

Aligning the MDGs with the needs of the ECE region

Mainstreaming gender into economic policies to reach MDG goals

Inter-regional DA project on social inclusion, gender equality and health promotion in the Millennium Development Goals

Project implementation in the ECE region will focus on additional targets and indicators to measure progress in mainstreaming gender into economic aspects of MDG and development strategies in Central Asia and in the South Caucasus. It will be also policy oriented.

Expected project outputs: (i) additional region-specific targets and indicators on gender equality in economic area and (ii) MDG knowledge hubs to disseminate relevant information, analysis and advocacy reports.

It is expected that these outputs will have an impact on policies through: (i) raising awareness of policy makers that gender equality is also an economic asset; (ii) providing indicators and guidelines how to engender selected areas of macroeconomic policies and (iii) including these policies into country's MDG development strategies and/or poverty reduction strategies (PRSPs).

Rationale

Project focus reflects the role of economic factors in reducing poverty and social exclusion in the ECE region and reaching other MDG goals including in the area of health¹ as well as priorities embodied in outcome documents from regional reviews of the Beijing process². It also takes into consideration ECE expertise and areas of work.

Trends, gaps and priorities for MDGs

Countries in Central Asia and in the South Caucasus have the highest levels of poverty and are at the highest risks of missing MDG targets. These countries also experienced the sharpest decline in gender equality especially in access to economic opportunities, which directly affects Goal 1 (Poverty reduction) and Goal 3 (Gender equality).

This decline is typical for transition process, which embodied a strong gender bias in redistribution of assets and entitlements when countries moved towards market economy. Women took over a major share of its costs related to the loss of job security and cuts in employment, a move towards low paid jobs both in formal and informal sectors and cuts in social protection, including in health and child care services. Women also benefited little from the privatization process and development of the private sector. Their access to income generating activities was also affected by a revival of traditional views on women's role.

Drastic deterioration of women's position in the economy resulted in feminization of poverty in the region. It also undermined women's economic potential in a growth process as they were pushed out of the labour market or had to accept low paid jobs, which did not match their education levels. Ensuring equal opportunities for women

¹ The Millennium Development Goals: The Way Ahead: A pan-European Perspective, ECE, 2006

² Beijing +5 (...) as well as Beijing +10 outcome documents (ECE/AC.28/2004/3) and report based on national responses to the UN questionnaire (ECE/AC. 28/2004/4)

and men in economic area is thus central for growth revival and reaching MDG goals in these countries.

ECE comparative advantage

ECE has an economic profile and no activities in health area. Its comparative advantages in project implementation include work on (i) gender statistics; (ii) promoting the process of mainstreaming gender into economic policies (iii) facilitating regional discussion on economic strategies and cooperation in central Asia under the Special Programme for Central Asia (SPECA), implemented jointly with ESCAP.

Economic focus of the project will benefit from in-house expertise and support as well as an integrated approach facilitating joint work of statisticians, researchers, gender constituencies and economic policy makers.

Gender and economy area: its definition and priority areas

Gender and Economy is one of 12 areas addressed by the Beijing Platform for Action (BpfA). It request actions to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to exert power over economic structures and decisions to engender policies which have direct impact on access to economic resources and income levels (such as financial, monetary, tax or wage and pension policies).³

Region specific priorities within Gender and economy area were identified by regional reviews of BpfA in 2000 (Beijing +5) and in 2004 (Beijing +10)⁴. These are:

- Access to finance and assets
- Employability including self-employment
- Public expenditure (gender budgets)
- Social protection and pension
- Institutional mechanism to engender economic policies (including data)

Specific concerns and actions to improve women's position in the economy were also identified by the SPECA WG on Gender and Economy. These are:

