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GENDER and GOVERNANCE

Overview Report

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Contents

ACRONYMS

BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
EPZ	Export processing zone
EU	European Union
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
IFI	International financial institution
IGTN	International Gender and Trade Network
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPM	New public management
NWM	National women's machinery
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WTO	World Trade Organization

Women are often excluded from decision-making, from the household up to the highest levels of policymaking. Women's equal participation in governance is, therefore, an important end in itself – a recognition of their right to speak and be heard. More broadly, it is a means to social transformation. Decisions made and policies implemented by governance institutions at global, national and local levels help to shape perceptions of the roles that women and men play in society, as well as determining their access to rights and resources. Involving women in defining these policies and processes, and in influencing the institutions that produce them, makes it more likely they will respond to the different needs and situations of both women and men, and contribute to gender equality.

So what is governance?
'Governance' is a slippery term, with various definitions depending on who is talking about it and the context in which it is used. Put simply, governance refers to decision-making by a range of interested people (or 'stakeholders') including those in positions of power and 'ordinary' citizens. These decisions have a huge impact on the ways in which women and men lead their lives, on the rules they are expected to abide by, and on the structures that determine where and how they work and live. They also shape how public resources are allocated and whether services take account of both women's and men's needs and interests.

Probably the first governance institution that comes to mind is *government*. Yet it is not only national governments that make decisions about our lives; global governance institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) also make decisions about our world, which then influence those made by national governments. In turn, civil society organisations (CSOs) and citizens play a key role – putting pressure on governments to take action to challenge gender inequalities, and holding them accountable for the commitments they make.

What are the goals and principles of governance?
Many agencies and organisations see effective governance as the route to goals that include reduced poverty and more equal, democratic, corruption-free societies. Some see economic growth and efficiency as the best way to achieve these end goals. For others, governance should promote social justice and gender equality, and further the realisation of the rights of all citizens. In turn, these different players assess how effective – or good – governance is on the basis of how accountable, transparent, inclusive and responsive governance institutions are to their citizens. These principles – if defined, applied and measured in ways which reflect gendered concerns – can improve the performance of governance institutions. For example, inclusive governance processes that meaningfully engage women as well as men are more likely to result in programmes that meet the needs of both, making them more effective.

Why is gender-sensitive governance so important?
We need effective governance, underpinned by the principles outlined above, at all levels – from the global to the local, in developed and developing countries. How can governance be effective if it does not lead to a more equal world where women have choices and their rights are realised? How can it be effective if it does not take account of and respond to the differing needs and priorities of women and men in public spending, policies,

legislation and treaties? How can it be effective if women are unable to exercise their right to participate in making the decisions that affect their lives?

What challenges do we face?

Failure to tackle entrenched gender inequalities
While there has been some progress, policies and legislation are still not eliminating gender inequalities. For example, trade liberalisation policies led by the WTO may have led to more employment for some women in developing countries, but these women are often denied their labour rights. Another is the continuing failure in many countries to recognise rape within marriage as a crime. While the international frameworks exist to challenge these gender inequalities – in the form of the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights instruments – signatory countries are not putting their commitments into practice, and others are failing to ratify them.

Decision-making is dominated by men
There are still far fewer women than men with the power to make decisions in governance institutions. In 2008, the world average of women in Parliaments was only 17.8 per cent. In the highest decision-making bodies of European Union central banks, there are five times as many men as women. Local government-initiated consultative processes also often fail to engage women sufficiently. Even decision-makers in CSOs tend to be men.

Governance processes often exclude people with caring responsibilities – primarily women
The working arrangements of governance institutions are usually inflexible, making it difficult for women to balance their work with unpaid caring responsibilities. In turn, the processes designed to engage citizens in decision-making – such as participatory budgeting – can exclude women by failing to provide crèches or other facilities.

Women are not treated equally in governance institutions and processes
Even when women are involved, they are often kept on the margins of decision-making or are confined to 'soft' policy areas such as health and education. This marginalisation is also prevalent in CSOs and in local government participatory processes.

What would gender-sensitive governance look like?
Gender-sensitive governance requires that gender equality and the realisation of women's rights are at the heart of the goals and practices of governance. Policies and legislation should address the differing needs, interests, priorities and responsibilities of women and men, as well as their unequal economic and social power. As already noted, establishing clear, gendered understandings of the principles associated with effective governance is important, but these principles need to be incorporated into the kinds of concrete approaches outlined below.

Enabling more women to participate in governance
Making governance gender-sensitive requires more than 'adding women' in Parliaments, but this is one place to start. Gender-sensitive reforms in national and local government – in the form of electoral quota systems and the establishment of women's ministries – have helped to achieve a better gender balance. For example, at 56.3 per

cent, the Republic of Rwanda has one of the highest figures in the world for women's representation in national assemblies – in large part due to a quota system. If women are to make the most of the opportunities which governance reforms present, investing time and resources to build their capacity is also vital.

Changing the governance institutions themselves

A thorough gender analysis of everyday institutional practices is a good way to uncover attitudes, behaviour, thinking and policies that are discriminatory or gender-blind. Likely institutional changes needed include:

- making rights more central to governance institutions and processes, with stronger systems of accountability for honouring international commitments such as CEDAW;

- ensuring that policies are responsive to all citizens, informed by participatory processes that identify the different needs of women and men;

- ensuring that all governance processes are transparent and accountable on gender inequality;

- building the capacity of women and men in governance institutions to understand gender issues – in turn developing the political will needed to bring about change; and

- promoting greater flexibility around working hours and ensuring free or affordable childcare facilities are available and accessible.

Changing mindsets – governance is for all

Finally, we need to break down existing ideas of governance as the domain of privileged men – removed from the realities of ordinary people – and inspire both women and men to identify their own potential roles in bringing about a transformed, more equal society.

1. INTRODUCTION

What is 'governance'?

Put simply, governance refers to decision-making by a range of interested people (or 'stakeholders') including those in formal positions as well as 'ordinary' citizens, those with more and less power. These decisions have a huge impact on the ways in which women and men lead their lives, on the rules they are expected to abide by, and on the structures that determine where and how they work and live. Five interconnected levels of governance have been identified – the household, community, local and national government, and global institutions. They shape, for example, whether legislation on gender-based violence makes a difference to women in their homes, whether women have access to and control over community land, whether services take account of both women's and men's needs and interests, who benefits most from public expenditure, and who in a household has rights to obtain a divorce or inherit land or property.

