

5 March 2009

**Further Details on Institutional Options for Strengthening the Institutional Arrangements for Support to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**

**I. Introduction**

1. On 15 September 2008, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on System-wide Coherence (A/RES/62/277) following a series of informal consultations held in 2007 and 2008 on the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence contained in the Panel's report (A/61/583). Recommendations included strengthening the coherence and impact of the United Nations institutional gender equality architecture by streamlining and combining existing gender institutions into a consolidated United Nations gender equality and women's empowerment entity.

2. To facilitate the informal consultations of the General Assembly, and in response to its requests, the Deputy Secretary-General submitted three papers. The first<sup>1</sup> set forth the vision and purpose for a new gender equality and women's empowerment architecture. The second paper<sup>2</sup> analyzed the gaps and challenges faced by the United Nations in supporting Member States to implement globally agreed mandates and their own national commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment. The third

---

<sup>1</sup> Concept Note on a Strengthened Architecture for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, 1 August 2007

<sup>2</sup> Note on the United Nations Support to Member States on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 5 June 2008

paper,<sup>3</sup> taking into account the views of Member States and the previously identified gaps and challenges, suggested two approaches to institutional options: (i) maintain the system as it currently is, and (ii) strengthen the existing institutional arrangements through consolidation of the four gender-specific entities, namely: the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). The second approach to institutional options would entail pursuing one of three possible institutional options for consideration by Member States: a Fund/Programme, a Department of the Secretariat, and/or a Composite entity.

3. The General Assembly, in paragraph 5 of its resolution 62/277, requested the Secretary-General to “provide a further detailed modalities paper in respect of the options, to cover funding, governance structure, staffing, specific functions and relationship with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and other relevant bodies and, having regard to the totality of views expressed by Member States in informal plenary consultations on 8 September 2008, focusing in particular on the ‘Composite’ entity option with a view to facilitating substantive action by the General Assembly during the sixty-third session”. The present paper responds to this request.

---

<sup>3</sup> Institutional Options to Strengthen United Nations Work on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 23 July 2008

## **II. Background**

4. Gender equality and women's empowerment are goals in their own right. They are also crucial to the achievement of the United Nations objectives in development, peace, security and human rights. Yet gender inequality exists in all societies around the world, albeit to differing extents. The devastating effects of poverty, discrimination, violence and lack of opportunity affect women in multiple ways, from their economic standing to their social wellbeing, as well as their prospects for better political participation. No country in the world can claim to have eliminated discrimination against women and violations of their rights.

5. Member States have reconfirmed that gender equality and women's empowerment are central to achieving peace and security, development, and human rights as set forth in the Beijing Platform for Action, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as well as internationally agreed development goals such as the Millennium Development Goals. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to which Member States are parties also addresses gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite these policy and normative achievements a large gap remains between commitments to women and gender equality and their implementation.

6. The informal consultations of the General Assembly facilitated by Co-Chairs Ambassador Paul Kavanagh of Ireland and Ambassador Augustin Mahiga of Tanzania, elicited a significant convergence of views among Member States on the gaps and

challenges to be addressed, and the corresponding aims and functions that a consolidated entity should encompass. Regarding institutional options to overcome the gaps and meet the challenges, in his summation during the 8 September 2008 informal consultations, Ambassador Mahiga stated “the burden of arguments we have heard is for an organization which is comprehensive and capable of seamless effectiveness both in the field and at Headquarters, that is, both at operational level and at the normative level, which would not rely solely on either assessed or voluntary contributions, and whose Head would operate with direct responsibilities to the Secretary-General but also have membership of the Chief Executives Board.” While noting that the Composite entity option appeared to carry the most promise of meeting all the priorities expressed by Member States, the Co-Chairs observed that the Composite entity was the least explained. Accordingly, the Assembly decided to seek further information on the modalities of the options.

### **III. Further Detailed Modalities of the Institutional Options**

7. In view of the importance attached to gender equality and the empowerment of women, all organizations of the UN system, including Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies, are mandated to support the achievement of gender equality. They are required to address the gender perspectives of their distinctive substantive programmes and activities, and they have delivered tangible results in this regard. Throughout the UN system, including in the Secretariat, there are gender units, gender advisers and departmental focal points. At the regional level, the

Regional Commissions support Member States in addressing gender equality issues from the regional and sub-regional perspectives. At the country level, Gender Theme Groups contribute to and monitor gender mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs). Furthermore, an inter-agency mechanism for coordination, the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE), works to promote dialogue and collaboration in the UN system on gender equality and empowerment of women.

