EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAC STRATEGY FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN THE EAC STRUCTURES, ORGANS AND INSTITUTIONS
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1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for EAC is the result of a Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) that was conducted by EAC Secretariat with CIDA support. In this way, gender audit processes provided useful baseline data that informed the development of this Strategy. This Audit, which is a self-evaluation exercise, was intended to promote organizational learning with regard to further institutionalization of gender mainstreaming approaches in EAC programs, the Secretariat, Focal Ministries in Partner States, institutions and governance structures. In the main, the PGA exercise revealed some positive achievements as well as areas in need of improvement in promotion of gender mainstreaming approaches within the EAC context, especially at the Secretariat and Focal Ministries. These have been elaborated in the Final PGA Report, which needs to be read alongside this Strategy.

Within this context the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy was considered critical for enabling EAC Organs and Institutions to up-scale its organizational efforts to implement its gender equality agenda at its different levels.

BOX I: What is Gender Mainstreaming?

"Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality" (ECOSOC, 1997)

2.0 **OBJECTIVES**

The overall goal of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for EAC Organs and Institutions to facilitate promotion of more effective gender mainstreaming approaches within EAC. Specifically, this Strategy intends to realize the following objectives:

2.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

a) Scale up on-going initiatives towards mainstreaming of gender and women empowerment processes within the EAC organs and institutions in gender mainstreaming knowledge and skills in policies development/implementation, planning/programming and budgets

b) Promote more functional gender accountability mechanisms within the EAC organs and institutions.

3.0 PRINCIPLES OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY FOR EAC ORGANS AND INSTITUTIONS

3.1. Rights-based and Agenda Setting Approach to Gender Mainstreaming

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy recognize that facilitation of gender equality and women's empowerment processes within EAC organs and institutions shall be embracing the existing international, regional and national policy instruments for promoting the rights of women and men in the region.

3.2 Investing in Women-specific Interventions

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for EAC also recognizes that women's empowerment in the regional socio-cultural, economic, political and psychological spheres is critically important to achieve gender equality. Based on this, the Strategy for EAC adopts a two-pronged approach, i.e. of mainstreaming and of targeting marginalized groups/voices to achieve women's equality and empowerment, and to reduce their vulnerabilities.

> **BOX II: Two-Pronged Approach to Gender MainstreamingStrategyfor EAC**
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> Mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programs across each core priority of EAC decisions and processes to ensure that men and women stakeholders at different levels fully participate in and benefit from intended regional integration outcomes andInvesting dedicated resources in specific interventions that empower women (and poor men), reduce their vulnerability, build their leadership, provide them access to resources, and protect their human rights.

3.3   Women and Men's Participation and Voice

The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy recognizes that for effective women and men's participation in EAC regional interventions, their equal access to relevant resources including putting in place supportive mechanisms and timely information for those in the margins of their communities is instrumental. This is seen as necessary conditions for them to have a voice and choice in decisions made at their levels.

4.0.   KEY OUTCOME AREAS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING STRATEGY FOR EAC

4.1   **The strategy is guided by five key outcomes, namely:**

Outcome 1: Reduced gender gap in governance and institutional structures in EAC organs and institutions

As part of undertaking interventions for ensuring gender parity in key EAC governance and management structures in the above-mentioned structures and institutions, it is essential that provisions be put in place for increasing women presence within the different levels. Increased women's participation in decision making structures and processes is a transformative move in breaking myths and stereotypes on women and leadership in the region. This means that institutional provisions to be deployed at different levelsshould not only apply to numbers or percentages but also to assessing the quality of women's participation in these

structures and processes.

For this to happen the following will need to be implemented:

a) Adopting an affirmative action mechanism at Secretariat and other structures for increased number of women in decision-making and management positions. This could be done through training/supporting existing heads of departments or potential officers in order for them to qualify for management positions whenever a vacancy occurs.

b) Institutionalizing, at the levels of EAC organs and institutions a Mentoring and couching program for women staff in order to facilitate their horizontal and vertical mobility.

c) Adopting an affirmative action mechanism at the Council level for supporting its SectoralCouncil Committees to reflect gender balance at different levels.