1.1 Why focus on gender[1] and governance?

Our lives and the world we live in are shaped by *negotiations with*, *negotiations between* and *decisions by* a range of governance institutions. Who has the power to make these decisions? Whose voices are heard during decision-making processes? What material impacts do these decisions have on people's lives – their opportunities, choices, access to rights and resources, and quality of life? Who are the winners and who are the losers? The answers to these questions tell a story of gender inequality – inequality in decision-making and inequality in the outcomes of decisions, wherever they are made. Women are often excluded from decision-making – whether within the household and community, in local and national government, or within global institutions such as the United Nations (UN). Even when they are included in these processes they are struggling to get their voices heard, and having to push for recognition of women's rights and for adequate mechanisms to hold government to account for their commitments on gender equality. How can governance be effective if women are unable to exercise their right to participate in making the decisions that affect their lives and if it does not lead to a more equal world where women's rights are realised?

Changes in governance approaches over the past few decades – with their emphasis on decentralised, democratised processes and principles of accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, equity and upholding the rule of law – have great potential to enable social transformation. But despite this potential and some progress in terms of electing more women to decision-making positions in some countries, most governance institutions are failing to deliver sufficiently on gender equality and women's rights and to challenge their own discriminatory practices. In some cases, they are creating further inequalities. For example, trade liberalisation policies led by the World Trade Organization (WTO) may have led to more employment for some women in developing countries, but these women are often denied their labour rights. In many countries there is still a failure to recognise rape within marriage as a crime – meaning that perpetrators cannot be called to account. International frameworks exist to challenge these gender inequalities – in the form of the Convention of the

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1 'Gender' refers to the range of 'socially constructed' roles, behaviours, attributes, aptitudes and relative power associated with being female or male in a given society at a particular point in time (Esplen 2009b: 2). 'Socially-constructed' means that these are not 'givens' or 'natural' but are constructed or produced by society. And as such are able to be modified or changed.

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights instruments but signatory countries are not putting their commitments into practice, and others are failing to ratify the relevant conventions.

Actively involving women in defining policies and processes at global, national and local levels, and in shaping the institutions that produce them, means they are likely to respond to the different needs and situations of both women and men, and contribute to gender equality. These changes should in turn result in more gender-sensitive governance. Gender-sensitive governance is also a significant means to broader social transformation because of the extent to which governance institutions help to shape perceptions of the roles men and women should play in society. Finally, women's equal participation in governance is an important end in itself – it is quite simply a basic right for women who are so often deprived of a voice in decision-making at all levels.

1.1.1 Governance – its levels and its institutions

'Governance' is a rather vague term, with multiple interpretations – yet it is an important concept to grasp because it is increasingly used to describe the way decision-making processes are managed at global, national and local levels – in developed as well as developing countries. Probably the first governance institution that comes to mind is *government*. Yet global governance institutions such as the UN and the WTO also make decisions about our world, and in turn influence the decisions made by national governments. In turn, social movements, Civil Society Organisations[2] and citizens play a key role – holding governance institutions accountable for the commitments they make to promoting gender equality. In fact, five levels of governance have been identified – the household, community, local and national government, and global institutions (Ashworth 1996).

These governance institutions are becoming more and more interlinked. Decisions made at a global level increasingly influence our lives – whether they are about human rights, security, the economy, trade, or the environment. They are filtered through government policy at national and local levels, consumed through measures that affect us directly; for example, a large percentage of small-scale farmers are women, and they have been facing the consequences of the rise in global prices of seeds and fertiliser and the falling prices of their goods in the face of competition from cheaper imported goods. At the same time, individuals, communities and CSOs are reacting to policies and practices of governance at national and global levels – they are defining their needs, demanding to be heard and influencing how policy is made and implemented, using strategies such as lobbying at international fora, direct action, and internet tools such as web-based 'blogs'.

1.2 What questions does this report answer?

- How can we reframe understandings and practices of governance to put gender equality and the realisation of rights at its centre?

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2 Civil society refers to those engaging in collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil society usually comprises organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trades unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups (from the London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society website: http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/introduction.htm).

- How can we analyse governance institutions and processes from a gender perspective to expose gender-blind policy and discriminatory practices?

- How are governments working with and influenced by other locations of governance such as household, community, national or global institutions?

- How can we enable *equality* and *quality* of women's participation in governance processes through strategies that ensure they have the capacity and institutional support to make a difference?

- How can we change the governance institutions themselves so they are responsive to the needs of women in addition to challenging gender inequality and promoting the realisation of women's rights?

- What mechanisms need to be in place to ensure governance institutions are held to account for their record on promoting gender equality by civil society and citizens?

- How can we ensure *all* people – women and men – are legally recognised as citizens, are aware of their rights and how to claim them, and have the capacity, confidence and motivation to engage with governance institutions?

- How can we support – through funding and capacity building – all social movements and CSOs to become agents of change towards gender equality and change any of their own discriminatory institutional practices?

1.3 What does this report contribute to debates?

It discusses that governance cannot be effective if it does not advance gender equality and the realisation of women's rights, and fails to equally engage women and men in decisions. To achieve these goals, significant changes are needed at the level of institutional goals and within governance institutions and processes – addressing deep-rooted, implicit prejudices that affect women but can also affect men. Broader shifts at the level of the public consciousness are also needed in order for these institutional changes to result in transformation. Governance institutions and those reflecting on governance processes, such as the media and educational establishments, need to better communicate what potential democratic governance processes hold in terms of enabling gender equality, as well as demonstrating this through their own practices. This will help to challenge associations of governance with male-dominated institutions 'up there', removed from ordinary people, and will enable women to identify their own potential roles in these processes.

While a significant amount of literature is now available on gender and governance, it usually focuses on gender equality in national – and sometimes local – government, often with an emphasis on increasing women's representation in government institutions through electoral reforms such as quotas, which stipulate that women must constitute a certain percentage of the members of a governance body. This report takes government as an entry point for talking about gender-sensitive governance, because of the extent to which government institutions and processes affect our lives, and because this is where most of the current work and resources lie. Yet it goes further, presenting the 'bigger picture' of governance through a gender-focused examination of some of the institutions that influence government. These include global governance institutions such as the UN, as well as CSOs at the global and local levels, and informal citizen-led participatory governance processes.