8. The main aim of a strengthened gender equality architecture was envisioned as providing coherent, timely support to Member States, consistent with the principle of national ownership, in their efforts to enhance their capacity to achieve gender equality, in line with national priorities and internationally-agreed norms and policies. A strengthened UN system would thus serve to address the gaps and challenges identified in the 5 June 2008 paper of the Deputy Secretary-General, namely: coordination and coherence; authority and positioning; accountability; resources; country-level support; and emphasis on country-driven demands and ownership.

9. A new gender equality and women's empowerment entity would undertake the following functions as previously outlined by the Deputy Secretary-General's papers of 1 August 2007 and 23 July 2008:

- (a) lead innovative and catalytic country-driven programming, gender mainstreaming and capacity-building, and provide targeted technical cooperation and capacity-building in line with national strategies;

- (b) provide substantive support to United Nations bodies (CSW, the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council) where commitments, norms and policy recommendations on gender equality and gender mainstreaming are discussed and agreed upon;
- (c) build on the comparative advantage of United Nations actors, lead and coordinate the systems' strategies, policies and actions on gender equality and women's empowerment, and promote effective system-wide gender mainstreaming;
- (d) ensure accountability of the United Nations system, including through oversight, monitoring and reporting of system-wide performance;
- (e) undertake global, regional and national advocacy efforts on issues critical to gender equality and women's empowerment to ensure that emerging, under-recognized and under-resourced issues receive national, regional and global attention;
- (f) undertake new and consolidate existing research and analytical work, to support overall objectives, including acting as a clearing house for knowledge and experience on gender equality and empowerment of women from all parts of the United Nations system;
- (g) monitor the implementation of the 12 critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action, the Outcome Document of the twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly, and Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008); and

- (h) monitor and report on system-wide compliances with intergovernmental mandates on gender balance including at senior/decision-making levels.

10. The new entity would also maintain and strengthen collaboration between Member States, the UN system and civil society in pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment.

11. Keeping in mind the above-mentioned functions together with the gaps and challenges, the following provides further detailed modalities of the institutional options.

#### **A Status Quo**

12. With respect to the request by the General Assembly in paragraph 5 of resolution 62/277, it is noted that the Status Quo option had been analyzed in previous papers of the Deputy Secretary-General on UN system support to Member States on gender equality and women's empowerment. Notably, the main functions performed by OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW were outlined by the Deputy Secretary-General in her paper of 23 July 2008.

13. Current analysis has confirmed the findings in the Deputy Secretary-General's Note of 5 June 2008, which showed that the Status Quo option would be the least effective in eliminating fragmentation or providing a single driver and voice for the UN

system on gender equality, even with increased resources and more effective internal collaboration. Further informal consultations with Member States, civil society and UN entities in preparing the present paper confirmed that specific steps could be taken to improve the current situation – such as joint planning and effective practices instituted by other UN organizations with complementary mandates – but compared to other options the Status Quo provides the most limited opportunities to strengthen the gender equality and women’s empowerment work of the United Nations.

## **B. Fund/Programme**

14. This option would involve the establishment of a Fund/Programme by the General Assembly that would be separately administered and funded. It would partially consolidate the four gender-focused entities with the exception of those staff resources that provide substantive support to intergovernmental bodies.

15. Funds and Programmes, mainly UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA were reviewed in order to provide further details on the modalities of this option.

### **1. Governance structure and relationship to CSW and other relevant bodies**

16. It is envisaged that the Fund/Programme would report to an Executive Board. The Executive Board would be responsible for providing intergovernmental oversight for the Fund/Programme in accordance with the overall policy guidance of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and for ensuring that it is responsive to



the needs and priorities of recipient countries. The Executive Board would be expected to bring to the attention of the Economic and Social Council issues requiring its guidance.

17. The Executive Head of the Fund/Programme, as is the case for other Funds and Programmes, would be a full member of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

## **2. Specific functions**

18. Responsibility for substantive servicing and support to the normative and policy work of the United Nations intergovernmental bodies would remain within the United Nations Secretariat. Accordingly, with regard to the functions outlined in paragraph 9 above, the Fund/Programme would not undertake functions (b) and (g) as these are functions typically carried out by the United Nations Secretariat, nor would it undertake function (h) as this is also a Secretariat function. These constraints would not preclude the Fund/Programme from making contributions to the work of intergovernmental bodies as is common with Funds and Programmes at present.