Outcome 2: Gender accountability mechanisms in place and functional

Instituting effective gender accountability mechanisms and tools for the EAC EAC organs and institutions shall assist in improving implementation of gender commitments and reporting of outcomes in programs and governance processes. It is thus being recommended that a more effective institutional mechanism/s be put in place for ensuring individual as well as institutional responsibilities and accountability for delivering gender sensitive results in programs and processes.

For this to happen, the following interventions will need to be undertaken:

a) The Secretariat to facilitate relevant processes within EAC for the development of a Regional Gender Policy and a Regional Gender Protocol/Bill. Undertaking of such initiatives is considered instrumental in promoting guidelines and further enhances the legal and regulatory environment for implementation of its gender mandate in the region. However, the recommended EAC Gender Policy and the Protocol will require a number of interrelated factors that will determine the degree to which they could enable effective gender mainstreaming. These include:

b) Commitment to gender equality and equity objectives at the highest levels of decision making, policy and administrative framework conducive to advancing gender equality

c) Presence of a critical mass of gender sensitive officers at different levels of implementation

d) The managements of key EAC structures and institutions, including the Secretariat to recognize their collective mandate in promoting gender equality, and facilitate review of key administrative systems and tools to ensure that staff is held accountable for ensuring effective gender mainstreaming approaches of their programs.

Some of the activities to be implemented in this area may entail:

a) Make all HR systems and policies gender-sensitive and responsive, and integrate gender indicators into staff performance appraisal systems.

b) Incorporating and explicitly mentioning gender sensitivity as an essential element in the tasks/job profiles in all terms of reference, including TORs for external consultants.
Through their TORS, the staff shall be made clear on what is expected from them and what are their duties and responsibilities in gender mainstreaming at their own levels.

c) Ensuring that conceptual clarity and sensitivity of staff on gender issues will be incorporated in orientation of new staff during recruitment processes and capacity building efforts

Outcome 3: Enhanced Institutional Gender Mainstreaming Capacities of the Secretariat, Institutions / Organs and Focal Ministries

Gender mainstreaming requires technical skills and competencies without which substantive implementation outcomes cannot be achieved. This calls for EAC Secretariat to invest in building relevant gender capacities of its key actors including Legislators, Managements and staff of the Institutions, Organs and Focal Ministries. This can lead to significant attitude change from staff and decision

makers and act as a key foundation for all other strategies for gender mainstreaming.

Within the EAC context, capacity enhancement for gender mainstreaming will, among others, call for the following:

a) The Secretariat to develop a Regional Gender Capacity Building Plan to enable the Secretariat, Institutions/Organs, respective Ministries in Partner States to articulate training needs of its key stakeholders, identify relevant gender mainstreaming approaches, methodologies and tools to be adopted for enhanced effectiveness and impacts of the training initiatives

b) The EAC organs and institutions to allocate adequate budget and human resources for building gender capacities and competencies of its managements, staff and decision makers (e.g. Sectoral Council Committees, EALA).

c) The Secretariat to develop/update a functional data base of gender experts in the region for facilitating/supporting EAC organs and institutions and program staffs in their on going gender training programs.

d) EAC organs and institutions to undertake purposeful measures to enhance equal participation of women and men in all organized training and staff development programs, including study tours, seminars and short courses

e) EAC organs and institutions o ensure that all trainings (internal and external) facilitated by them are gender-sensitive in terms of the a) training content/methodology/mode of facilitation b) logistics etc

Outcome 4: Gender responsive programs, interventions and M&E Processes undertaken