1.4 Who is this report for?

This report is for a broad audience of those interested in and working on governance and gender issues – gender equality, social justice and human rights advocates, as well as decision-makers in mainstream government ministries, donor agencies and CSOs – who are seeking to understand the ways in which governance and gender intersect. The report speaks to both gender specialists and those with no or little knowledge of gender issues. Equally it does not pre-suppose a prior knowledge of governance, recognising that even those who are experts on governance will benefit from a clear, gender-focused mapping of this complex field in order to consider the implications for policy and practice.

1.5 Scope and structure of the report

We focus on three key, interlinked levels of governance: government, and influencers of government – that include global institutions, civil society and citizen-focused participatory processes. In each chapter, key issues and concerns are raised and potential strategies for enabling gender equality and women's empowerment in governance are outlined.

The sites of governance explored in the report provide useful entry points for considering the gender implications of governance, and the links between them are emphasised. For example, the report considers how global policy increasingly shapes national and local imperatives, which in turn affect levels of gender-sensitivity in policy making. At the same time participatory processes at the local level are often intended to 'feed upwards', influencing national and global decision-making and policy implementation – though the extent to which this is true in practice is explored in the report.

The report is also concerned with the relationship between the household[3] and community[4] – which are themselves places where governance happens – and national and global governance institutions. For example, when women enter the 'public' sphere of politics, the way they are treated is often affected by social gender 'norms' – the expected roles of men and women that are reinforced within the home and the community. The report also recognises the significance of markets, and the enormous influencing power of trade and finance institutions such as the WTO and the World Bank, but does not focus on these.

Case studies from different global regions and cultural settings illustrate the report. Recommendations for achieving more gender-sensitive governance at different levels are presented, as well as more cross-cutting approaches. The Supporting Resources Collection that accompanies this Overview Report provides insights into useful approaches, tools and frameworks, while pointing to further related resources through an annotated bibliography.

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3 The household is the basic unit of analysis in many social, economic and government models. The term refers to all individuals who live in the same dwelling. Government and policy discussions often treat the terms household and family as synonymous (source: wikipedia). Feminists call for analysis of power relations within the household, particularly between women and men.

4 The term community refers to a group of people living in the same area, who may have shared interests as well as a shared right to public goods such as water and health facilities. In practice, communities are often fragmented and people may not view themselves as being part of them.

Chapter outline

- **Chapter 2** aims to demystify the notions of 'governance' and 'good governance', providing some conceptual clarity on the notions of governance and good governance.

- **Chapter 3** explains why it is crucial to understand and challenge the gender dynamics of governance institutions, relationships and processes.

- **Chapter 4** focuses on gender and government at national and local levels. It also looks at citizen-led governance processes through a gender lens.

- **Chapter 5** tackles global governance. Questions are raised about the level of gender equality in international-level decision-making, and the implications of these decisions for men and women.

- **Chapter 6** provides detail on possible entry points and steps forward for institutions and organisations that are serious about enabling gender-sensitive governance.

2. GOVERNANCE: CONCEPTS, GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

This chapter provides a conceptual grounding for the notions of governance and effective or 'good' governance. It aims to create greater clarity around these knotty concepts in order to provide a strong starting point for the report. The aim of the chapter is not to over-simplify the concepts; it addresses the different ways in which governance and effective or 'good' governance have been interpreted by various agencies, showing how their own priorities shape these interpretations. It also shows how these different perspectives and emphases have evolved. Chapter three then goes on to present a gender analysis of the concepts, goals and principles of governance.

2.1 What is governance?

'Most agree that the central component of governance is decision-making.'

(Institute on Governance website 2009)

2.1.1 Definitions of governance

The concept of governance is a 'catch-all' term for often 'messy, unpredictable and fluid' processes (Institute on Governance website 2009). It is a slippery term with multiple definitions, depending on the agency using the term or the context in which it is used. However, put simply, governance refers to decision-making by a range of interested people, or 'stakeholders',[5] including those in formal positions of power and 'ordinary' citizens. These decisions have a huge impact on the ways in which women and men lead their lives, on the rules they are expected to abide by, and on the structures that determine where and how they work and live. In *theory* this means that multiple individuals and organisations – or stakeholders – are involved in strategic planning: 'They articulate their interests, influence how decisions are made, who the decision-makers are and what decisions are taken' (Institute on Governance website 2009; UNESCAP website 2009). Decision-makers are expected to be guided by this input, and accountable to the stakeholders for the decisions they make and the way they are implemented through the management of public affairs and public spending. The reality, however, is that not all stakeholders have the required power or leverage to influence decisions and hold decision-makers to account.

This complexity is reflected in the different ways in which national and international agencies and institutions frame governance – what they see as the end-goals of governance. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank emphasise efficiency of processes and resource management. By contrast, the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) conceptualisation of governance builds on an understanding of governance rooted in social justice and rights – not referring to governance institutions as holders of power, but rather as enablers of equitable decision-making and accountability, and of greater citizen involvement (see UNDP 1997). In turn, CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation) brings the focus round to citizens and the need for a participatory approach to governance which is ultimately about achieving equitable power-sharing in governance processes (see definitions below).

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5 Stakeholders are those interested in the outcomes of decisions – they should be involved in shaping processes and decisions that affect them. This means they share mutual responsibility for ensuring that the decisions are effective and for finding solutions if they are not.

Various definitions of governance

The World Bank: 'Governance is … the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good. This includes (i) the process by which those in authority are selected, monitored and replaced, (ii) the capacity of the government to effectively manage its resources and implement sound policies, and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.'

The Asian Development Bank: 'Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's social and economic resources for development. Government means the way those with power use power…'

UNDP: '[Governance is] the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations.'

CIVICUS: 'Participatory governance is about empowering citizens to participate in processes of public decision-making that affect their lives.'

(Extracted from McCawley 2006: 2 and from Malena 2006:3)

2.1.2 Levels of governance

Governance happens at five interconnected levels – the household,[6] community,[7] local[8] and national government, and global institutions (Ashworth 1996). The institutions and actors involved in governance processes vary according to the level. For example, at the national level the institutions where governance happens include businesses, schools, hospitals, the military and the media, as well as the government. At the local level, governance takes place not only in local government offices but also in community and household decision-making processes. At a global level, governance is less easy to locate in particular institutions, but the term 'global governance' is often used to describe the complex processes of management, and the frameworks and rules through which international social and economic policy is coordinated and regulated (Grugel and Piper 2007: 3). The global sphere includes multinational corporations as well as international institutions such as the UN agencies and WTO. From a gender perspective, the inclusion of the household, or 'family', as well as communities as institutions of governance is essential – this is where many gender inequalities are acted out, shaped by decisions made at international, national and local levels that define rights and responsibilities.

