender issues are recognized by Key Government Officials and are addressed in the work of different Government structures – Laws on Equal Opportunities and Violence against women are enacted and indicators developed for monitoring the impact of these legislations.

Albania presented an innovative programme which exchanged weapons for development project. Women have benefited from this effort to generate employment and rehabilitation of 23 communal infrastructure priorities.

another good example of action to combat violence against women is the UNDP Turkey intervention which assisted the Government in foreseeing a clause in marriage codes amended that encourage and/tolerate domestic violence against women.

Cross-Cutting Linkages to the practice Areas

Gender-poverty : (**Turkey and Tajikistan**) in activities aimed at building capacity of women to manage credits thus increasing their revenues) (**Bulgaria**) : the extension of loans to women entrepreneurs under the UNDP small and medium enterprise development programme, (**Ukraine**) : Business training for women's farmers.

Gender-human rights: **Kazakhstan, Bulgaria**, the enactment and implementation of laws on equal opportunities and violence against women. In Belarus, UNDP plays an active role in promoting human rights and gender balanced approach for development through specific projects such as providing legal services for vulnerable groups. Gender-Governance: **Albania, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Moldova, Armenia** through intense upstream policy dialogue at local and national levels.

The SRF ROAR has provided an impetus in the region for adequate attention to gender issues and recently RBEC has established its gender strategy based on its regional cooperation framework which foresees gender mainstreaming in all the main pillars of the RCF. A compulsory SRF reporting is necessary if we should ensure that gender dimensions are integrated in all the practice areas. Already, in the RBEC region where UNDP's interventions are fairly recent, the movement for the promotion of gender equality is growing as well as many gender related problems.

Last year's assessment has highlighted the achievements in some areas and the need for improvements in many other areas in terms of gender mainstreaming and partnership building in our region. This was made possible by the SRF which allows a global assessment of what has been done and what needs to be done. We certainly hope that the response in gender reporting will improve in our region.

REGIONAL STRATEGY WORKSHOP

Drawing on the RBEC 2nd Regional Cooperation Framework's commitment to promote equity in development as a strategic issue, critical for sustainable human development in the region, UNDP Regional Bureau for Central and Eastern Europe and CIS (RBEC), Bureau for Development of Policy (BDP), and UNDP RBEC Regional Support Centre based in Bratislava, jointly organized a Regional gender strategy workshop on 28-30 January 2003, with the participation of all UNDP Gender Focal points (GFPs) in the region to develop a draft Regional Gender Strategy document for RBEC and set priorities at regional/sub-regional/national levels.

The workshop participants were represented by UNDP Gender advisers, SURF specialists, UNDP Country Office and RBEC/NY Gender Focal Points (from 21 CEE/CIS countries), invited national counterparts from the CEE/CIS region and partners from UNECE, UNIFEM and UNFPA. This provided an excellent forum for review and analysis of lessons learnt and new challenges for gender equality in the diverse and changing context of the region, including potential partnerships; opportunity to better understand UNDP's corporate policy on gender equality and share good practices across the region. Participants identified strategic entry points in the RCF and CCFs which formed the basis for the draft Regional Gender Strategy.

In fact, this was the first strategic event of such scope held by UNDP in gender area since it started its operations in the RBEC region.

The majority of participants evaluated the workshop and commented highly of it. They all agreed that it has met all of its objectives. Positive remarks were made especially regarding the opportunities presented by the workshop for networking, information exchange and learning. One of the workshop's concrete outputs is the establishment of the Regional Gender Strategy.

A group of participants volunteered themselves at the workshop to be part of the Drafting committee to finalize the document. (Once it is endorsed by



Plenary Session : left arrow : Aster Zaoude, BDP Sr. Adviser

RBEC, it will be made available on-line at UNDP RBEC Gender Virtual Library, gender.undp.sk)

The Regional gender strategy serves several purposes: it

- renews RBEC's commitment to engage in activities to promote gender equality,
- translates UNDP corporate goals into regional context, prioritizes in complex and changing development context of the region,
- provides guidelines for harmonized and concerted efforts at regional and national levels and
- facilitates partnerships and donors' coordination.

Thus, the RBEC regional gender strategy presents an important, perhaps a unique opportunity to really move forward on mainstreaming gender across the regional programme. Another important dimension of the strategy is that it represents a collective effort. It also shows what has already been done in the region, identifies new challenges, and outlines the directions and areas of intervention to enhance progress.

The Regional Gender Advisory services have been identified by the participants as a resource mechanism for Country Offices with responsibilities to coordinate with colleagues from other donor agencies, to promote and facilitate gender community of practice, to ensure gender mainstreaming of the Regional governance programme and be engaged in resource mobilisation, on behalf of regional gender and related programmatic themes.

Is this document needed at all? As UNDP-UNIFEM Synergy Conference Room Paper (DP/2000/CRP.7), approved by the Executive Board at its April 6 Session states, UNDP has the responsibility to ensure that its own policy, operations and internal procedures support and advance gender equality. UNDP is committed to ensuring that support provided to governments includes gender concerns. The work being done by UNIFEM, does not diminish UNDP's own internal responsibility for policy and programme development.

Now, what's the next step? Here is where the new challenge comes. The next step will be to implement the ideas contained in the document!

UNDP's comparative advantages such as the network of Country offices; coordinating role UNDP plays in UN system in the field; access to key governmental institutions; wide outreach and last but not least, past and present experiences will play irreplaceable roles in moving forward gender equality agenda in the region.



