

Gender Equality and Swedish Non-Governmental Organizations: Overview and Talking Points

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Overview: Gender Equality and Swedish Non-Governmental Organizations

This overview is intended as a starting point or stimulus for a consideration of gender equality issues in relation to Sida's support to Swedish non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It is not comprehensive. Instead, it aims to suggest relevant issues and provide a starting point for discussion.

This document takes a somewhat different approach than the other "guidelines" in this series. Sida's work with NGOs is not a "thematic" sector (such as health, agriculture or transportation), rather it is one development cooperation channel which encompasses a wide variety of sectors, relationships and types of project. This document explores various challenges facing both Sida and NGOs as they continue to incorporate gender equality as a development goal in all aspects of their work.

There are three parts to this document:

- 1) the main discussion of key issues;
- 2) a one-page set of 'talking points' on the rationale for the consideration of gender equality issues in this sector; and
- 3) citations from international documents that can be used to support gender equality initiatives.

The primary audience for this document is Sida staff, although it could also be of interest to NGO staff, volunteers, partners and consultants.

Gender equality as a goal of development cooperation includes attention...

1. Gender Equality as an Objective of Development Cooperation and NGOs

Equality between women and men is now an explicit goal of Swedish development cooperation. What does this mean for Sida's work with Swedish NGOs within the broad context of development cooperation in the mid-1990s?

From the perspective of development impact of NGO projects, programmes and relationships, there are two basic questions related to gender equality:

- I) Do projects and programmes recognize the differences between women and men in needs, interests, responsibilities and access to resources? (In other words, is there a clear understanding of how being male or female will influence people's ability to participate in development initiatives and benefit from them? Has the target population been disaggregated by gender to achieve a clear

...to gender differences

understanding of who does what work, who has access to what resources and who has what priorities?)

...and to gender inequalities

- ii) Do projects and programmes promote more equitable gender relations? (In other words, is there support for women's empowerment? Is there an understanding of gender inequalities and are there efforts to narrow that gap? This can often include support for the women's movement in the developing country.)

Cross-cutting themes for NGOs include...

The following sections explore three specific issues: gender equality in the context of Sida's relationship with NGOs/responsive funding, institutional issues for NGOs and programmatic issues. In addition, there are a series of themes that cut across these issues and have broad implications:

...the relevance of gender equality in all sectors

- ▶ The establishment of gender equality as a formal goal of development cooperation recognizes the principle that equality between women and men is not just a "women's issue" that can be dealt with through isolated, marginal projects. Rather gender equality is a fundamental development issue that crosses all types of development programming. It is relevant in education programmes, tax reform, road construction and community development. The broad socio-economic and cultural context shapes the possibilities and actions of women and men and influences both their ability to participate in various development initiatives and the impact of these initiatives.

...a vital role for men

- ▶ Although to date the main advocates of gender equality have been women, there is an essential role for men. The general acceptance of gender analysis reflects the important insight that women's position is inextricably wound up with that of men and that the empowerment of women cannot be achieved without broader social changes involving both women and men. For NGOs, the pursuit of gender equality goals poses personal, organizational, and programmatic challenges. It is important that both women and men are involved in the development of strategies to deal with these challenges.

...women's empowerment as a key objective

- ▶ Various strategies and analytical tools have been developed to support efforts to work toward gender equality. Each has its strengths and weaknesses and, at times, the language and concepts can seem abstract, obscure and overwhelming. The key, however, is to remain firmly focused on the ultimate goal (gender equality) and then use the tools to the extent that they assist movement toward that goal.
- ▶ The agreement among national governments achieved at the

*...international
support for gender
equality goals*

Beijing Conference should serve to refute claims that the inclusion of gender equality goals in development cooperation constitutes interference in local culture or cultural imperialism. The conference's final document, the *Platform For Action*, provides an important foundation for gender equality initiatives. Furthermore local/national women's organizations and gender equality activists are vocal advocates for women's empowerment. There are numerous possibilities for international alliances that support gender equality.

...women's diversity

- ▶ The Beijing Conference and the parallel NGO forum provide a striking reminder that although women may share strategic gender interests, there are also important divisions and diversity among women. It is important not to assume that all women are the same or that they share identical needs and interests.