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8 Here 'local' covers all government which is located outside the national level, including regional, municipal and local authorities.

2.2 What is effective or 'good' governance?

'Good governance means creating well-functioning and accountable institutions – political, judicial and administrative – which citizens regard as legitimate, in which they participate in decisions that affect their daily lives and by which they are empowered.'

(Annan 1998, Chapter 4, para 114)

The terms governance and 'good governance' are often used interchangeably by a range of organisations – from donor agencies to CSOs. We make a distinction between 'governance' as being about *processes* of decision-making, mechanisms and management, while 'good' or 'effective' governance refers to the *quality* of these processes, judged against a set of governance principles (see below).[9] The notion of good governance is being applied in developed as well as developing countries, as a set of standards all governance institutions should be striving for, and as a recognition that 'bad governance' happens in developed as well as developing countries. However, it is most commonly used by international development agencies – including bilateral and multilateral – which link the continuation of poverty in many countries of the South to 'bad governance' which is viewed as inefficient, undemocratic and often corrupt (see Section 2.6.1). But it is not only international agencies that use this term. Citizen-focused organisations such as CIVICUS also use the term good governance (Malena 2006).

Some have argued that the polarised notions of 'good' and 'bad' governance beg the question of who decides what constitutes good governance; whether those making the judgements are leading by example, being accountable for their own governance processes — and whether the way they assess the effectiveness of governance adequately captures the complexity and sometimes contradictory nature of local cultural, social and political contexts (Pettai and Illing 2004: 349). These are important questions, given that donors and financial institutions are increasingly basing aid flows and loans on the condition that 'good' governance reforms are introduced. This means that some associate the term good governance with particular and negative manifestations of particular donor policy and behaviours.

Many agencies and organisations in developed and developing countries – including bilateral and multilateral donors, country governments and CSOs – agree that effective governance is a route to more democratic, corruption-free societies, but – as Section 2.6 explains – organisations differ as to what they think effective or 'good' governance is and how it should be assessed. Some – for example, international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank – see governance that promotes efficiency in financial management and administration as a priority for achieving poverty reduction and democracy. For others, governance is only effective if it promotes social justice and equality, and furthers the realisation of rights for all citizens. This report takes the view that governance can only be effective if it focuses on achieving social justice and gender equality, and that gender equality in society enables more effective governance.

2.2.1 Donor policy on gender and good governance: strengths, gaps and ways forward

Many bilateral and multilateral agencies see gender equality as an important element of 'good' or effective governance.[10] Yet these agencies often present the inclusion of more women in governance processes in narrow terms, as a means to reduce corruption and increase transparency (see, for example, Dollar et al. 1999).

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9 See for example UNESCAP 'What is good governance?': http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp
10 See, for example, Danida, 2008; UNDP Democratic governance webpage, http://www.undp.org/governance/gender.htm; Morna (2004) World Bank Gender and governance briefing paper: a proposed world bank action plan, http://www.gdrc.org/gender/governance/wb.pdf.

These arguments fail to acknowledge that a lack of corruption among female ministers may say more about the lack of opportunity for women to be part of the male-dominated bureaucratic inner circles where the 'hidden' business of governance happens than it does about their biological inability to be corrupt (Goetz 2007: 95). Policy statements on gender and good governance are also often unclear on what needs to change and how this change should happen. Many hinge around the increased need to augment the number of female representatives in government (see, for example, Danida 2008), but do not take other levels of governance into consideration, mention the need for *quality* of participation, or address the wider social gender inequalities that sustain inequalities in governance.

Bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as IFIs, have a responsibility to help create enabling environments for gender-sensitive policy and practice in recipient-country governments in order to promote public expenditure and policies that advance gender equality and women's rights.[11] Donor agencies also need to create realisable goals and benchmarks, in partnership with recipient countries, to map progress on gender equality rather than introducing conditionalities that affect the predictability of aid. Generating indicators that capture the different impacts of mechanisms and processes of governance on diverse groups of women and men in various contexts is an essential part of this process (Corner 2005; see Chapter 6).

2.3 Principles of effective governance

Different players – including IFIs, bilateral or multilateral donors and CSOs – assess how effective governance is on the basis of how accountable, transparent, inclusive and responsive, among other such principles, governance institutions are to citizens. Despite concerns that IFIs and donors may impose their own notions of 'good governance' on developing counties, there is still great potential in some of these principles for achieving social justice, and particularly for enabling greater gender equality. However, they can be far more useful entry points for enabling gender equality if they are defined, implemented and measured in gender-sensitive ways. To provide a starting point for the process, definitions of selected principles are provided below, drawing on current understandings, which tend to be gender blind in that they often do reflect the different needs, roles and experiences of women and men.

This report focuses on seven governance principles that are fundamental to the overarching goals of social justice and equality: accountability, transparency, responsiveness, equity, inclusiveness, upholding rights, and following the rule of law. As all these principles are commonly viewed as contributing to more democratic governance, understandings of democracy are critically explored and a definition provided as a foundation for the report. Finally, we address the notion of citizenship, since the principles all revolve around the notion of citizens as stakeholders in governance. Chapter 3 considers how the principles would look if they had gender concerns at their centre, in addition to thinking about how careful implementation could make them vehicles towards the goal of gender equality.

2.3.1 Accountability
Broadly, the notion of accountability means taking responsibility for the outcomes of decisions made, and being answerable for failures to meet expectations. Accountable governance means that those involved in governance

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[11] For example, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is playing a strong role in facilitating public sector reform in Laos. Notably, SDC is working closely with the Lao government to build capacity on gender and ensure it is mainstreamed throughout its work (OECD 2008).

decision-making in the public and private sector are expected to adhere to publicly agreed standards, norms and goals, which may include international agreements such as CEDAW, and citizens or 'stakeholders' are entitled to demand accountability when this does not happen. Governance decision-makers need to justify the way they have designed, administered and implemented policies, and the way they have allocated and spent financial resources – for example, by giving an account of what they have done with the national revenue or through an assessment of specific performance measures. If they have not met their obligations, corrective action can be taken, which might entail voting politicians out of office or setting up a judicial enquiry (UNIFEM 2008: 2). CSOs at local, national and international levels are often expected to play a key 'watchdog' role in these accountability processes through formal procedures such as CEDAW Shadow Reporting (see Chapter 5 for a case study on Egypt) as well as through lobbying policymakers. (see Section 2.6.4. and Chapters 4 and 5).