## **3. Staffing**

19. Under this option, staff resources of UNIFEM and INSTRAW would be deployed to the new entity. Staff resources of OSAGI and DAW responsible for substantive servicing of intergovernmental bodies would remain in the Secretariat. While it is important to maintain support to the normative and policy framework, the consolidation

could involve a significant shift of resources from Headquarters to country and regional levels, and provision of integrated programmatic and technical support. The Fund/Programme would aim to have universal coverage to deal with all gender equality issues world-wide and strategic presence.

20. The Executive Head would be appointed by the Secretary-General at the Under-Secretary-General level, and would be assisted by two Assistant Secretaries-General to provide overall leadership, vision and strategic direction.

21. The Fund/Programme's regional directors would be members of the United Nations Regional Directors Teams (RDTs) located at the United Nations regional hubs where most of the other regional offices of UN entities operating at the country level are based. The tasks of the Fund/Programme's regional directors would include strategic positioning and collaboration with United Nations actors, such as the Regional Commissions and other regional and sub-regional bodies as well as with civil society organizations. They would engage in performance management and coordination of operational activities of UNCTs in their respective regions. Policy dialogue and advocacy with the above-mentioned regional/sub-regional institutions and bodies, as well as oversight of and facilitation of coordinated inter-agency support to UNCTs activities, would be key functions of the Fund/Programme's regional offices, especially within the context of the ongoing United Nations reform at the country level.

22. At the country level, the Fund/Programme's senior representative would be a full member of the UNCT. She/he would provide coherent and timely evidence-based policy advice and programming on gender equality and women's empowerment and support to members of the UNCT. She/he would also chair the inter-agency Gender Theme Group and be responsible for developing and maintaining partnerships with key stakeholders at the country level including NGOs and community groups.

23. One of the key roles of the Fund/Programme's representative, in close collaboration with the Resident Coordinator (RC), would be not only to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment were fully integrated in United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), but also to promote joint programming in specific areas of UNDAF and lead and coordinate efforts for resource mobilization for the implementation of agreed joint programme activities.

#### **4. Funding**

24. The Fund/Programme would be solely financed from and dependent on voluntary contributions. Joint funding of projects with other entities in the UN system would be promoted. The Fund/Programme would be fully accountable for the management of its resources and for the outputs of the Executive Board-approved programmes at country, regional and global levels. It would also be accountable for monitoring and reporting on

outcome and goal indicators. The Fund/Programme would maintain an appropriate budgetary ratio of management and programme support costs to programme in line with existing ratios of comparable UN entities.

### **C. A Department of the Secretariat**

25. A Department of the Secretariat on gender equality and women's empowerment would consolidate OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW.

26. OCHA, DESA and OHCHR were reviewed in order to provide further details on the modalities of this option.

#### **1. Governance structure and relationship to CSW and other relevant bodies**

27. The work of the Department would be guided by intergovernmental bodies including CSW, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. These bodies would be substantively supported by the Department on gender equality and women's empowerment. Support would also be provided to the Security Council in follow up to its resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) respectively, on women, peace and security and sexual violence in situations of armed conflicts. On its operational activities (technical cooperation and advisory services), the Department would report to the General Assembly through the Secretary-General.

28. As a Department of the United Nations Secretariat, its Head would participate in CEB as a member of the Secretary-General's team.

## **2. Specific functions**

29. While the Department would be positioned to provide links between normative and operational activities, it would support country activities through a network of technical advisers rather than a more permanent field presence. It would thus have limited opportunities to strengthen attention to gender perspectives across sectors and would not be able to play a major role in implementing function (a) in paragraph 9 above nor in system-wide coordination of normative and operational work because it would not have sufficient field presence.

## **3. Staffing**

30. While some Secretariat departments such as OCHA have an extensive field presence, typically Secretariat staff is deployed at Headquarters. The Department option would unlikely be able to build effectively on UNIFEM's field presence. The operational component of the Department's work programme would focus on assisting Member States upon request, to achieve their national objectives through technical assistance projects and advisory services, using a network of interregional advisers similar to that of DESA, or in-country advisors similar to those of OHCHR.

31. The Department would support United Nations entities, including RCs/UNCTs and RDTs by providing capacity building advisory services and specialized expertise at the country, regional and global levels by deploying advisors, consultants and experts. The Department would also draw on existing expertise in the sub-regional and regional bodies, including the Regional Commissions. The level of support provided would be based on need, the capacity of other actors, and availability of resources. At country level, the Department's advisors would participate to the extent possible in inter-agency arrangements including UNCTs and Gender Theme Groups.