Often, the programming level is the arena in which institutions such as the EAC focus and operationalizes their commitments for gender equality/mainstreaming initiatives. This calls for effecting gender mainstreaming approaches in all steps undertaken for facilitating/development of EAC regional programs and interventions. This entails among other things:

a) The Secretariat to engender its key guiding planning and programming frameworks, especially the EAC Strategic Plan (SP) based on the gender analysis of the region

b) The Secretariat to clearly articulate gender specific issues and constraints in a competitive regional market and plan for addressing in the different regional sectoral programs (e.g. Customs and Trade; Infrastructure development etc);

c) The Secretariat to support staff and equip them with gender analytical skills to enable them to systematically incorporate gender in the total program cycle.

d) The Secretariat to support staff and consultants in developing gender responsive indicators and design gender responsive M&E frameworks and tools for their programs

e) The Secretariat to equip staff with gender budgeting skills, especially those working on planning, budgeting and monitoring, including the Resource Mobilization Department

f) The Secretariat to support staff with relevant skills of reporting on implementation outcomes from gender perspectives.

Outcome 5: Formulating Gender responsive advocacy Materials

EAC organs and institutions to develop staff capacities in formulating gender sensitive advocacy materials on gender related issues from the regional programs

The Secretariat to support staff to design advocacy materials which depict positive gender images, and use gender sensitive language, which is user friendly.

Outcome 6: Engendering of Management Information System

Sex/Gender disaggregated data is critically important for facilitating effective gender mainstreaming approaches in institutions such as EAC. This is because such sex/gender-disaggregated data provides the basis for gender analysis, which is a key tool for gender mainstreaming. Both quantitative and qualitative statistical

information on differences and inequalities between men and women, can feed institutions such as the EAC organs and institutions with facts on the main achievements, gaps and needs in gender equality policy and implementation.In the light of this, the Secretariat may consider undertaking the following measures:

a) The Secretariat to review the current regional communication and information system and tools to ensure effectiveness in gender responsiveness
b) The Secretariat to support and facilitate development of a Gender responsive Communication Strategy
c) The Secretariat to build staff awareness and sensitivity by processing information and publishing communication material, which will appeal to both men and women in the region
d) The Secretariat to use multiple forms of media to ensure that information reaches women and men in their varied locations e.g. Faith based institutions, CSOs and CBOs, FM local radios, print and electronic media
e) The Secretariat to develop a media strategy which will attract young girls and boys, including using social sites such as face book, YouTube

Outcome 7: Promoting gender responsive Organizational culture

Gender responsive organizational/institutional culture is central to in transforming the attitudes and mindset towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

> **Organizational culture is:**
> The informal processes that underpin how organizations/institutions functions. This include for examples: attitudes, behaviors, values, symbols, language, styles of communication, structure and management styles, informal networks, etc. Gender responsive or sensitive organizational culture is about building an understanding and changing of culture so that gender mainstreaming/equality is understood and accepted by all key stakeholders as a core value of their organization

Within the EAC context, enhancing a gender responsive organizational culture will

entail the Secretariat, Institutions/Organs, respective Ministries in Partner States to consider undertaking the following among other things:

a) Creating awareness on the added value of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the regional integration agenda
b) Developing and Implement gender specific policies such as Sexual Harassment Policy for providing safe means of staff reporting acts of sexual and gender specific forms of violence without fear that disclosure will have a negative impact on victims of gender based violence.
c) Use existing staff/management forums to discuss openly the concept of sexual harassment, and the forms it takes.

CONCLUSION

This Strategy is a broad framework to guide gender mainstreaming implementation processes within the EAC context. It is has been informed by the findings from the Participatory Gender Audit conducted at EAC organs and institutions and focuses on providing some broad based interventions in key programming areas at different levels. As part of its implementation, it will be of importance for each Organ, Directorate, institution and departments to translate the provided strategies into Plans of Action to fit the different contexts under which they will be operationalized.

Finally, the implementation of this Strategy will call for strong commitment from the EAC leadership at different levels as well as committed financial and human resources.