2.3.2 Transparency
In support of accountability, transparency literally means that citizens should be able to 'see through' the workings of governance institutions. This means making information freely available and not preventing citizens from seeking or sharing information. Transparent procedures include holding open meetings, issuing publicly available financial disclosure statements, passing freedom of information legislation and conducting budgetary reviews.

2.3.3 Inclusiveness
Inclusiveness is often linked to participation, equity and diversity. Inclusiveness primarily refers to enabling people prone to marginalisation – including women – to participate equally in governance institutions and practices by voting freely in elections, by standing as elected representatives or through their involvement in other forms of governance planning and administration. Inclusiveness is as much about increasing citizen involvement in informal processes such as local consultations as it is about involvement in formal institutions.

2.3.4 Equity
Closely linked to inclusiveness, equity refers specifically to the right of all citizens' to have an equal say in governance processes, and to benefit equally from their outcomes. This means ensuring that decision-making is informed by all voices, including those of the most vulnerable, and that resources are shared in ways that meet everyone's needs. Equity is a *goal* as well as a principle of governance.

2.3.5 Responsiveness
Responsiveness in governance means *acting on* the information gathered through participatory processes in ways that benefit all citizens. This means actively listening to what citizens are saying, and providing services and policies that meet their diverse needs.

2.3.6 Upholding rights
Governance institutions need to guarantee the full protection of human rights – particularly of vulnerable or marginalised people – as endorsed through the various elements of the UN human rights framework, which include CEDAW and various other instruments that set out the minimum rights that individuals should expect in different situations and circumstances. The realisation of rights should also be a *goal* of governance. In fact the establishment and implementation of rights frameworks are at the centre of the work of some global governance

institutions – such as the International Criminal Court, the UN and some of its agencies, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO). Some argue, however, that notions of universal rights contradict cultural norms and understandings. This argument has been applied by some countries that have either failed to ratify international rights conventions such as the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW, or who disagree with aspects of the conventions by placing reservations on certain articles (see Chapter 5; Centre on Law and Globalization 2009; and Cowan et al. 2001).

2.3.7 Following the rule of law

When governance institutions follow the rule of law this means that they abide by fair legal frameworks that are established through a consensus process and do not discriminate against anyone in society. These laws must be enforced through impartial bodies, so require the establishment of an independent judiciary and a police force that is not corrupt.

2.4 Democracy

Some definitions of democracy emphasise the processes that underpin democratic governance, such as fair, competitive elections and freedom of speech and information. Others view democracy more broadly in terms of civil and political rights and the distribution of power in society (see the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) website).[12] In this report we argue that respect for rights and for human rights agreements is an essential component of gender-sensitive governance. Therefore, our starting point is the most recent Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1997. The Declaration states that democracy is based on the core principles of participation and accountability. It refers to citizens' rights to participate in governance processes, either directly or by voting in fair, transparent elections for freely chosen representatives; the need for governments to be responsive and accountable to citizens; the right of citizens, including the most disadvantaged groups, to influence their governments and criticise governing bodies without fear of punishment; and freedom of speech, information and the media.

Significantly, the Universal Declaration states that 'democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in conducting the affairs of society' (IPU website, Universal Declaration on Democracy).[13] What this might mean in practice is discussed in Chapter 3 and is a theme running throughout this report. It is important to note that there is often a large discrepancy between the way governance institutions talk about democracy and the way democratic principles are applied. Moreover, although many may agree with the ideals expressed in the Declaration, the notion of democracy is rejected by some because of the extent to which it has been shaped by European and American thought. It should also not be assumed that democracies result in greater gender equality – it is an important foundation but not the only contributing factor – for example, in China women's numerical participation in village committees has declined since elections were introduced (see Howell 2006).

2.5 Citizenship

In its simplest meaning, 'citizenship' is used to refer to the status of being a citizen – a member of a particular political community or state. Citizenship theory is based on the idea of the 'universal citizen' – an individual who

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12 'What is democracy?', GSDRC website: http://www.gsdrc.org/go/topic-guides/political-systems/democracy
13 Also see UNDP 2002: 55; and UN Democracy Fund website: http://www.un.org/democracyfund/index.htm

engages with governance institutions in the public arena of political debate. In principle then, citizenship brings with it rights and responsibilities that are defined in law, such as the right to vote and the responsibility to pay tax and to behave according to social and moral codes set out in the law. Citizens may see themselves as members of a particular community or group, as well as nationals of a country, as well as being citizens of wider regional or global groups (see BRIDGE *Cutting Edge Pack* on Citizenship). Most definitions of governance view citizens as stakeholders in decision-making processes – meaning they have a shared interest in how these processes work and what they achieve. In some understandings of governance, the notion of citizenship is linked particularly to the realisation of the rights of poor and marginalised people, including women. Feminists and women's rights activists have sought to re-frame citizenship from a gender perspective to show how struggles for women's rights must be seen as citizenship struggles that affect everyone in society rather than 'minority' interests (Meer and Sever 2004a).

2.6 A brief history of governance

'Governance' is not a new term, but has been increasingly taken up over the last three decades by diverse sectors and actors, including policymakers, businesses, schools and CSOs. Throughout this period, notions and practices have taken different trajectories and been interpreted and implemented in different ways, depending on the agency or organisation deploying them. A clear understanding of the relationship between governance and gender, and of the potential for transformation, requires an awareness of governance's historical roots, and an understanding of the various ways in which governance and good governance have been interpreted and applied. This section, maps key factors that have contributed to the increasing prevalence of a governance framework in global, national and local contexts in developed and developing countries since the end of the 1980s.

2.6.1 Economic growth, development and governance

The conceptual move from 'government' to 'governance' reflects global changes in a post-Cold War environment that are marked by particular, economic and political principles rooted in neo-liberalism[14] or globalisation. One of these principles is the growing emphasis on a free market economy and economic liberalisation as the drivers of economic growth and development. According to this logic, all sectors within the economy – including public services traditionally provided by the state, such as education – can be more efficiently managed if they are privatised or decentralised (Vercelli 2003). Consequently, many basic services are increasingly being delivered by private companies and – in some cases – CSOs (Jayal 2003: 99). So the state retains an important role in determining public policy, budgets and laws, but is increasingly taking the role of contractor with regard to service provision and spending. Chapter 4 reviews what some of the implications of this have been for women and gender equality.