#### **4. Funding**

32. The Department's support for policy and normative activities would be funded mainly through assessed contributions while its technical cooperation and advisory-services would be funded largely from voluntary contributions. It could draw, as well, on the United Nations' Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and the Development Account for its technical cooperation and advisory activities. To ensure operational flexibility, the Department would have delegated authority in personnel, procurement and financial matters similar to DESA.

#### **D. Composite entity**

33. During the informal consultations, many Member States expressed particular interest in the Composite entity. This option would consolidate OSAGI, DAW, UNIFEM and INSTRAW. The Composite entity would combine Headquarters policy and

normative support functions currently performed by Departments with those for the country level operational and technical support characteristic of Funds and Programmes. In order to draw lessons from entities with composite features, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, and UNODC were reviewed along with UNAIDS' coordination mechanisms.

**1. Governance structure and relationship to CSW and other relevant bodies**

34. It is envisaged that the Composite entity would report to an Executive Board that would have features that are well known and tested and yet provide opportunity for innovation given the breadth of the Composite entity's proposed mandate.

35. The Executive Board would supervise the activities of the Composite entity in accordance with the overall policy guidance of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It would provide oversight of the operational programmes, plans and financial resources of the Composite entity and would encourage and examine new programme initiatives. This would be done with due regard to the budgetary authority of the General Assembly. The Executive Board would report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council in accordance with their respective mandates

36. The Executive Board would establish effective ways to engage with CSW, CEDAW and other relevant bodies. It would also work closely with all UN entities engaged in gender mainstreaming. This work would be funded by the regular budget.

37. CSW would remain a functional Commission of the Economic and Social Council with its current mandate. The Economic and Social Council would continue to provide the UN system with cross-sectoral coordination and overall guidance on a system-wide basis including objectives, priorities and strategies, in the implementation of the policies formulated by the General Assembly and review and evaluate the reports on the work of the United Nations system on their efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in all their policies and programmes.

38. The Executive Head of the Composite entity would be a member of CEB. At the country level, the entity would work closely with other UN entities in preparation of Common Country Assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCAs/UNDAF) and through joint projects. To achieve greater coherence and effectiveness, the Composite entity's representatives at country, sub-regional and regional levels would be co-located with those of other UN entities.

39. To maximize the contribution of civil society, the Head of the Entity would establish a mechanism for their periodic consultations.

## **2. Specific functions**

40. The Composite entity would consolidate the four gender-specific entities, with their respective mandates, and would carry out the functions outlined in paragraph 9 above. It would undertake analytical, normative and operational work on gender



equality and the empowerment of women in an integrated and strengthened manner, and become the driver for the promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system. By bringing together the existing gender-specific entities, it is envisaged that the Composite entity would achieve the desired synergies between policy research, analysis and substantive support for intergovernmental processes, as outlined in (b), (f), (g) and (h) of paragraph 9 above. It would further strengthen support to Member States at the national level through operational activities, as outlined in particular, in paragraph 9(a) and (e). The Composite entity would also be appropriately positioned to enhance system-wide coordination and accountability, as outlined in (c) and (d) of paragraph 9. An accountability framework with goals and indicators would be developed. Coordination and catalytic programming to fill programmatic gaps would be key functions of this Entity.

### **3. Staffing**

41. As with the other two proposed institutional options, to provide overall leadership, vision and strategic direction, the Composite entity would be led by an Executive Head at the level of Under-Secretary-General appointed by the Secretary-General and would be assisted by two Assistant Secretaries-General.

42. The Composite entity, like the Fund/Programme, would aim to have universal coverage to deal with all gender equality issues world wide and strategic presence. A large share of its staff would be located at country and regional levels based on need,

demand and availability of resources. In view of the number of United Nations programme countries (over 150); it might be necessary to adopt an incremental approach by locating representatives of the Entity initially in only a portion of the programme countries.

43. Scaling up to the needed level to achieve a significant country presence would likely take several years. Nonetheless, there must be a firm timeline backed with adequate resources and concrete commitments by Member States for achieving this growth. To do so, the Composite entity would build up a track record of effective research and analysis, programming, and inter-agency coordination that would demonstrate to Member States and donors its efficacy. It would also develop solid partnerships with women's organizations and other stakeholders so as to ensure that the programme best meets the needs of women on the ground.