Brainstorming session during the Bratislava workshop - GFPs (Photos: RSC Bratislava)

RBEC would like to extend its gratitude to BDP Staff, **Aster Zaoude**, **Dasa Silovic** and **Christine Musisi** for their cooperation and contribution to the success of the workshop. It is a proof of the excellent collaboration between RBEC and BDP. It also thanks the GFPs from the Country Offices who made excellent presentations (**P. Larson**, **O. Dugert**, **E. Vertopi**)

Also a note of gratitude to the presenters from other Agencies and institutions in the field, particularly **Nani Chanishvili**, National Gender Association, Georgia; **Galina Kalinaeva**, National Gender Adviser Russia; **Anna Klimackova**, Director, National Gender Centre, Slovakia; **Giedre Purvaneckiene**, Member of Parliament, Lithuania. **Ewa Ruminska-Zimny**, UNECE; **Zina Mounla**, **Damira Sartbaeva**, **Osnat Lubrani**, **Eva Havelkova**, UNIFEM and **Riet Groenen**, UNFPA.

NEWS from the Field

Armenia by Kristina Henschen

In cooperation with the UN Theme Group on Anti-Trafficking, the Swedish fiction film "LILYA 4-EVER" was broadcasted during the week of the International Women's day in Armenia. The film is part of a Swedish governmental anti-trafficking project, and can only be shown in connection to a seminar on anti trafficking.

In Armenia, two screenings took place at the largest cinema hall: one for key officials within the Government and the NGO sector, as well as diplomats etc. The second targets risk groups such as students/others. A talk show in

cooperation with Internews, on anti trafficking will also take place. Mr. Joel Boutroue, the UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative as well as governmental and NGO representatives were invited guests at the event.

Kazakhstan by Gulira Myrzabayeva

The UNDP Country Office in Kazakstan in cooperation with the National Commission on Family and Women Affairs conducted a training for trainers on the theme "How to start business in rural area". The seminar took place in Astana on March 27, 2003.

It was organized for 25 trainers from the region of Akmolinsk, Karaganda, Kostanai and North Kazakhstan oblasts who will be responsible to train rural women in their respective regions.

Expert trainers from International Labour Organizations were invited to conduct the training. Representatives from the Committee on Support of Small Business of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Director of the National Training Center in Astana presented information on recent measures undertaken by the Government in support of small enterprises of rural areas. All the participants pointed out the importance of training and the result of the workshop was disseminated through mass media.

Uzbekistan by Dinora Azimova

A Seminar on the Gender Dimensions of Human Development was organized by UNDP and the Association of Business Women in Oqoqand, on March 20, 2003. More than 70 participants from all around the Valley, including from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tashkent and Samarkand attended the seminar to discuss current problems of Human Development.

It was the first attempt to address gender dimensions of Human Development issues on a regional scale. Uzbekistan Human Development readers group and the network was enlarged and became international. The Participation of NGOs, civil society, intelligentsia and business circles allowed us to share different views on growing concerns of poverty, unemployment, labor migration, water and governance.

The Russian Federation by Galina Kalinaeva

The first reading of the draft Law "On the State Guarantees on Equal Rights and Freedoms for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Implementation" took place in Gosduma (the Parliament of Russia) on 16th April. Out of 345 members of Parliament, present at the session, 342 supported the law. 105 peoples' deputies abstained. To adopt the law, it should be approved by the majority of the members of Parliament during three consecutive readings and then followed by approval of

the President of Russia and endorsement by the Council of Federation. The fact, that the draft law was supported by so many delegates, is a significant and positive sign.

Bosnia and Herzegovina by Hideko Shimoji

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Law on Gender Equality and Equity has been passed by the State Parliament. The Law encompasses a whole spectrum of issues along with enumerated indicators as well as clear definitions as to what constitute gender discrimination and promotion of gender equality. An English version of the Law can be found at RBEC Gender Virtual Library (gender.undp.sk)

Georgia by Louise Nylin

UNDP Georgia launched in the beginning of 2003 a multi sector programme in one of the regions of Georgia called Samtskhe-Javakheti. The region is one of 12 administrative regions in Georgia and is located in the south of Georgia, on the border of Armenia and Turkey. The region is geographically remote and economically depressed and is characterised by high ethnic and confessional diversity, which makes the regional problem complex and specific.

One sub-project is planned to give special support to women. The idea is to establish a women's training and resource center. The center would have the following objectives:

- Social and economic empowerment of women in S-J.
- Support women in leadership positions to participate in the decision-making process on the local level.
- Provide vocational training to women to be able to participate more actively in the regional development process.

More Information from the Russian Federation (the Komi Republic)

In September 2002, the UNDP supported Women's Management Center of the Komi

Republic and the Women's Chamber of the Komi Republic have launched a new project "From Balance in Power to Harmony in Life". This is the logical continuation of the prior two-years project that trained women for public activities. In October 2002, the School "Partners" was established with the main objective to enhance capacity of women to participate in the forthcoming elections to local bodies. Twenty nine women from different towns and districts of the autonomous republic were trained by this School. Besides educational programmes, the School conducted educational campaigns in the republican mass-media, and opened the "Discussion club" to initiate a dialogue on issues related to participation of women in politics. All the above- mentioned activities had a deep impact . As a result, the voters elected women-candidates in 3 out of 5 districts of the Komi Republic, and the number of women - deputies significantly increased from 12 to 16,6% ! Ten women who got the mandates of peoples' deputies were trainees of the UNDP supported project..The next step of this two-year project will be dedicated to professional education of elected women.

To facilitate information exchange among the countries, we are providing the List of RBEC Gender Focal Points & their email addresses below.

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We would like to thank the contributors and look forward to receiving more news from the field !

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