In developed countries of the North there were several imperatives for these changes. The state-led socialist modes of governance in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe collapsed, opening up the possibility for a much freer flow of goods between nations, which was facilitated by a dramatic reduction in state regulation of business transactions. A severe financial crisis hit countries of the North in the late 1980s, compelling governments to find new, more efficient ways to manage public goods and services. In addition, the role of the nation state was re-

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14 Neo-liberalism refers to a political movement that promotes economic liberalisation – for example, promoting the reduction of trade barriers, such as import tariffs, as a means to promote international trade and cooperation – as a means of promoting economic growth and securing political liberty (based on reference in Wiktionary, http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/neoliberalism).

evaluated in a globalising world where the framework for trade and finance was increasingly being set by 'supra-state' institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the WTO, the European Union (EU) and the African Union.

In the developing countries of the South the pressure for governance reforms came from the international donor agencies and the IFIs. The emphasis on governance as an integral part of donors' approach to development in countries of the South emerged from an influential World Bank document in 1989 that blamed continuing poverty in sub-Saharan Africa on a 'crisis of governance' (World Bank 1989: 60) and argued that development was being stifled by corrupt, inefficient and ill-equipped governments. Central to the World Bank's notion of good governance was better management of developing countries' economic and social resources for development, through leaner, more minimal state control of goods and services such as water and health (Jayal 2003: 98; World Bank 1989: 55). Some say that the World Bank's interest in good governance for countries in the South was to shift focus away from the failures of the structural adjustment policies (SAPs) of the 1980s.

2.6.2 Democratising governance

> *'Good governance implies democratic governance, meaning an agenda for participation, human rights, and social justice.'*

> (UNIFEM 2008:2)

As noted above, the notion of 'democratic governance' is often identified both as a cornerstone and a goal of good or effective governance (see, for example, UNDP 2002: 51–61). This is based on the assumption that democracy is weak in many developing countries, so the needs and rights – particularly of the most vulnerable – are not taken into account. Yet this assumption is often over-simplistic. For example, socialist states could not be described as strong democracies but nonetheless they act in what they see as the best interests of the vulnerable, and often do it much better than some of the strong democracies (Lorraine Corner, personal communication, 2009).

The process of strengthening institutions and electoral and legislative systems, enhancing citizen engagement in decision-making and involving civil society in political processes associated with governance reforms is often referred to as 'democratisation'.[15] The establishment of electoral reforms that enhance women's entry into governance are also part of this process. But – as many have argued – increasing numbers of women in governance should not be considered a guarantee of democratisation; women's equal participation in governance processes is contingent on the creation of enabling conditions such as subsidised child care and capacity building (see for example Dovi 2007; see also Chapter 4).

2.6.3 Rights and governance

In light of the IPU's Universal Declaration on Democracy (see Section 2.4 above) there has been renewed recognition by those promoting governance processes of the need to protect human rights (Grugel and Piper 2007: 12). These include economic rights and the right to security, as well as equality, and are laid out in UN Declarations and Conventions, including CEDAW (see Chapter 4 for detailed discussion of CEDAW). Some organisations – such as CIVICUS – promote a rights-based approach to governance.

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[15] See CIDA governance website: http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/JUD-121135230-Q5V

CIVICUS – taking a rights-based approach to governance

CIVICUS adopts a rights-based approach to development and governance – it seeks to 'promote basic human rights (including freedoms of association, information and expression), the right to essential services (such as water and education) and citizens' rights, including the right of all women and men to participate in the decisions that affect their lives and the right to expect and to ensure that government acts in the best interests of the people'. Its participatory governance programme places special emphasis on the rights and participation of women, children, disabled people and other traditionally marginalised groups.

(Malena 2006: 5)

However, rights are still the most undeveloped element of governance, partly because of weak processes of claiming them and holding states to account under international conventions, and partly because there is no shared consensus as to what they mean in practice. A key message of this report is that far more attention needs to be paid to rights in the context of governance as a means to strengthen national and international commitments to gender-focused international frameworks, including CEDAW. It is also vital to expose the extent to which many people – especially women – are denied the right to be heard in governance and in society.

2.6.4 Decentralisation and governance

In many countries the decentralisation of governance functions is viewed as a means towards the dual goals of economic growth and democracy. 'Democratic decentralisation' entails the increasing responsibility of lower-level authorities at local levels over resources and bureaucratic tasks (Crook and Manor 2000), accompanied in some countries by the development of formal and informal spaces for citizen involvement in governance decision-making processes. Decentralisation is also viewed as a means to achieving greater efficiency because decisions are likely to be quicker and more relevant to local needs, as well as improving transparency and ownership (ibid: 23). Some have argued that the expansion of local government offices and the increase in citizen-led consultative processes has led to greater gender equality in decision-making (see, for example, Basu 2003: 39–43; Pedwell and Perrons 2007: 8–9), However, while increasing the number of women in governance processes is important, constant attention needs to be paid to the *quality* of their participation and the extent to which their voices are listened to. Furthermore, decentralisation has the potential to further entrench power inequalities, with negative consequences for women (see Chapter 4; and Beall 2005).

2.6.5 Social justice and citizen-led governance processes

Understandings of governance have gone through a transition since 2000 in light of an increasing emphasis on social justice, prompted by concerns that elected representatives may not always act in constituents' interests (Grugel and Piper 2007: 2; Jayal 2003: 99; Pedwell and Perrons 2007: 8). Recent understandings of governance and democratisation have consequently placed a much greater emphasis on enabling ordinary people at all levels of society to exercise their citizenship through consultative processes around service delivery management and other issues; partnerships with governance representatives; and online discussion platforms, known as e-governance, that enable people in diverse and sometimes remote geographical locations to share their opinions (see UNDP 2005: 69–106). CIVICUS use the term 'participatory governance' for this (Malena 2006).

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As part of their 'watchdog' role outlined above in Section 2.3.1, CSOs are viewed as key actors in implementing and monitoring these participatory processes, as well as mediators in ensuring that local voices are heard at higher levels of governance (Pedwell and Perrons 2007; UNDP 1997). Yet whether these participatory processes amplify the voices of marginalised people in reality is debatable. Chapter 4 provides more information about participatory, citizen-focused forms of governance, in addition to considering their effectiveness in terms of facilitating gender equality.

Key points from Chapter 2

- 'Governance' refers to a stakeholder approach to decision-making processes which includes both those in formal positions of power and 'ordinary' citizens.

- Governance approaches are therefore – in theory – inclusive of a wide range of people or 'stakeholders', In reality, not all stakeholders are invited to the decision-making table, and those who are have different levels of power, or ability to influence the final decisions – with women likely to be excluded.