44. As in the case of the Fund/Programme, the Composite entity's regional directors would be members of the RDTs located at the United Nations regional hubs. The tasks of the Composite entity's regional directors would include joint regional programmes with other UN entities, support to Member States and strategic positioning and collaboration with United Nations actors such as the Regional Commissions, other regional bodies and civil society organizations. In undertaking those tasks the Entity's regional directors would take into account recommendations, frameworks and/or policies adopted as well as the research conducted and data collected at the regional level on gender equality and women's empowerment. They would also engage in performance

management and coordination of normative and operational objectives in support of country activities in their regions. Policy dialogue and advocacy with the above-mentioned regional/sub-regional institutions and bodies, as well as oversight of and facilitating coordinated inter-agency support to UNCTs activities, would be key functions of the Composite entity's regional offices.

45. At the country level, the Composite entity's representative would be a member of the UNCT. She/he would provide coherent and timely policy advice and programming ideas drawing on data and gender analysis in support of national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies. The Composite entity's representative would support integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in the UNDAF through, *inter alia*, joint programming and resource mobilization for joint programmes. She/he would chair the inter-agency gender theme group and would develop and maintain partnerships with key stakeholders at the country level including NGOs and community groups.

46. In order to maximize the impact of the Composite entity at the country level, a top priority would be to immediately establish a presence in all the regional hubs where operational entities are located so that the entity would fully participate in regional programming from its inception, taking into account the fact that policy positions adopted at the regional or sub-regional level greatly influence programme implementation at the country level. Enhancing regional presence would also enable the Composite entity to build on existing programming and to continue to develop best practices and successful

models through participatory knowledge management for gender equality programming that meet the needs of women on the ground. A strong and effective presence in the regional hubs would also enhance the new entity's capacity to deploy programming staff to countries in the region where it lacks a presence or a substantive programme, making the best use possible of existing expertise in the sub-regional and regional institutions. This would also help to deepen the institutional capacity for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels.

#### **4. Funding**

47. The Composite entity would be funded from both voluntary resources and assessed contributions. Given the emphasis on field presence and support to countries for their national strategies for gender equality and women's empowerment, Member States would be called upon to determine the balance between these two sources of funding.

48. Developing joint funding proposals with other entities in the UN system to build on the comparative advantages of participating entities particularly at the field level is an important goal within the context of United Nations reforms.

49. In order to facilitate voluntarily-funded operational activities, authority would be delegated to the Executive Head of the Composite entity in financial and procurement matters. This would include, but not be limited to, the authority to accept financial contributions, enter into contribution agreements, issue budgetary allotments and certify financial statements and expenditure reports to funding entities. The Executive Head

would also require delegation of authority for the recruitment and administration of staff, consultants, and experts to efficiently and effectively carry out operational activities

## **V. Summary of Similarities and Differences**

50. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/277, the preceding discussion has focused, in particular, on the Composite option. The present paper therefore provides more details on the Composite entity. By its very nature the Composite entity combines institutional features of the Department and the Fund/Programme. Therefore, it has similarities with both as well as differences. Some of these were set out in paragraphs 21 and 22 of the Deputy Secretary-General's Paper of 23 July 2008. This section further highlights key similarities and differences of the three options for consolidation in terms of governance, staffing and funding. The analysis of the options is based on key features of each option and draws on precedents and experience of existing UN entities.

### **A. Similarities**

51. The governance of all three options would:

- be guided by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and CSW, in accordance with their mandates, as the three-tiered intergovernmental policy mechanism for gender equality;
- support the cross-cutting nature of gender equality mandates and would be responsive to the needs of both developing and developed countries alike;

- promote a meaningful role for civil society organizations in particular, women's networks and NGOs;

52. With regard to functions, all three options would make it a priority to support gender sensitive CCA/UNDAF processes.

53. With regard to staffing and funding, all three options would:

- be headed by an Under-Secretary-General, who would advise the Secretary-General and be the spokesperson and voice of the United Nations on gender equality and empowerment of women;
- systematically tap available expertise to enrich their work;
- require increased resources to adequately support gender equality issues at country and regional levels, particularly through increased voluntary contributions;
- carry out vigorous resource mobilization; and;
- undertake incremental staff deployment to the field scaled up as resources become available and sustainable;

## **B. Differences**

54. With regard to governance:

- the Fund/Programme and the Composite entity would each be overseen by an Executive Board while the Department would not;
- the head of the Fund/Programme and the Composite entity would be members of CEB whereas the Department would not.

