

Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDFW) and the National Women's Council (NWC) for the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality

The Gender Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and the National Women's Council operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, hereinafter referred as to the "Parties".

1. Reaffirming the commitment to work towards the social, economic and political empowerment of women for the attainment of gender equality;
2. Recognising the desire to strengthen the ties of partnership and cooperation between the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare and the NWC;
3. Considering the comprehensive implementation of policies and programmes on women's empowerment and gender issues;
4. Resolved to work jointly to accelerate their interventions to address prevailing gender gaps;
5. Reiterating their commitments for the full implementation of the Beijing Platform For Action(1995) and the Sustainable Development Goals (New York, 2015);
6. Aware of the importance of effective collaboration for the promotion of women's rights.

Have reached the following understanding:

Article 1

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding are to:

- (i) provide an overarching framework for the parties to empower women for the attainment of gender equality as part of their respective mandate;
- (ii) enhance the capacity of the Gender Unit to play its role, as the National Gender Machinery, more effectively and get more involved in its policy advisory function;
- (iii) to strengthen the National Women's Council's ability and capacity to implement policies in favour of women;
enable women's associations to participate in and have influence over policy making processes, thereby upscaling their overall empowerment.

Article 2

SCOPE OF INTERVENTION

In order to achieve the objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding, the parties identify the following areas of cooperation as key to fulfilling their respective mandate effectively:

- (i) transforming the institutional mechanism and structures to strengthen the linkages between the parties;
- (ii) adopting a paradigm shift from "Women in Development"(WID) to " Gender and Development"(GAD);
- (iii) establishing channels of communication between the Parties, aimed at facilitating policy implementation relating to women's empowerment and gender equality;
- (iv) establishing an accountability mechanism for the coordination of the Memorandum of Understanding.

This Memorandum takes effect upon signature and is to remain in effect indefinitely.

Article 3

FORMS OF COOPERATION

In order to achieve the objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding and to promote gender equality, the Parties, hereby, decide to have clear demarcations on the role and responsibilities of the Gender Unit as the central policy and coordinating body for gender mainstreaming strategies; and those of the NWC responsible for the implementation of women's empowerment programmes.

(i) Transforming the institutional mechanism and structures to strengthen the linkages between the Gender Unit and the NWC

The Parties acknowledge that linkages between the Gender Unit and the NWC are critical for the effectiveness of both institutions. Strategic partnership between the Gender Unit and the NWC that articulate women's empowerment can contribute significantly to the attainment of the gender equality agenda.

- a) The Gender Unit will ensure that all commitments taken at international and regional levels in favour of women's human rights by Government are communicated to the NWC. These will guide the NWC to align its actions for the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality;
- b) The Gender Unit will be responsible to formulate policies from a gender perspective, on the basis of emerging needs and aspirations of women, resulting from the prevailing socio-economic context;

- c) The NWC will be responsible to disseminate the human rights instruments and commitments pertaining to women's empowerment and gender equality amongst its clientele;
- d) The NWC will ensure that recommendations relating to the concerns and priorities of women and women's organisations are communicated to the Gender Unit on a regular basis which shall influence policy decisions.

(ii) Adopting a paradigm shift from "Women in Development" (WID) to "Gender and Development (GAD)

The WID approach of the 1970-1980s focused on implementing women's specific projects in relation to their traditional roles. This resulted in women being seen as passive beneficiaries of development.

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) refers to the unequal power relations between men and women, wherein, the latter are relegated to subordinate positions, thereby, hindering their empowerment. In order to address this issue, the GAD approach was adopted, focusing on the need to address the unequal gender relations which prevent equitable development and which often lock women out of the development process.

The change of appellation of the Ministry, therefore, followed suit in 2010. Since then, the Ministry's policies and programmes have been formulated and implemented from a GAD approach. The NWC as the implementing arm of the Ministry will, *de facto*, be called upon to adopt a GAD approach in its intervention.