*...incorporating
gender equality
issues into the civil
society debate*

- ▶ Finally, there is growing interest in NGOs throughout international development cooperation circles. There is talk of their efficiency and effectiveness as a development channel and their ability to reach the poor. The importance of "civil society" in developing countries has emerged as a major theme. To date this discussion has not incorporated gender equality as either a goal or influencing factor. Both Sida and NGOs have the potential to make a positive contribution in this area.

The roles of NGOs (both northern and southern) are currently changing. Their relationships with the state, with each other and with international institutions are evolving. This context of change provides strategic openings to incorporate both a gender analysis and gender equality objectives in the structures, objectives, goals and ways of working of NGOs in general.

2. Gender Equality in the Context of Responsive or Indirect Funding

One of the primary issues facing Sida in its work with Swedish NGOs, is that NGO projects are not in a strict sense Sida projects. Sida's role is an indirect one - providing funds, monitoring and (at times) evaluating. As is pointed out in the recent NGO evaluation (Riddell, *et al*, 1995: 49)

*Despite its indirect
funding role, Sida
can support gender
equality goals in its
relationships with
NGOs*

On the one hand, SIDA states that it is providing funds to support the NGOs' own [emphasis in the original] development projects and initiatives. On the other, SIDA states that in receiving funds from the NGO Division, Swedish NGOs have to comply with the general objects of Swedish development assistance. It appears to be quite

widely accepted in Sweden that these two principles generally work in harmony with each other.

What does the integration of gender equality objectives mean in this context? Since Sida does not assess and approve every NGO project, there is a need to look at broader questions relating to the overall capacity of NGOs and to their broad development and programming philosophies and priorities. In other words, instead of "checking out" each project, Sida can (through dialogue, incentives, evaluations, formal guidelines...) encourage NGOs to improve their **institutional capacity** in the area of gender equality and to develop specific programming directions.

The discussion is further complicated by the fact that Swedish NGOs themselves are often only funders of other NGOs. The majority of Swedish NGOs do not implement projects directly, rather they develop relationships with southern organizations (who may in turn have other relationships with grass-roots organizations).

An important theme is that there are no easy answers and no set list of steps to take. The "best" actions for each NGO will vary -- given the NGO's structure, development philosophy, size, partners and relationships with Swedish organizations. This highlights the importance of communication and the sharing of lessons learned -- both among northern NGOs, but also with southern organizations.

3. Gender Equality and Institutional Issues for NGOs

*Institutional issues
include...*

In order to assess the capacity of NGOs to incorporate a gender equality perspective in their programming, Sida staff can examine the institutional intentions, capacity and structures of NGOs. This section explores various issues related how an NGO organizes itself to meet gender equality objectives.

3.1 Policy

One of the first steps many NGOs take is the development and approval of a policy on gender equality (or women's empowerment...). A policy generally sets out the organization's analysis of the situation, what it hopes to achieve and how.

*...policy formulation
and implementation*

Some NGOs have found that the policy formulation process itself offers important opportunities to generate support for gender equality objectives throughout an organization and to explore these issues with southern partners. This process can also be time consuming. For example, the gender policy of Oxfam(United Kingdom/Ireland) went through 12 drafts before it was eventually approved in 1993 (Macdonald, 1994).

Yet the existence of a policy in and of itself may not be a good indicator of how well the organization is incorporating gender equality issues. Many policies remain un-implemented and are merely symbolic. A basic challenge for all organizations is actually implementing the policy as this involves changing practices, procedures, attitudes, and possibly programming priorities and even southern partners.

Key elements in policy implementation include:

- ▶ a clear statement of what the organization is aiming to achieve;
- ▶ a clear strategy for policy implementation outlining who is responsible for what, measurable targets and objectives, and a time frame;
- ▶ demonstrated support from the organization's leadership and management;
- ▶ specific allocation of resources (both staff time and money);
- ▶ ongoing dialogue with southern partners and women's organizations on strategies and priorities;
- ▶ the identification of resistance and the development of strategies to deal with that resistance (resistance to gender equality policies can be overt or covert, organized or informal, primarily on the part of men -- but also on the part of women--, from staff or from partner organizations);
- ▶ an institutional culture in which policies or policy statements are used by staff and influence programming.