55. With regard to their functions, the Department and the Composite entity would be better able to ensure seamless consolidation of normative support and operational activities than the Fund/Programme.

56. With respect to staffing and funding:

- the Head of the Department and the Composite entity would assume all responsibility to implement the mandates of the four existing gender-specific entities, while in the case of the Fund/Programme the substantive servicing of the intergovernmental bodies would remain with the United Nations Secretariat; this would require an effective coordination mechanism between the Fund/Programme and the Secretariat to avoid coherence weaknesses associated with the status quo.
- regarding field presence, the Fund/Programme and the Composite entity would have sustained presence at the country and regional levels, and staff presence in the field would be strategic and coverage of issues would be universal, whereas the Department would rely on a network of external advisers;

- with regard to funding, the Department and Composite entity would be funded from both assessed and voluntary resources, whereas the Fund/Programme would rely entirely on voluntary resources.

## **VI. Findings and Conclusions**

57. The previous Notes of the Deputy Secretary-General highlighted the critical need for i) a stronger and more coordinated UN system support to countries to advance gender equality in line with national commitments, and ii) an effective driver for the UN system on promotion of gender equality and use of the gender mainstreaming strategy.

58. With regard to stronger and more coordinated UN system support to countries to advance gender equality in line with national commitments, both the Composite entity and the Fund/Programme have the greatest potential to respond to this challenge. The advantage of the Composite entity, in this regard, is that it would have a clear mandate – and accompanying staffing and positioning – to more seamlessly support countries to translate agreements from intergovernmental processes into national-level programmes and policies, working closely with UNCTs in doing so. The Department’s envisioned “light touch” field presence would hamper it from providing the on-demand, state-of-the-art support required by countries. Existing procedures in the Secretariat may also hamper its flexibility in mobilizing and deploying resources to undertake operational activities in support of Member States.



59. While the three options (Fund/Programme, the Department, and the Composite entity) have the potential, to various degrees, to address the deficits of status and authority that constrains the current architecture, the Composite entity has the greatest potential to consolidate the strengths and experiences of the four existing gender-specific entities and create synergy between operational work and normative and policy development functions. The Composite entity would bring together the normative inputs of CSW and other intergovernmental bodies with a strengthened operational component overseen by an Executive Board dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment. It would ensure a link between the consideration of gender mainstreaming in the intergovernmental sphere and its consideration in operational activities.

60. Whilst the other two options have notable strengths with respect to the functions discussed above, each might require establishing new ways to respond to the full range of gaps and challenges identified. The Department would have clear advantages in supporting the normative work of intergovernmental bodies, just as the Fund/Programme would have clear advantages with regard to implementing operational activities. A Department could engage in operational activities and a Fund/Programme could play a role in intergovernmental processes. However, modifications of the traditional functions of each would be required. Moreover, a Department would be unlikely to achieve the flexibility and sustained field presence required to influence gender mainstreaming on the ground. In the case of the Fund/Programme, the need to continue substantive servicing of intergovernmental bodies from the United Nations Secretariat would perpetuate some of the existing fragmentation.

61. Hence, the findings of this paper – which have benefitted from informal consultations with Member States, civil society and UN entities – support the conclusion that the Composite entity has the greatest potential to address the identified gaps and challenges and carry out the functions set forth in paragraph 9. The Status Quo, even with increased resources and improved inter-agency coordination, could not entirely address the current weaknesses identified. The Department would not provide the robust field presence and support that Member States have demanded. A Fund/Programme would not eliminate fragmentation, support strengthened synergy between normative, policy and operational activities, nor exercise the level of authority required to ensure accountability for implementing mandates on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

## **VII. Proposed Way Forward**

62. Over the past two years, through an open, integrated, balanced, transparent and inclusive process of consultations on system-wide coherence conducted by Moderators under the aegis of the President of the General Assembly, Member States achieved significant progress on a number of critical issues related to the strengthening of the United Nations' gender equality architecture including the elaboration of institutional options as set forth in the Deputy Secretary-General's paper of 23 July 2008. This progress was reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 62/277 which called for further detailed modalities of these options.

63. Delegations are invited to examine the detailed modalities contained in the present paper and are urged to come to an agreement during the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the General Assembly, on how the UN gender equality architecture should be strengthened to improve coherence and support to Member States. Should Member States select an option, the detailed administrative and financial implications of the option would be presented to the General Assembly.