

Terms of Reference

Gender Sector Working Group (GSWG)

1. Background

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution, approved in 1995, establishes equal rights for men and women in economic, social, and political sectors such as education, employment, and access to and control of resources. Ethiopia has also created a policy framework that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Ethiopia is a signatory to a number of international agreements on gender and development, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), the Protocol to the African Chapter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004).

In addition, the government has established suitable legal and policy frameworks based on the constitutional protection of women's rights. This includes updating the family and criminal codes, as well as releasing statements such as the 1993 National Women's Policy, the 2006–2010 National Action Plan on Gender Equality, and the 2017 Development and Change Strategy and Package. The government has set up the national gender machinery including the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (formerly the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth), bureaus of women, children and youth/social affairs at regional level and lower structures and directorates at sector ministries. Gender has also been incorporated into development plans and agendas, as evidenced by the successive Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) I and most recently by the 10 Years Development Plan (2020-2030) which includes gender and social inclusion as one pillar of the plan.

It is been vital to ensure that women and girls are included in Ethiopia's economic, social and political development and that a gender perspective is integrated in this development. In this context, the Donor Group on Gender Equality (DGGE) was established with the mandate to support gender equality and women's empowerment across the different sectors and harmonise donor interventions in this area. The DGGE evolved into a donor coordination group on gender issues with the key mandate to contribute to the strengthening of mainstreaming gender issues and concerns into national development policies and strategies. The DGGE also revitalized the sub-group on children's issues as a result of the expressed commitment of development partners engaged in programmes/projects related to children's issues.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agenda for Action, the Post-Busan and SDGs processes reaffirmed commitments to increase aid effectiveness while focusing on development results. Thus, donors are committed to more coordinated, harmonized and effective assistance approaches to avoid duplication of efforts and increase their contribution to development impact and results. The Accra Agenda for Action (2008) has included reference to

the importance of government and development partners' coordinated efforts to support gender sensitive development programmes, strategies and policy frameworks. Ethiopia's vision is to become a middle-income country by 2025.

The DGGE has been involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of different national development strategies and plans, namely Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP), Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I and II), and the 10 Years Development Plan. The DGGE played a key role in advocating for the inclusion of a standalone pillar on gender and inclusion. The DGGE also contributed to the Women and Development Package (WDPI-I) 2011-2015, and the launch of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2006-2010 (NAP-GE). Some of the key thematic areas prioritized by the GoE include: Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE); Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG) and Harmful Practices (HPs), Women in Leadership and Political Participation (WILPP) and Women's participation in peace and conflict resolution. In the past, the DGGE had established a Gender Pooled Fund, to provide financial support to national gender machineries and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The Gender Pooled fund is not operational at this time but may be revisited in the future should there be a general desire to do so.

While the DGGE is a donor-focused structure, there was a strategic partnership framework established by the former MoWYCA, called the Gender Sector Working Group (GSWG). This subgroup aimed at strengthening partnerships and the ministry's convening capacity for multi-actor partnerships on the issues of women, children and youth and supporting national partners to integrate and coordinate various program partnership initiatives includes international and national CSOs and UN Agencies as a member. This working group will continue to be instrumental in the GEWE activities. To this end, meetings with the MoWYCA and other government partners has been identified as one of the significant undertakings.

This terms of reference (ToR) refines the objectives, principles, expected outcomes and the operational modalities of the GSWG and provides the opportunity for donors to engage with the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs and Women's Machineries in Gender Policy Dialogues.

2. Objective of the Gender Sector Working Group (GSWG)

The goal of the Gender Sector Working Group is to engage and support Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment issues in Ethiopia.

Specific Objectives

- To enhance the capacity and skill of agencies, technical working groups, development partners and governments to identify gender gaps and propose solutions in policies;
- To strengthen coordination and harmonization the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment issues in policy dialogues;

- To strengthen and contribute to evidence based policy formulation to realize gender equality and women empowerment in Ethiopia;
- To strengthen the exchange of experiences among the group members on gender issues; contribute to policy discussions with the Government, within the Development Partners Group (DPG), with other sector working groups and with other development partners and stakeholders;

3. Principles

The followings are principles of the Gender SWG

- Commitment and contribution to address barriers to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Principles of effectiveness, efficiency, alignment and harmonization of the initiatives promoted by Development Partners in gender equality in Ethiopia.
- Encourage a sharing and cooperative spirit and
- Promote networking and partnership building;

4. Expected Outcomes

4.1. Enhance the capacity and skill of agencies, technical working groups, development partners and government to ensure the integration of gender equality and women empowerment issues in policies and laws.