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ Does the NGO have a gender equality policy? Is the analysis in the policy consistent with Sida's approach to gender equality?
- ▶ If the policy is new: who was involved in the development of the policy (staff, volunteers, men and women, representatives of southern counterparts...)? Did the policy development process itself build broad consensus throughout the organization?
- ▶ Does the policy (or supporting documents) outline how the policy will be implemented, including specific, measurable targets and objectives?
- ▶ Have gender equality issues been taken up in other policies?
- ▶ Who is accountable for the implementation of the policy? Is there a reporting mechanism (for example, an annual report to members on progress in this area)?

- ▶ Is there clear support from management? Does the leadership demonstrate that gender equality is a real (rather than rhetorical) priority for the organization?

3.2 *Institutional Structure*

...organizational mechanisms to support policy implementation

There is no consensus on the best institutional structure to support the implementation of a gender equality policy. Some NGOs have established specific units or a core internal staff group. Others have rejected this option, arguing that it only marginalizes the issue and discourages the majority of staff from taking up gender equality objectives. Instead, they have opted to develop supports for all programmes and tried to strengthen institutional accountability mechanisms. Thus the specific institutional “mechanism” or structure to support policy implementation will vary from organization to organization.

What is clear, however, is that resources (staff time and money) and a structure of some sort are required to support policy implementation. Gender equality policies are not self-implementing.

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ Has the NGO developed an institutional structure to support the implementation of its gender equality policy?
- ▶ Have adequate resources been allocated?

3.3 *Staff and volunteer capacity*

...staff and volunteer understanding of gender equality issues

The integration of gender equality objectives into both the organization and its ongoing programming requires specific skills on the part of volunteers and staff. Although two different types of skills are required, to date these have often been confused.

First, there is a need for a general understanding of the basic issues on the part of all staff and volunteers. NGO workers need to share a vocabulary and develop a consensus on why and how they are working in this area. This has been called “gender sensitization”. Various training manuals have been developed to assist NGOs in this area (for example, Williams, 1994 and CCIC, 1991).

...specific expertise in gender equality issues

Second, there is an additional need for professional expertise in gender analysis. This has often been under-estimated by organizations. All too often in the past, the responsibility for the gender policy was handed to a woman who was interested in women’s issues but did not have any special expertise in gender analysis. Certainly a basic sympathy with the issues is an important starting point, however experience and a technical ability are also required.

A parallel can be drawn with environmental assessments. For example, staff are often expected to know that where and when an environmental assessment is needed, but they are not required to conduct the assessment themselves. Specific expertise is brought in to carry out the actual assessment.

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ Are all staff aware of the policy and their responsibilities for its implementation?
- ▶ Has there been an assessment of the skills required to implement the gender equality policy? If there are deficiencies, what steps can be taken to fill them?
- ▶ Has there been training for staff? Who participated? Was there follow-up?
- ▶ Are there opportunities for the ongoing development of skills in this area?
- ▶ Does the NGO have access to (either internally or externally) the specific technical expertise required to bring a gender analysis and perspective to the areas in which it works?

3.4 Staffing and "work style" issues

A part of the implementation of gender equality objectives, some NGOs have also started to examine their own internal structures and work cultures. They have raised questions about who holds power in the organization, about the relative authority of women and men internally and whether or not the organization's way of working facilitates equitable participation by women and men.

...an organizational culture supportive of gender equality goals

On one hand it is easy to examine the "staffing profile" of an organization (who holds what positions): Are all the senior decision-makers male? Is all the support staff female? How are training opportunities divided between women and men?

Yet it is harder to identify the gender biases in an organization's overall "work culture." Some questions that have been raised include:

- ▶ Are decisions made in a transparent fashion with all those involved having an equitable opportunity to provide input?
- ▶ Are meetings conducted in a way that facilitates participation by both women and men?
- ▶ Do job descriptions and/or working conditions support both women and men's ability to meet family responsibilities?

Some positive steps are possible to deal with "organizational culture" issues. For example, many NGO staff positions require extensive travel

and long hours. These demands can be difficult to juggle with family responsibilities, especially for parents of young children or people caring for elderly parents. Although it is not feasible to ask staff not to travel, some organizations have sought means to compensate for the strain induced by travel through, for example, providing additional leave once people return home from a trip or reduced hours at other times of the year to compensate for long absences.

4. Gender Equality and Programming Issues for NGOs

*Programming issues
include...*

Another set of issues relates to what an NGO does: the nature of projects it supports, the organizations it works with and its relationships with southern NGOs.

4.1 NGO Relationships With Southern NGOs

Relationships between northern and southern NGOs are varied and, at times, complicated. In recent years, much has been written about "partnerships" and the evolving nature of NGO-NGO relations. The limits of "donor-recipient" relations in the context of declining development cooperation budgets, economic globalization and people-to-people solidarity have provided much fuel for discussion (for example Smillie, 1995; Edwards and Hume, 1993; Clark, 1990.)

*...working jointly
with partner NGOs
on gender equality
issues*

The 1995 NGO evaluation reports that Swedish NGOs tend to work with southern organizations that mirror their concerns and constituencies ("mission organizations work the church partners, LO/TCO with trade unions, DIAKONIA with NGOs and the Swedish Red Cross works with local Red Cross societies") (Riddell, *et al.*, 1995: 75). This tendency presents both opportunities and obstacles to the integration of gender equality objectives. On one hand if the northern and southern organization share goals and structures (for example, trade union organizations), then there is a common basis from which to begin a discussion of gender issues (introducing the history of struggle of women within the trade union movement, for example).

On the other hand, if northern organizations only seek out relationships with parallel southern organizations, it may be difficult to bring women's organizations and gender equality advocates into the relationship. The gender biases of northern NGOs may be mirrored and implicitly encouraged in southern NGOs.

Experience to date demonstrates that discussions with partners on gender equality issues are most fruitful when all parties enter into the dialogue with an open mind and a willingness to listen to criticism. Northern NGOs themselves have much to learn from southern women's organizations. The case of a Dutch NGO is interesting:

...working together with partner organisations, especially on policy formulation, has had a tremendous influence on Novib's work. Working with both autonomous women's organisations and mixed organisations on platforms and in working groups has influenced Novib's policy and led to changes within Novib itself as women's organisations, particularly from Latin America, have challenged the relationship between Novib and its partners. (Macdonald, 1994: 57)

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ Has the NGO entered into discussions with partners on gender equality issues? Who participated? Were representatives of women's organizations or gender equality advocates also invited to attend?
- ▶ What has the NGO learned from these discussions? How have these discussions influenced programmes, overall priorities or other policies?

4.2 Merging Gender Equality With Other Development Priorities

Although Sweden now has six objectives for development cooperation, they are clearly inter-linked. Gender equality is fundamental to economic and social equality as well as to democratic development. Studies have also shown that a recognition of women's contribution to the economy and an investment in strengthening of their position will contribute to economic growth. Furthermore, initiatives to encourage the sustainable use of natural resources, in most cases, will be more successful if women are involved.

...making the connections between gender equality and other development priorities

If gender equality initiatives or requirements are interpreted as an "add-on" or something "extra" that NGOs have to do, then their effectiveness will be limited. In Sida's conversations with NGOs and in the discussions between Swedish NGOs and their partners it is important to explore how gender equality is a crucial element in sustainable and equitable development, as well as poverty alleviation.

One entry point into this discussion is raised in the 1995 NGO evaluation (Riddell, 1995). It highlights the questioning of gender relationships as one dimension of questioning power relationships in general. Others have made a similar point. For example, according to an expert group assembled by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in January 1995 to develop a "vision statement on gender-equitable and sustainable human development":

Inequality between women and men intersects with other forms of discrimination such as those based on class, race, caste and ethnicity. The pursuit of gender equality is

therefore a powerful catalyst to transform relations of inequality and power in all aspects of life to achieve sustainable human development.

4.3 Mainstreaming vs Women's Projects

To date, a common practice for NGOs concerned with gender equality has been to support women's projects (often income-generating projects). One of the key lessons drawn from past experience, however, is that this has had limited impact. Instead of supporting more equitable gender relations, these projects have tended to marginalize women. Income generation projects in particular have proved unsuccessful -- from both an economic and social perspective. Some NGOs have supported women's project or programmes and then failed to look at the impact of their overall programme on women, men and gender relations.