- Effective or 'good' governance refers to the *quality* of these processes, judged against a set of principles, which include: accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, responsiveness, upholding principles of equity, and following the rule of law – some describe these as democratic principles or processes, with democracy invariably an overarching goal of governance.

- Organisations promoting democratic governance processes differ as to what they think effective or 'good' governance is – this shapes what strategies are used and which governance institutions or actors are strengthened and funded.

- Notions and practices of governance have not remained static; nor are they unitary – rather, they have taken different trajectories and been interpreted and implemented in different ways, depending on the agency or organisation deploying them.

The next chapter provides insights into why it is crucial to analyse governance institutions and processes from a gender perspective, exploring reasons for the persistence of gender inequality in governance. In turn, it introduces the goals and underlying principles for gender-sensitive governance, and outlines the mechanisms of governance where change needs to happen.

3.   GOVERNANCE THROUGH A GENDER LENS

> *'Until gender parity is reached in governance, women cannot reach full equality with men in any sphere. The absence of women's voices in shaping the most fundamental political instruments...has ensured the preservation of gender inequality.'*
>
> (Banerjee and Oquist 2000)

Why is it crucial to analyse governance institutions and processes from a gender perspective? This chapter explores reasons for the persistence of gender inequality in governance and considers the ways these inequalities are manifested. It goes on to ask what gender-sensitive governance would look like and what needs to change to ensure that gender sensitive processes are put in place to implement principles of equality. The chapter introduces an approach intended to assist those involved in governance processes in different contexts and at local, national and global levels to clarify their goals and the principles for gender-sensitive governance, understand the gendered mechanisms of governance where change needs to happen, consider what is needed to implement change – and where they could begin.

3.1 How gender-sensitive are current governance institutions and processes?

It is difficult to generalise but certain markers indicate that, despite governance reforms, there has been a fundamental failure to challenge entrenched unequal gendered power relations and other forms of exclusion that have been inbuilt in governing processes and institutions. Such markers include:

Gender imbalance in decision-making - Gender-sensitive reforms in national and local government in the form of electoral quota systems and the establishment of women's ministries have resulted in some progress in achieving a better gender balance in governance – for example, the fact that Rwanda has one of the highest figures for women's representation in its national assembly is largely due to the application of quotas. However, there are still far fewer women than men in decision-making positions at global, national and local levels of governance – including the micro-levels of the community and household.

<u>**Who are the decision-makers?**</u>
- The world average of women in Parliaments in April 2008 was only 17.8 per cent, with the highest number in Nordic countries (41.4 per cent) and the lowest in the Pacific and Arab states (IPU website 2009).

- There were nine female presidents (in India, Ireland, Finland, the Philippines, Liberia, Chile, Argentina, Bosnia Herzegovina and Reunion) and five female prime ministers (in New Zealand, Mozambique, Germany, Ukraine and Moldova) as of 2008 (IPU website 2009).

- In the highest decision-making bodies of EU central banks there are five times as many men as women (European Commission 2008).

- Across UN agencies, between 1999 and 2007, the share of female Secretariat staff in professional and higher categories increased by an average of only 0.35 per cent per year between 2004 and 2006, in spite of the UN's commitment to a 50–50 gender balance in its staff (UN News Centre 2007).

(See the *Supporting Resources Collection* for further statistics.)

Women are not treated equally in governance institutions and processes - Even when women are actively involved in governance, their struggle for equal treatment and recognition is not over. Women are often kept on the margins of decision-making in government, confined to 'soft' policy areas such as health and education. Existing systems of governance reinforce this marginalisation, with important decisions often made between men in closed 'inner circles'. Governance institutions also continue to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people on the grounds of their sexuality. These forms of marginalisation are just as prevalent in local government and processes designed to include ordinary citizens as they are in national and global institutions.

Governance institutions fail to take women's 'double burden' into account - The working arrangements of governance institutions are usually inflexible, making it very difficult for women to balance work with the additional caring responsibilities they are often expected to take on. This is as true for citizen-focused participatory processes as it is for state-level and global institutions.

Governance policies fail to challenge gender inequalities and to take the different needs of men and women into account - As a result of these inequalities in decision-making, governance policies often remain blind to the different needs of men and women. For example, there is a vast amount of evidence indicating that women and other marginalised groups have been negatively affected by trade policy led by the WTO. At the local level, services such as the provision of health, water and education often still fail to meet the needs of women and men.

Poor institutional accountability on gender equality and women's rights - Even when institutions commit to gender equality in their policies and practices by ratifying CEDAW, developing a gender equality action plan or promoting gender-sensitive electoral reform, they often fail to take responsibility for these. There can be many reasons for this, including inflexibility within the institution, but a major factor is often that there are no clear mechanisms in place to ensure that gender equality remains a priority. And gender equality may not be an indicator against which the performance of governance actors is assessed.

3.2 What are the roots of the gender imbalance in governance?

While many reasons have been identified for the gender imbalance in governance, the most common argument is that the division between 'public' and 'private' spaces has created a barrier to women's participation in governance. Politics has traditionally been considered a male arena because it operates in the public domain, while in many societies women are expected to restrict their activities to the household and immediate community (Tambiah 2003: 60; also see Waylen 2008b; Mishra Panda 2008).   It is important to bear in mind that these distinctions between private and public are not 'givens' – they are themselves part of a set of accepted ideas about the male and female place in society that have been frequently used as a *justification* – often by partners, families, communities and women themselves – for women's absence from public life (Rai 2008: 38).

The public–private argument does little to counteract fixed views on female and male social roles, and may conceal gender inequalities within household or 'family' governance that may prevent women from becoming involved in more formal governance institutions and processes (Baden 2000; Ashworth 1996). These inequalities may be reinforced by cultural or religious practices – for example in some countries there are strict rules about interactions between men and women who are not related. And women may be prevented from voting or

participating in other aspects of governance by male partners or relatives who are concerned their social power will be eroded if their wives, daughters or mothers are equal partners in traditionally male arenas.

There are other external constraints that prevent women from being fully integrated into governance structures, including lack of financial resources, lack of confidence and a lack of personal or family contacts often needed to 'make it' into governance positions (see Chapter 4). Gender-sensitive governance reforms, such as gender quotas, have facilitated women's entry into politics to an extent, but are considered by many to be an imperfect and superficial solution that do not tackle the roots of unequal access (see Nussbaum 2003; Jayal 2003; Corner 1998). This is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.3 What are the social roots of gender inequality in governance?

