A COMPENDIUM OF CASE STUDIES ON **GENDER MAINSTREAMING INITIATIVES** IN UN-HABITAT, 2008 - 2012





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## INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is one of the most powerful forces in the world. We live in a new urban era with most of humanity now living in towns and cities.<sup>1</sup> By the middle of this century it is expected that 7 in 10 persons on the planet will be urban dwellers<sup>2</sup>. Cities must now ensure that urbanization generates enough decent and productive jobs for their rapidly growing populations; but too often economic development has led to gains only for a few. Gender inequality and barriers to women empowerment remain widespread in the urban environment, compromising the future of cities.

Equitable, inclusive and prosperous cities need to harness the full potential of all citizens, irrespective of gender and age. This is important as the world grapples with the effects of the global economic and financial crisis that has resulted in widespread unemployment, climate change and food insecurity. A gender study in 2012 by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) shows that theoretically, and foremost, Urbanization is largely associated with the prosperity of women; in practice few women benefit from economic growth and prosperity of cities. This is largely due to discrimination, the lack of recognition of women's reproductive work and, to some extent, undervaluation of their productive work.

Women are the Third World's powerhouse'<sup>3</sup> and the drivers of global economic growth. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities. "The future of the world economy lies increasingly in female hands<sup>4</sup>".

Gender Equality is a key priority in UN-Habitat's mandate; it is an integral part of the agency's work. UN-Habitat commits itself to the goal of gender equality in human settlements development and resolves to promote it and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty and stimulate the development of human settlements that are truly sustainable. UN-Habitat further commits itself to formulating and strengthening policies and practices to promote the full and equal participation of women in human settlements planning and decision-making.

Whilst we recognize that much work has been done in the mainstreaming of gender equality in human settlement, UN-Habitat acknowledges that much more is required.

This compendium of case studies is designed to bring into one document most of the gender mainstreaming initiatives UN-Habitat implemented from 2008 to 2012. The compendium may not be the most complete account of all gender initiatives within this period, given the time and resource limitations in doing this study. However, the case studies provide the most comprehensive examples of the field implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan of 2008 to 2013.

The projects and programmes compendium brings recognition to UN-Habitat's efforts (which have often remained inadequately documented and disseminated) to advance the internationally agreed agenda for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. The compendium serves as a good start towards capturing the successful efforts under way to advance the agenda on equality and empowerment of women. In addition, the compendium will also serve as a learning and resource tool to UN-Habitat and its partners.

The case studies were submitted by UN-Habitat's branch/offices at headquarters and all regional offices in response to a call for submission from the Gender Coordination and Support Unit, in the agency's Projects Office. The consultants and the Unit developed a case study template that was sent to all branch headquarters, regional and country offices through the heads of units and the gender focal points.

A total of 30 project case studies of gender mainstreaming initiatives were submitted from the following geographic branches:

## LINKING CASE STUDIES TO THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

In the context of the Gender Equality Action Plan, the project case studies may be clustered according to the specific action areas to which each case study contributes most. This classification does not preclude the possibility of a case study contributing to more than one action area.

Geographic Branch	Number of Cases	
Headquarters	7	
Regional Office in Africa	7	
Regional Office in the Asia-Pacific	12	
Regional Office in Latin America and the Caribbean	4	
Total	30	

#### **GEAP Action Areas**

## **Case Study Title / Themes**

**ACTION AREA 1.** Advocacy and Monitoring Gender Equality in Cities

#### **Outcomes:**

- Production and use in policymaking and practice of sex-disaggregated data and evidence-based knowledge on gender in cities
- 1. Research papers on gender and urban planning prepared as an input for the:
  - "Cities and Climate Change: Global Report on Human Settlements 2011"

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