...integrating gender equality issues in all programmes and projects

Sida's current approach to gender equality emphasizes the importance of a **mainstreaming** strategy. In other words, all decisions and programmes should incorporate gender equality considerations. For more discussion on this strategy, see the Sida-commissioned 'think piece' (Schalkwyk, *et al*, 1996).

There is a role within a mainstreaming strategy for projects that specifically target women. However, these projects should not marginalize women. Instead, they support women's participation in larger initiatives or focus on specific inputs that support gender equality.

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ Does the NGO seek to integrate or mainstream gender equality considerations into all its programme?
- ▶ Are the women-specific projects that it does support catalytic and supportive of gender equality?
- ▶ Is there a supportive link between an NGO's women-specific projects and the rest of their programme?

4.4 Participation, Women as a Target Group and Gender Equality

Some organizations have assumed that involving women or increasing the number of women participants in their projects will automatically contribute to gender equality. Although increased participation is one important dimension, it does not necessarily lead to either a consideration of women's strategic gender interests or more equal gender relations. As one recent study (Mayoux, 1995: 236) argued:

... increasing the numbers of women involved in 'participatory' projects cannot be seen as a soft alternative to

...going beyond a focus on women's participation to support gender equality goals

conscious strategies for change in gender inequalities. Gender inequalities in resources, time availability and power, structure the activities, priorities and organizational framework of participatory projects as much as 'top-down' development and market activities. In most cases, women's 'empowerment' will only be achieved through strategies of positive discrimination and organizational structures to protect women's interests.

Thus in addition to undertaking specific initiatives that have the explicit goal of working toward gender equality, it is necessary to understand the gender dimension of all initiatives. Although programmes that deliver services and benefits to women may assist those specific groups of women in the short term, they are unlikely to provide support for long-term changes in women's lives.

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ In looking at issues of gender equality, does the NGO go beyond "counting the number of women participants"?
- ▶ Do the consultation strategies or participation approaches used by the NGO acknowledge the differences between women and men and ensure that both women and men have the opportunity and means to become involved?
- ▶ Do projects explicitly address gender inequality?

4.5 Public Information Activities

Public education activities also have gender equality dimensions. NGOs can develop programmes that explicitly address and explore women's empowerment and gender relations. For example, a development education programme can focus on the highlights of the Beijing Platform for Action.

...raising gender equality issues in development education campaigns

NGOs can also ensure that all their education activities are "gender-sensitive". For example a programme on NGOs and conflict resolution can address if and how women and men are affected differently by situations of conflict and how NGOs can respond to these differences. A publication on macro-economic policy can include an analysis of the differential impact of policy choices on women and men.

NGOs should be aware of the images of women and men that they use. Stereotypical images (women as mothers, men as technical workers) can perpetuate views on what is appropriate for both women and men.

Public information or development education campaigns can also be important avenues for developing linkages between the domestic women's movement and women's organizations around the world. Exchanges, networking and visits can strengthen the non-monetary

side of NGO-to-NGO relationships as well as provide support to all those participating.

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ Has a gender analysis been incorporated into information campaigns - for example is it clear that boy and girl street children face different challenges and have different needs? that national economic policies generally have a differential impact on women and men?
- ▶ Have NGOs avoided stereotyped gender images and portrayed both women and men doing non-traditional tasks?
- ▶ Has there been an effort to recruit both male and female volunteers and to interest both in gender equality issues?
- ▶ Are there links to the women's movement in Sweden?

4.6 Gender Equality Issues in Fundraising

Some of the issues for public information campaigns also apply to fundraising initiatives, in particular concerns over the images of women used to solicit contributions. Women's organizations from the south have criticized pictures of women often used in fundraising. They have objected to the portrayal of women as poor, helpless, desperate victims whose problems can all be solved by a donation of funds.

Some questions to ask:

- ▶ Do fundraising images depict women as victims or women as actors capable of improving their lives?
- ▶ Do fundraising images perpetuate gender stereotypes?