- Proactively engaged in dialogue on the design of gender-responsive policies, programs, and projects with government institutions, development partners, sector and technical working groups, civil society organizations, and national women's machinery. (For example, monthly gender research dissemination forums, national and regional level consultations);
- Actively participate to ensure that the principles of national and international commitments to gender equality are domesticated in laws and policies, such as CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Maputo Protocol, the SDGs, and the Ten-Year Development Plan.
- Coordinate the GSWG to identify gaps and alternative solutions to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in policies and laws.
- Document and share the identified gaps and alternative solutions needs of with policy formulators and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.
- Request and advocate for the inclusion of policy/strategic level interventions in the projects/programs supported by donors.
- Review and comment on the mapping system being developed by the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance. This enables GSWG to have a clear understanding where the funds are being allocated and monitor strategic level interventions.

4.2. Strengthen coordination and harmonization the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment issues in policy dialogues.

- Initiate/strengthen information sharing and learning among the GSWG to strengthen policy oriented programs/projects and updates the status of drafted, amended and promulgated laws and policies that will affect women and vulnerable groups.
- Strengthen the information sharing and coordination between and amongst agencies, sectors and technical working groups, government entities and CSOs for the effective mainstreaming of gender in policies and normative framework.
- Discuss and reach common understanding between GSWG on needs and prioritization of actions to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Support other Sectoral Technical Working Groups (STWGs) to effectively mainstream gender into sector reviews, reform programmes and other strategic initiatives.
- Formulate sub-section GSWG based on the interest and experience of members to advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment.

4.3. Strengthen and contribute for evidence based policy formulation to bring gender equality and women empowerment in Ethiopia.

- Facilitate and support evidence based policy revision for laws and policies that are at draft stage through availing data and engaging in consultative meetings with government institutions, CSOs, UN agencies, donor groups, researchers and academicians.
- Strengthen the information management system on gender equality and women empowerment issues in the different sectors (Thematic areas) by strengthening/establishing virtual library.
- Availing information about policies and laws that integrate a strong gender equality principle.
- Strengthen the organizational memory of the GSWG and the sector through documentation, recording of progress reports and minutes.

4.4. Enhance the exchange of experiences among the group members on gender issues; contribute to policy discussions with the Government, within the Development Assistance Group (DAG), with other sector working groups and with other development partners and stakeholders.

- Increase the exchange of knowledge and learning among GSWG, government institutions, CSOs.
- Contribute to the effort to strengthen collaboration and cooperation with Government institutions, UN Agencies, other working groups, CSOs, researchers and academic institutions in the effort for gender equality and women empowerment.
- Encourage and invite researchers/academicians, UN Agencies, government institutions from different sectors to present new updates and research findings.
- Create a system that exchanges and disseminates new updates and developments or change in context about gender equality issues (E.g. share draft policies).
- Establish and strengthen the institutional memory of the GSWG as to its operation, mandate and contributions.

5. Operational Modalities

The Gender Sector Working Group will be composed of Development Partners and members representing the Government Sectors with leadership of Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

6. Membership

Any interested bi- or multilateral development partner, member of DPG, currently supporting or planning to support interventions in the area of gender equality and women empowerment can be a permanent member of the GSWG.

Alongside Permanent Membership, the GSWG will invite ad-hoc participation of non-permanent members, based on value addition to a given discussion or series of discussion. Ad-hoc members will be selected by the GSWG permanent members and invitations will be communicated by the secretariat, upon approval of the chair and the co-chairs. Ad-hoc participants can be invited from a broad set of actors, including CSOs, non-traditional donors, private sector, academia, members of the humanitarian community, and may also include GoE, DPs, or UNCT Members not permanently represented in the GSWG.

Sub-groups on specific issues of social inclusiveness might be established based on the agreed decision of the working group. These groups may include concerns of children, youth, persons with disabilities, the elderly and other vulnerable groups based on the mandates of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

6.1. Mandates and Responsibilities of the Co-chairs and Members

The Sector Working Group will be co-chaired by the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA) and two Development Partners (DPs) (One DP will be changed each year, while the remaining DP will ensure knowledge transfer and learning). The Ministry will be co-chaired by Her Excellency Minister of Women, Children and Youth Affairs or a State Minister that the Minister designates.