- (a) the Gender Unit will be responsible to assist the NWC in harmonising the implementation of its programmes and interventions from a gender perspective;
- (b) the Gender Unit will organise Training of Trainers Programme for the personnel of the Council on the gender equality concept as well as other related gender discourses;
- (c) the NWC will be responsible to promote awareness about the gender equality concept;
- (d) the NWC will be responsible to assist the Gender Unit in the identification of prevailing gender gaps arising from the socio-economic and political domains;
- (e) the NWC will be responsible to encourage Regional Committees and Women's Associations to advocate for gender equality in all sectors of development.

(iii) Establishing channels of communication between the Parties, aimed at facilitating policy implementation relating to women's empowerment and gender equality

The establishment of direct channels of communication between both Parties is pre-requisite, fosters cooperation and offers opportunities for the Parties to decide jointly and by consensus on their short, medium and long term tasks and/ or areas of intervention. The contact details of officers designated to embody the channels of communication are namely-

	Name	Designation	Contact Details
(a)	Mrs M. Bali	Head Gender Unit, Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare	2063823
(b)	Mrs K. Ah-Nien	Secretary, National Women's Council	2173973

(a) The Gender Unit will be responsible to provide guidance to the NWC on the following

- (I) the organisation of training programmes for women/ women's organisations;
- (II) the thematics to be addressed during Information, Education and Communication Campaigns;
- (III) the promotion of women's participation in decision-making processes;
- (IV) the promotion of entrepreneurial activities, including linkages with the National Women Entrepreneur Council; and
- (V) the development of women's leadership programmes through development of networks and mentoring.

(b) The NWC will provide feedback through quarterly reports on the outcome of their women's empowerment programmes (as listed above);

- (I) the Gender Unit and the NWC will hold monthly meetings, or, as and when required, decide on joint programmes to be organised for women's empowerment;
- (II) the Gender Unit and the NWC will conduct weekly briefing sessions between the Family Welfare and Protection Officers and Field Staff to ensure the active involvement of both parties for enhanced service delivery;

(III) the Gender Unit will be responsible to share with the NWC updated information on women's empowerment and gender issues, public policies and best practices, by fostering regular dialogue between the Parties.

(IV) the NWC will, in turn, ensure that an effective channel of communication is established with its clientele through which policies for women's empowerment will be implemented and the concerns of women voiced out through a bottom-up approach.

(iv) Establishing an accountability mechanism for the coordination of the Memorandum of Understanding in relation to policy formulation in favour of women

In a bid to ensure that the Gender Unit does not find itself as the policy making body as well as spearheading implementation of policies for women's empowerment, its Coordinating role needs to be clearly demarcated.

Concurrently the Gender Unit needs to monitor policy implementation aimed at gauging their gender impact.

(a) the Gender Unit will be responsible to ensure that the institutionalisation of the working arrangements with the NWC are implemented, *in toto*.

(b) the Gender Unit will designate its representative(s) to coordinate the activities and issues contained in this Memorandum of Understanding; and

(c) the NWC will, in turn, designate its representative(s) to provide regular feedback to the Gender Unit through reports (including qualitative and quantitative data and other useful indicators) to inform about the achievement of the set objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Article 4

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

- (i) Activities undertaken under this Memorandum of Understanding are to be jointly funded by the Parties, and will be allocated in accordance with their established procedures;
- (ii) activities to be undertaken under this Memorandum of Understanding should be consistent with the mandate of the Parties;

Article 5

EFFECTIVE DATE

- (i) This memorandum takes effect upon signature.

Article 6

AMENDMENT

- (i) Any of the Parties may, as and when required, through appropriate channels notify the other of its decision to amend the Memorandum of Understanding to make it more explicit and/ or responsive to emerging trends, or to bring it to an end

Article 7

TERMINATION

Either party may put an end to the MOU by informing the other party of its intention, in writing, six (6) months in advance and through appropriate channels.

The termination of this MOU shall not affect projects already implemented by the parties. The termination of the MOU shall put an end to any project implemented or approved by all parties.

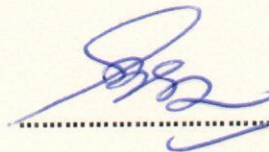
Signed, in duplicate, this 09th day of March, 2016.



Mrs M. Bali

Head Gender Unit

**Ministry of Gender Equality,
Child Development and
Family Welfare**



Mr M. Boodhun

President

National Women's Council