5.0 What can Sida seek to achieve with Swedish NGOs and gender equality?

In conclusion, some of the main directions that might be pursued with Swedish NGOs include:

- ▶ move the consideration of these issues from a view of gender equality as a "sector" or special interest group (that only services to marginalize women) to a mainstreaming perspective that recognizes the gender implications within each project and maximizes opportunities to work toward gender equality;
- ▶ bring gender equality considerations (gender differentials, gender biases in organizations, women's participation, women as decision-makers...) into discussions of civil society and NGOs in general;

*...reviewing the
images of women and
men in fundraising
campaigns*

*Possible directions
for Sida's NGO
strategy with a
gender perspective*

- ▶ increase the understanding of institutional issues required to support the achievement of gender equality objectives in NGO programming;
- ▶ facilitate discussions among southern and northern NGOs on gender equality and women's empowerment (share lessons learned...);
- ▶ strengthen links between women's organizations and the international women's movement (both north-south and south-south);
- ▶ Sida can ensure that gender equality considerations are part of the terms of reference for all studies and evaluations; and
- ▶ support NGO efforts to develop capacity and increase competence in this area.

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The Rationale for Taking a Gender Perspective in NGO programming: Some Talking Points

From an efficiency/effectiveness perspective:

For NGOs concerned with poverty reduction, both a gender analysis and gender equality goals are crucial.

A growing percentage of "the poor" are women and there is an increasing awareness that poverty has gender dimensions. An analysis of poverty should include an understanding of how men's and women's poverty is similar and different (both as an experience and the causes). For example, scarce resources are not always shared equally within families as intra-household relations influence distribution. As well, given varying educational levels, time availability, family responsibilities (among other factors), men's and women's participation in initiatives to reduce poverty (employment creation, credit...) is also different.

Civil society is strengthened when both women and men are active participants and decision-makers in non-governmental organizations.

There is growing agreement on the need for a strong, representational and pluralistic civil society. One element of civil society that is often overlooked is women's participation and decision-making. If the needs and interests of half the population are not represented through the institutions in civil society, then the democratic nature of these institutions is open to question.

As well, if women see their interests fully represented and an necessary role for themselves as citizens, then women will have a stronger stake in the strengthening of civil society.

Using a gender analysis supports development effectiveness.

Communities are not homogenous. People have different needs, interests and resources based on a variety of factors, including gender. Therefore an accurate picture of the "target group" should include a disaggregation by gender. A gender analysis will assist in obtaining a full picture of who does what work (both paid and unpaid), who has what responsibilities, who makes what decisions and how resources are both allocated and controlled. A project based on a full set of information has better chance of meeting its objectives than one based on incomplete information.

From an equitable development perspective:

Equitable development implies that women receive a fair share of development resources and benefits.

The percentage of Swedish development cooperation resources channelled through NGOs has been increasing. Given Sida's goal of supporting equitable development, consideration should be given to the benefits that flow from these resources. Past experience has shown that men and women do not automatically benefit equally from development programmes. Without a consideration of the different starting points of women and men (responsibilities, resources, priorities) and explicit consideration of gender equality issues, there is no guarantee that women will receive a fair share of development resources.

Equitable development implies challenging power imbalances. One dimension of power imbalances is gender inequalities.

Gender imbalances are perpetuated and reinforced by institutions – of both the North and South. NGOs' structures and procedures can reproduce inequitable gender relations. Thus NGOs have a role to play in considering their own structures, their relationships with other organizations and the projects they support.

Women's empowerment is a vital development goal in itself.

The Beijing Declaration affirmed that "women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace."

In addition to supporting specific projects, NGOs have a fundamental role to play as advocates. They often have the flexibility to speak out in support of women's empowerment and strengthen linkages among women's organizations.

Key Citations from the Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995

Strategic objective G.1: Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

Actions to be taken

- 190 (a) Support non-governmental organizations and research institutes that conduct studies on women's participation in and impact on decision-making and the decision-making environment;
- 192 (d) Encourage efforts by non-governmental organizations, trade unions and the private sector to achieve equality between women and men in their ranks, including equal participation in their decision-making bodies and in negotiations in all areas and at all levels.

Paragraph 298. Non-governmental organizations should be encouraged to contribute to the design and implementation of these strategies or national plans of action [for the implementation of the Platform for Action]. They should also be encouraged to develop their own programmes to complement government efforts. Women's organizations and feminist groups, in collaboration with other non-governmental organizations, should be encouraged to organize networks, as necessary, and to advocate for and support the implementation of the Platform for Action by Governments and regional and international bodies.



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