The Ministry of Women as the Co-chair of GSWG is responsible to:

- Provide updates and new developments/initiatives on the issue of gender equality and women empowerment.
- Share the status of new policies and laws (draft/promulgated) related to women and other vulnerable groups.
- Provide information for the dissemination of information and exchange of experiences among the GSWG members and other stakeholders;
- Invite other government institutions (depending on the context) that work on gender equality issues.
- Update and share mapping of projects/programs related to gender and other vulnerable groups issues.

The Development Partner Co-chair is responsible to:

- Inform and advocate for gender equality with partners and stakeholders using a range of communication mechanisms.
- represent the GSWG members in meetings with other sector and technical Working Groups, DAG Ex-Com and other relevant forums;
- coordinate inputs of DGGE members in the preparation of joint statements and activities;
- coordinate with other DPG Working Groups, and other programmatic groups;
- advocate for enhanced support on gender issues among donors and other development partners;
- Creation and facilitating opportunities and mechanisms for sharing information, knowledge, views, expertise, and experiences.
- Increase consultation around thematic and sub-sector issues, to raise issues that need special attention and to reach agreement in response to policy and technical issues raised;
- Regularly consult with DPG members on strategic issues under the sector working group, including at minimum quarterly meetings of DPG members to discuss issues of importance with the SWG;
- Serve as spokesperson(s) on behalf of the DPG for thematic areas under the sector working group;
- Report to DPG Ex-Com on outcomes and achievements of the GSWG, primarily through the annual reporting mechanism;
- Ensure that the minutes of the meetings are prepared and circulated among the group members in adequate time period;
- liaise with the DAG Secretariat on substantive and operational matters (including the drafting of the agenda, dissemination of information and logistics of DGGE meetings); and
- prepare the agenda of the meetings in consultation with GSWG Co-chair and members. The Co-Chair will circulate minutes no later than two weeks after the meeting.

Development Partners that are members of GSWG are responsible to:

- Ensure regular representation of the sector to the GSWG through the appointment of a focal person;
- Actively engage in and contribute to the discussion of agendas of the GSWG;
- Timely provide inputs on policies, strategies, plans and activities of the government with a gender equality and women's empowerment lens.
- Avail technical and financial resources for joint activities of the GSWG as identified in its annual plans; as deemed fit and possible by each development partner
- Contribute to the Gender Information Management system by sharing researches and information in the different thematic areas.
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Ad-hoc participation of non-permanent members are expected to:

- Actively engage and contribute to the learning and information sharing discussion of GSWG;
- Provide thematic specific inputs on policies, strategies, plans and activities from gender perspective.
- Avail information and research findings that can influence and support during policy formulation.

6.2. Secretariat

UN Women will be the Secretariat for the GSWG and be in charge of planning, coordinating and assuring regular meetings, communicating with GSWG members and developing agendas, ensuring meetings are efficiently structured and minute. The secretariat is also expected to lead in keeping records and strengthening the GSWG memory and communication. This can be done by creating shared drive and WhatsApp group. It will also facilitate the invitation of government institutions, CSOs and researchers considering the need. Development Partners will support the Secretariat tasks with Technical Assistance if needed.

7. Frequency of Meetings

GSWG meetings will be held in monthly basis. To avoid overlapping, several meetings will be conducted among Development Partners, and others with the leadership of MoWSA. In order to address gender mainstreaming issues within other Sectoral Working Groups, at least two joint meetings (GSWS + other SWG) will be held per year. Ad hoc meetings can be arranged at any time based on the notification of the co-chairs if necessary.

The meetings are scheduled quarterly in the following order: the first meeting is exclusively for DPs, the second meeting is with DPs and MoWSA, the third meeting is only with DPs, and the fourth meeting is with DPs, MoWSA, and other working groups.

Attendants	Jan	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Meeting only with DPs												
Meeting with DPs and MoWSA												
Meeting only with DPs												
Meeting with DPs, MoWSA and other working groups												

- The meeting in March will consider the commemoration of International Women's Day/Month and might be flexible in attendance.
- For the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence beginning on 25th November until 10 December the composition in attendance might be different.
- Given most participants will be on leave in July and August, it is advised to conduct ad-hoc meetings.