

Fawu Gender Strategy 2010

The paper examines the basic premise which defines the union gender strategy, to better understand its implication and how it relates to the union fundamentals in terms of gender equality. It concludes, that, unless these fundamentals are questioned, it would be difficult to make strides in terms of gender in key areas such as education, health and violence against women and children.

Some of the key premises underlying the union gender strategy are:

- (a) gender equality , especially with regards to rights, voice , and decision making, resources, leads to higher economic growth and greater poverty reduction;
- (b) men and women face different constraints and opportunities in the workplace, society and union.

The gender mainstreaming strategy for 2010-2015 focuses on:

- Enhancing the internal structures , procedures and monitoring;
- Work with the constituents and or structures to strengthen and expand actions for achieving gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming strategy: Key concepts

Gender equality, or equality between men and women, refers to the equal rights , responsibilities, opportunities, treatment and evaluation of women and men:

- a) In employment;
- b) In the relation between work and life.

Promotion of gender equality is about ensuring equal outcomes and equal shares between men and women so that all persons are treated with respect, dignity and be allowed to develop their full potential, leading to higher quality of life for all. It does not mean that women need to become identical. Women and men are and can be different, but should have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities: All human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles and prejudices. Gender equality means that different behavior , aspiration and needs of women and men are considered , valued and favored equally , and that the way women and men are treated and their work is valued and should not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender equality includes:

- The same human and workers rights;
- Equal value and fair distribution of :
 - * Responsibilities and opportunities
 - * Workload, decision making and income

Equality between men and women is both a human rights issue and a precondition for sustainable people –centered, social and economic development. It is both the right and the smart thing to do

The main strategy for the promotion of gender equality is gender mainstreaming.

The following definition was adopted by the UN in 1997:

“The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action , including legislation , policies or programmes , in any areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economical and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated”.

Gender mainstreaming is an institutional strategy aimed at giving equal opportunities and rights to men and women as beneficiaries, participants and decision makers. It refers to the process of:

- Integrating gender equality into the mainstreaming of policies programmes, projects , institutional mechanisms and budgets
- Addressing gender inequalities through gender –specific measures for and with women and men or both.

Gender mainstreaming need to take place at policy, programme and project levels at all stages of the programme cycle (design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and should cover all fields of the union actions.

1. Desegregating data by sex and carry out a gender analysis to review the needs of men and women , assess the impact of the union action on women and men and identify possible imbalances between the position of men and women
2. Giving women a voice by increasing their participation in programmes, organization and in decision making with a view to ensure that their interest and perspectives are taken into account in development work.

The overall objective of the union gender mainstreaming strategy is:

- To achieve equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women at work and in the relation between work and life;
- The elimination of all forms of discrimination against women workers and equal participation of women and men in decision making in the employment , social protection and labour fields in the country served by the union in South Africa with specific attention for gender equality and empowerment of low- income women.
