

# Framework and Guidance Note for Capacity Development<sup>1</sup>

UNIFEM<sup>2</sup> understands Capacity Development as referring to the **processes** of enhancing, improving and unleashing capacity. Capacity Development (CD) as a process can lead to changes to individual competencies, collective capabilities, and system capacity. Individual competencies refer to the abilities and aptitudes of people that determine what kind of contributions they can make to the functioning of an organization, institution<sup>3</sup>, group, or other type of (social) system or to a goal or outcome. Individual competencies include: **Knowledge; Skills; Attitudes, mindsets, and motivations.**

The **overall objective of capacity development** is to facilitate the inclusion of gender empowerment commitments in national development strategies, policies etc; ensuring financial commitments for implementation and strengthening implementation, monitoring and assessment.

Collective capabilities refer to the **skills of a group** (organization, institution, movement or network) to carry out a particular function or process. **Collective capabilities** include not only functional abilities/skills related to the fulfillment of tasks such as conducting gender audits but also more intangible abilities such as leadership, vision and ability to engage in dialogue. These abilities are essential to bringing about higher level change and are particularly relevant to **relationship and network building** among strategic partners and key constituencies, e.g., NWMs, ministries of finance, budget and other key government agencies, women's organizations such as networks of home-based workers, or women migrant workers, HIV+ women, etc.

The term *system capacity* refers to the **overall ability of a system** to create public value. System capacity **emerges** over time out of the **interrelationships and interactions** among: Individual competencies, Collective capabilities, and the dynamic external contexts (e.g. political, social, economic, and cultural contexts) in which the organization or institution is embedded.

## Guiding Principles for Capacity Development

- **Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)** - Under HRBA, capacity refers to the key conditions that must exist to realize a right. The idea is to contribute to the development of capacities of duty bearers (individuals and organizations) to meet their obligations and/or capacities of rights holders (individuals and organizations) to claim their rights. HRBA is essentially a CD model.
- **Women's Empowerment Approach** – Capacity is about empowerment and identity, properties that allow individuals and groups to be aware of themselves, to grow, and to survive. This is supportive of UNIFEM's philosophy on empowerment.
- **Gender Mainstreaming** – Identify the individual competencies and collective capabilities needed to ensure that the implications for women and men of planned actions are assessed at all levels and appropriate means are taken to address them.
- **Results Orientation**–The suggested approach includes the specification and measurement/description of expected results of programmes that aim to enhance the competencies or capabilities of UNIFEM's partners. The establishment and use of baseline data in order to make 'before and after' comparisons' is an important tool in this context.

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<sup>1</sup> Drafted in March 2010

<sup>2</sup> In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly established United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). UN Women combines the mandates and assets of UNIFEM, OSAGI, DAW and INSTRAW, with an expanded mission and vision.

<sup>3</sup> In this document the term 'institution' is used to refer to specific administrative entities that UNIFEM partners with, such as official government bodies like Ministries. This differs from broader understandings that, for example, see institutions as the respective 'rules of society' in a certain area.