

The United Nations Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Issue-Based Coalition on Gender Equality (IBC-Gender)

Terms of Reference

Last Update on 24/11/2017

I. Background

The establishment of a gender coordination group at the regional level in Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region was first proposed among Regional Directors at the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) meeting in December 2014. Following from this discussion, UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP regional offices began meeting on a regular basis in early 2015. In order to strengthen the collaboration and coordination among the three agencies at the regional level and to better support the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and Gender Theme Groups (GTGs)/Results Group on Gender (RGGs) at the country level, a regional partnership framework document was developed among the three agencies in early 2015.

Furthermore, during the RCM meeting on 7 May 2015, Regional Directors agreed to formalize the ECA Regional Working Group on Gender (ECA-RWGG) and to expand the membership to other UN agencies and entities working on regional specifics of gender. The work of the ECA-RWGG supports both RCM and R-UNDG in ECA region, and the ECA-RWGG reports to the Regional Directors of RCM and R-UNDG.

In 2016, as per the decision of the Regional Directors under the framework of Regional UNDG and RCM, the ECA-RWGG was transformed as Issue-Based Coalition on Gender Equality (IBC-Gender). This was done to strengthen collaboration and partnership with key regional actors beyond the UN system to jointly advocate for and support the implementation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the ECA region. At the same time, IBC-Gender also maintains the key functions to strengthen the inter-agency coordination and the UN system accountability on gender equality at the regional level and to support UNCTs and GTG/RGGs in the ECA region.

II. Main goal and objectives

The main goal of IBC-Gender is to ensure a coordinated UN system approach to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the ECA region, specifically around achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). IBC-Gender was founded to ensure the realization of human rights commitments and for addressing gender issues in humanitarian contexts. In line with the Secretary General's Human Rights Up Front initiative, IBC-Gender ensures a rights-based approach and to focus collaboration in this critical area.

The following are specific objectives of IBC-Gender:

- 1) Strengthen **regional engagement to promote gender equality through regional and international initiatives and fora** such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Beijing Platform for Action review and its follow-up;
- 2) To provide more coherent and timely programming and policy/normative **guidance and technical support** to the RCM, R-UNDG, UNCTs, GTGs/RGGs and their partners on gender-related issues at regional and country levels;
- 3) To increase effective and efficient use of **human and financial resources** within and between member agencies on gender-related initiatives and interventions, including regional joint resource mobilization efforts;
- 4) To improve coordination, communication and information sharing on **key lessons and good/promising practices** from this region and other regions among member agencies at the regional level and also across all GTGs/RGGs and UNCTs at the country level in the ECA region, in order to better meet gender equality goals established by countries in the region;
- 5) Identify **gaps in gender equality programming and develop innovative regional mechanisms** to address those gaps, including through advancing strategies for joint programming; and
- 6) Support **joint advocacy and coordination** including with regional partners engaged in gender equality policies and programming, such as the European Union and World Bank.

III. Membership

The membership of IBC-Gender consists of the UN agencies and related entities working at the regional level on gender equality and the empowerment of women in Europe and Central Asia. Additionally, there will be some representation from the country level as relevant, such as chairs of GTGs/RGGs, depending on the specific topics/subjects of agenda.

IBC-Gender also invites specific non-UN regional partners to jointly implement specific activities. Membership of non-UN partners will be determined case by case every year based on specific joint activities of from annual work plan.

Each member agency will designate a focal point and an alternate, ideally a gender specialist/advisor or someone equivalent in their respective office. The cost of participation will be met by each participating member agency.

The focal points represent their agency and are responsible for providing an update on their gender-related activities and plans. The focal point is also responsible for keeping their colleagues in the respective agencies informed on the activities of IBC-Gender.

Observers may be invited to the IBC-Gender meetings on a case-by-case basis as necessary and when relevant (for instance, member agencies might invite their colleagues to brief IBC-Gender on their specific activities).

IV. Chair and Secretariat

Co-chairing of the IBC-Gender is done by UN Women and another UN agency that will be determined on a rotational basis. The co-chairs will be responsible for overall coordination and following up on the status of joint work plans.

The two agencies co-chairing the IBC-Gender will also be in charge of the secretariat functions, including organizing the quarterly meetings, drafting and finalizing minutes as well as finalizing joint annual work plan and following up on the status of activities in annual joint work plan.

New co-chair agency that will co-chair with UN Women will be decided based on the voluntary nomination.

V. Meetings

Meetings of IBC-Gender (face-to-face in Istanbul for Istanbul-based agencies and connected with other agencies via skype/Bluejeans) will be normally held quarterly. Additional meetings may be convened, if deemed necessary, by the members. Skype, Bluejeans and/or teleconferencing facilities will be used for meetings to enable involvement of interested regional and/or sub-regional offices of member organisations that are not based in Istanbul, as well as participants from country level as relevant to the specific agenda.

The agenda of each meeting will be provided to members in advance by the secretariat, including relevant background documents. Minutes of each IBC-Gender meeting, summarizing key decisions and follow-up actions, will be prepared by the secretariat and endorsed by the members. The final version of minutes will be shared with all member agencies by email and uploaded in ECA Gender Group page of Yammar (under the sub-group on ECA IBC-Gender).

In addition to the quarterly meetings, member agencies communicate and coordinate regularly for effective implementation of activities as agreed in joint annual workplans of IBC-Gender.

VI. Planning, Monitoring and Reporting Arrangement

Starting from the year 2016, during the 1st quarter of each calendar year, the IBC-Gender will prepare a joint annual workplan that consists of: 1) priority areas, key joint results/indicators and activities; 2) lead agenc(ies); 2) supporting agenc(ies); 3) timeline; and 4) budget. Joint annual workplan of IBC-Gender is to specify the key areas of collaboration on gender among member agencies in ECA region, based on the existing regional strategies, regional programmes and other types of planning documents of each agency. The financial contribution and funding must come from the member agencies/entities of IBC-Gender. The joint work plan will be uploaded in IBC-Gender page of Yammar.

The leading agency per key activity is responsible for coordinating with other agencies to ensure effective implementation and monitoring. Leading agencies will report on the status and achievements during the quarterly meetings of IBC-Gender.

The co-chairs of IBC-Gender will report on the overall status of joint annual work plan as well as key achievements and challenges at the meetings of the RCM and R-UNDG as relevant and necessary. Budget allocations and outstanding requirements to achieve objectives of the group will be also reviewed with the RCM and R-UNDG if necessary.