

FACTSHEET 02 (February 2009)

Programme on Gender and Governance: “Promoting women’s political leadership and governance in India and South Asia” Supported by the Royal Norwegian Agency

Background: The programme has been launched in December 2009, and UNIFEM is currently in the process of hiring staff members for successful implementation of this programme and developing activities and strategies with NIRD, the Hunger Project and other partners.

On 14 January 2010 the proposal was approved by the Project Approval Committee (PAC) of UNIFEM (at Headquarters, New York). The programme can now be formally rolled out.

The Programme’s Linkage with UNIFEM’s Strategic Plan (SP): The project will contribute to the following SP Outcomes –

- **SP Outcome 2:** Increase in the numbers of Constitutions, legal frameworks and processes that promote and protect women’s human rights.
- **SP Outcome 5:** Gender equality experts, advocates and their organizations or networks effectively demand the implementation of gender equality dimensions in national laws, policies and strategies.
- **SP Outcome 7:** Key policy, service delivery and media institutions create enabling institutional environments to promote and protect women’s human rights in line with global, regional and national agreements.

In order to accomplish the overarching goal that “By 2015, elected representatives in local governments ensure implementation of national commitments on women’s human rights in four South Asian countries,” the programme aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- *Evidence based advocacy on gender-responsive governance that strengthens legal frameworks and policies for women in India and South Asia by 2015.*
- *Elected women and men representatives in local governments have the knowledge and capacity to transform and implement policies, programmes and resource allocations for gender sensitive governance in seven states in India by 2015.*
- *Key capacity development and media institutions/structures in India and South Asia are strengthened to mainstream gender into their policies and programmes by 2015.*



Programme Information

Area: Democratic Governance

Budget: USD 10 Million

Project Duration: 36 months (2009 – 2012)

Implementing Agency: United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in partnership with the National Institute for Rural Development (NIRD) and The Hunger Project (THP)



Activities – Phase 0: Implementation planning, context setting and ownership building – In order to refine the strategy and prepare for programme implementation, UNIFEM has initiated a process of enquiry by placing a query on the programme design with two communities (gender and decentralization) of the **UN Solution Exchange** (<http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/en/index.php>). The responses that are generated through this query will be shared among all relevant stakeholders. The responses will contribute to knowledge generation for programme implementation.

UNIFEM South Asia organised a **two-day visioning workshop** from 2 - 3 February 2010 along with partners from NIRD and The Hunger Project. The objective was to bring all partners on a common platform in terms of understanding the vision and goals to be achieved.

Some **outcomes from this workshop**:

- (a) The Theory of Change and the Results Matrix was discussed at length to ensure a common understanding of the programme objectives and goals, and alignment of the strategies and outcomes;
- (b) The states in which the programme will be operational in India were selected based on relevant criteria;
- (c) An agreement was reached on the TOR for the research organisations;
- (d) Names of experts for the Steering Committee were shortlisted, and it was agreed that Committee members will rotate to allow a range of expertise to be consulted at different stages of the programme;
- (e) The budgets, monitoring formats and reporting guidelines were presented to the partners for future reference;
- (f) UNIFEM proposed to meet with Ministries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on 10th February 2010 for support and collaboration from both ministries (See the box below for update on the meeting);
- (g) Plans for the first steering committee meeting and the consultative meeting were also finalised for the end of March 2010 in New Delhi along with a field visit to Jaipur, Rajasthan to meet with the SIRD, relevant ministries and elected women representatives there.

A meeting was held on **10th February 2010** with Mr A N P Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and Mr B K Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development. Apart from representatives from both ministries, The Hunger Project, the National Institute of Rural Development, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, and UNIFEM were present at this meeting.

UNIFEM had coordinated this meeting with the objective of sharing the concept of the project. An MOU between the Government of Norway and the Government of India would be signed formalizing their partnership in the area of local governance on 2nd March 2010. The UNIFEM programme will fall under the umbrella of the larger bi-lateral initiative.

The Secretary stated that whereas a large amount of funding to strengthen local governance was available with the government, it was critical that UN agencies like UNIFEM bring in quality strategic and catalytic inputs that have the potential to transform the Panchayati Raj system. He also added that a number of gaps in political leadership identified at the local levels needed qualitative inputs.

The meeting ended on a positive note of support and sponsorship for the UNIFEM initiative and with commitment towards mutual collaboration.

Programme Location(s):

Starting in India - The project will be implemented in seven states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh)

Other countries in South Asia – Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh