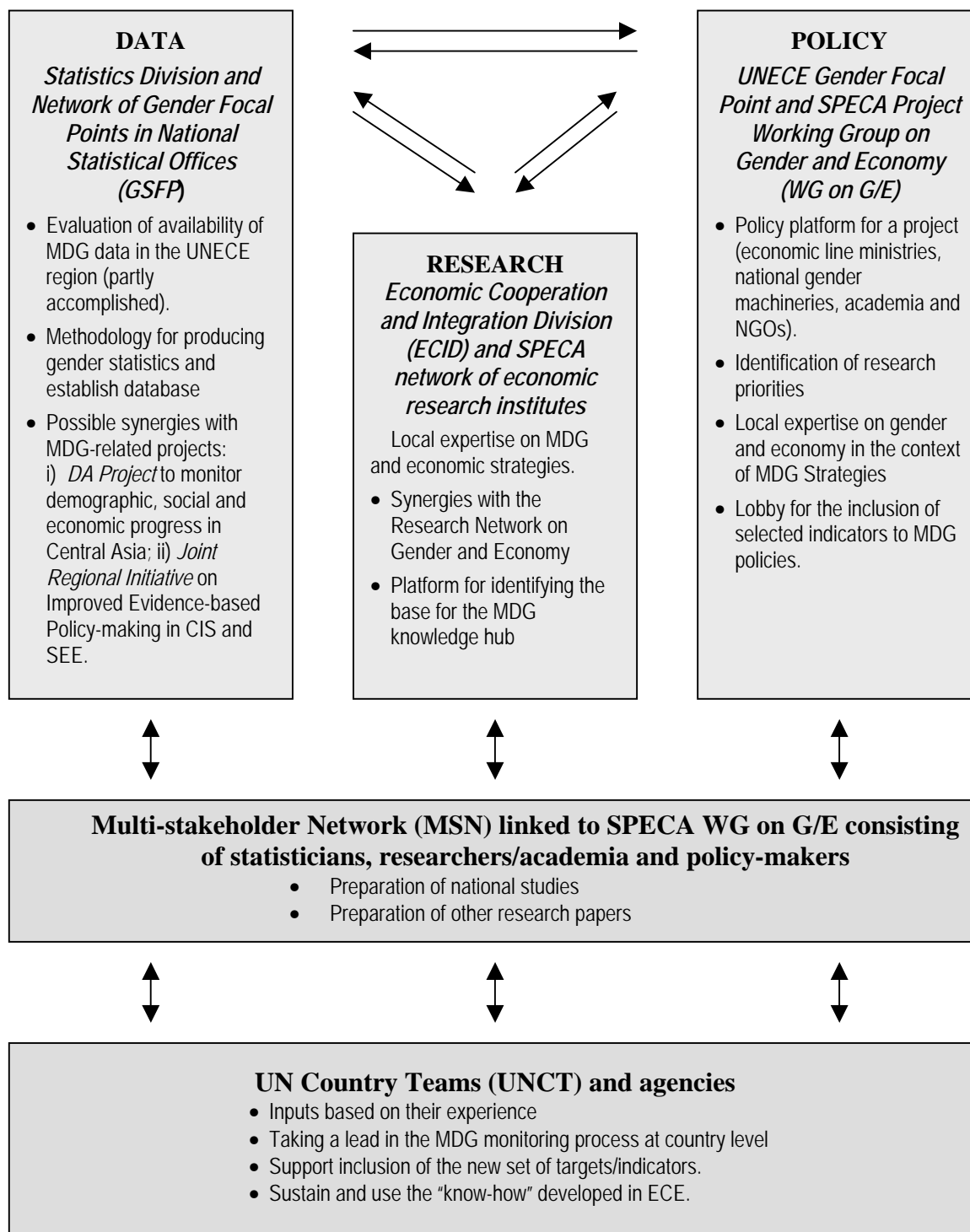
- Need for gender disaggregated economic data
- Analysis of public expenditure from the gender point of view (pilot project)
- Establishing an integrated approach to supporting women's entrepreneurship (access to financing, skills, markets and ITC)
- Attention to urban-rural disparities.

³ Beijing Platform for Action, New York, UN 2001 p. 93-97 .

⁴ Outcome documents Beijing +5 (...)Beijing +10 (ECE/AC.28/2004/3).

Modalities for project implementation:

Project implementation will involve joint work of three groups of stakeholders: statisticians, researchers and policy makers. It will draw on ECE expertise, networks and activities. Project implementation will be supported by Co-chairs of the SPECA WG/ and UN Country Teams monitoring MDG. The project will be coordinated by ECE Gender Focal Point (OES) and jointly managed with the chief of social and demographic statistics section (Statistics) and SPECA Regional Adviser (CECI).



Expected project outputs:

A. **Final report** identifying additional region-specific targets and indicators in the context of key trends and issues in gender and economy area for the inclusion into national MDG Strategies/and, if relevant PRSPs.

B. Creation of **MDG knowledge management hubs** involving all stakeholders; disseminating additional MDG targets and indicators in gender and economy area; making available on-line research and literature on linkages between MDGs and key issues specific for the region; and establishing monitoring/reviews of progress made measured by additional targets and indicators.

C. **Raising awareness** and development of **active communication channels** among all stakeholders involved in promoting gender aspects of MDG Strategies (economic line ministries, national statistical offices, other governmental institutions, academia, and NGOs).

Tentative time-table of activities and outputs :

2006

- **Stock-taking desk study** on what we have at ECE, what is done by other organizations active in CA and South Caucasus on MDG (including existing/planned MDG knowledge hubs, work on data/indicators and basic literature overview with particular attention to gender and economy area);
- **Identifying members of country teams/ and members of Multi-stakeholder network (MSN)**; request for inputs for a desk study and preparation of country studies (outline and TORs)
- **Establishing a project page at UNECE web linked to other RC** (end October)
- **Preparatory work for the first meeting of MSN in Geneva** (date, programme, participants)

2007

- **First meeting of MSN**, Geneva; discussion of country studies; agreement on themes for further research and work on additional indicators (under SPECA WG on Gender and Economy);
- **Finalization of country studies** (and placing them on a project web)
- Preparation of **consultancy contracts** for additional studies and work on indicators (TORs etc)
- Developing the concept and structure of **a knowledge hub**; **agreement** on IT provider and contractual arrangements
- **Second meeting of MSN** (fall 2007, in the region); discussion of key findings of (draft) research papers and proposals for additional indicators; agreement on the outline and content of the final report; agreement on the process /partners for establishing a knowledge hub

2008

- Preparation of the **Final report** with region-specific additional indicators for MDG strategy and its **launching at the SPECA Economic Forum**

- **Preparation of advocacy briefs** (based on country reports, research papers and final report) with key messages to policy makers on additional MDG indicators/targets as well as why and how they should be included)
- **Inter- regional meeting** to discuss project findings organized by ESCAP.

Interregional cooperation

Cooperation with ESCAP in the context of a SPECA WG on Gender and Economy will be proposed.