

Issues Paper
Gender mainstreaming in the work of
United Nations system intergovernmental bodies
22 June 2004
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ECOSOC Chamber

Introduction

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) endorsed gender mainstreaming as a major strategy for the promotion of gender equality. Two years later, the Economic and Social Council adopted agreed conclusions 1997/2 on “Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system”. In those agreed conclusions, ECOSOC defined gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and at all levels, as 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 social spheres.

Gender mainstreaming in intergovernmental bodies

The policy directives/decisions adopted by the intergovernmental bodies help guide the actions of the entire United Nations system. Mainstreaming gender perspectives into every aspect of the work of these entities is therefore vital, both for achieving gender equality and for the general success of United Nations activities.

to the issues of gender mainstreaming and gender equality than any of the other Committees. Despite these developments, progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives in the work of the General Assembly has been slow and uneven.

Gaps and Challenges

There are still many areas that can be improved further. Gender equality is often seen as a purely social issue, a perception that has not allowed it to be recognized as an essential aspect of the economic, financial, environmental, and peace and security sectors. Financing for development, trade, technology, and investment issues have major gender components, which have generally been ignored or overlooked. The outcomes of the intergovernmental deliberations have not adequately addressed gender dimensions of these issues.

Not all the Main Committees of the General Assembly have systematically incorporated gender perspectives into their outcomes. The First, Fourth, and Fifth Committees have made little reference to the issue in their work as a whole, and the Sixth Committee has made no reference at all. Likewise, ECOSOCr gends0ffurncionsthes6 still manyallence to Tc 0.330t1 Tal0e hes into -0.1296 Tc 0.3171 T