The low number of women engaged in governance institutions partly fuels poor levels of commitment to challenging gender inequality, but existing social inequalities and unequally gendered power relations at the micro level also present barriers to change within these institutions. Households' implicit governance structures revolve around decision-making power, from which women may be excluded. Communities often have social rules and informal governance processes that may differ from those promoted by national or local government. Individuals working in governance institutions live in households and communities and bring values and experiences from this sphere to negotiations and working relationships. For example, men who receive more privileges than the female members of their families may assume this should also be the case at work. Similarly, perceptions of the roles women should play in governance may be coloured by the roles they are expected to play within the household and community (Ashworth 1996; Baden 2000).

3.4 Why does governance need to be gender-sensitive?

There are five primary reasons linked to development-focused goals and to broader goals of social justice.

3.4.1 Governance cannot be effective unless it has gender equality at its centre
Governance must lead to a more equitable world, where women also have choices and their rights are realised. It cannot be effective if there is no understanding of the differing needs of women and men in public spending, policies, legislation and treaties. Nor can it be effective if women cannot exercise their right to participate equally in the decisions that affect their lives. In short, governance cannot be effective, or 'good', unless it is gender-sensitive (Jayal 2003: 101; UNIFEM 2008: 18).

3.4.2 Women have a right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives
Women remain under-represented at all levels of decision-making in governance institutions and less engaged in governance processes more broadly. Achieving greater gender equality in governance is an important end in itself – quite simply, those who have traditionally been excluded because of their gender, sexuality, race or for other reasons have the right to play an equal part in governance institutions and processes. For this reason the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) devotes one of its 12 'critical areas of concern' to 'Women in Power and Decision-making' – its strategic objective is to 'take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making'. It outlines actions that need to be taken by a broad range of actors – from governments to trade unions – to achieve a gender balance (see the *SRC* for further detail). But

'adding women' is not enough. CEDAW echoes this statement, with a focus on women's participation in national level institutions, stating that women should have the right to: 'participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government' (DAW website 2009).

3.4.3 It will result in policies that promote gender equality and women's rights

While governance institutions can reinforce gender inequalities, they can also challenge them. So ensuring that women play an equal role in shaping the decisions, rules and structures that influence our lives is likely to lead to long-term, sustainable changes. For example, if more women are involved in developing school curricula, there is a good chance they will challenge the gender stereotypes often reinforced through school textbooks. If they have an equal voice in developing legal frameworks, it is likely they will ensure laws do not discriminate against women and that international, gender-focused legislation such as CEDAW is honoured. This could result in greater equality for women in the workplace and a greater commitment to addressing the problem of gender-based violence. It could also mean establishing legal obligations for companies to provide extended paternity as well as maternity leave so that men and women can share caring responsibilities, as well as more flexible working arrangements so the demands of domestic and work lives can be balanced (see Esplen 2009).

3.4.4 It is a means to shifting gender norms

Governance institutions can reinforce or challenge ideas of what it is to be a woman or a man in any society or community. Statutory or customary laws lay out what is acceptable female behaviour – they can constrain women's freedom of movement and participation in public life but they can also enable greater recognition of women's rights as equal citizens with a potential role in governance. Strategic legislative changes could therefore provide the foundations for shifts in social expectations about the roles and responsibilities men and women should take on and the rights they should enjoy. A higher profile of women as decision-makers in governance would also contribute to a transformation in attitudes towards women in households and communities and provide positive role models for both girls and boys. The increased representation of women in governance institutions has also been shown to increase numbers of women voters – strengthening citizenship. Similarly, governance institutions and processes can determine whether gay or transsexual men and women can exercise their citizenship without persecution.

3.4.5 It is a means to more effective, equitable resource allocation

Governance institutions determine how public resources are allocated and whether services take account of women's needs – for example, few governments fund childcare facilities, making it easier for women to take on paid work. A greater recognition of women's as well as men's needs and situations is likely to result in better and more equal allocation of public financial resources – including subsidies for childcare – and more targeted delivery of services such as water, education and health services.

3.5 What is gender-sensitive governance?

'Transformation requires more extensive change than simply increasing the influence of previously excluded groups…'

<div align="right">

(Waylen 2008: 255)

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Interpretations of gender-sensitive governance will depend on the institutions concerned and their understanding of governance. Broadly, gender-sensitive governance begins with putting gender equality and social justice issues at its centre. It needs to recognise the different needs, interests, priorities and responsibilities of men and women and challenge entrenched gender inequalities. Gender equality issues, such as equal pay, women's right to participate in decision-making, domestic violence, and the recognition of unpaid care work, must be taken seriously. Its institutions and processes need to be designed to identify and integrate gender differences into all aspects of decision-making so that policies, plans and programmes equally benefit all women and men across societies. Importantly, gender-sensitive governance means women and men must have equal involvement in planning and implementing these institutions and processes.

As noted in chapter 1, work on gender and governance tends to equate increased representation of women in government with more gender-sensitive governance. Certainly, enabling a diverse, "critical mass" (Ashworth 1996) of women to enter government via mechanisms such as quota systems, enabling them to exercise their citizenship by voting and be part of national and local decision-making bodies is a good starting point – not least because this may create enough strength in numbers to make it impossible to ignore women's collective demands or the gender-focused concerns of certain groups (see Chapter 4). Involving women in the accountability processes that are linked to initiatives promoting effective or 'good' governance is also an important step forward. But it should not be assumed that these types of strategies will automatically result in gender-sensitive governance. To be effective, such strategies need to be rooted in a change of culture across governance institutions, processes and relationships (see Section 3,5,2). These changes need to happen at all levels, from global governance to the household, and from schools to the media. Achieving these changes requires a multi-dimensional approach which involves assessing current gender imbalances and barriers to women's participation, and developing effective solutions (see Chapter 6 for approaches to implementing this).

If agencies and institutions at any level are serious about achieving a more gender-sensitive approach to governance, they need to start with the concepts themselves – what is their definition of gender-sensitive governance and how are they framing their goals? Second, they need to critically analyse the various elements that constitute the 'what' of governance – the mechanisms through which governance is 'done'. These elements can be broken down broadly into: institutions and processes of governance and the human relationships within and between institutions. They also need to carefully consider the principles against which they assess the 'how' or the quality of governance. To what extent does the way they understand and put principles of accountability, responsiveness and so on into practice reflect the situations of men and women; and how gender-sensitive are the indicators used to measure governance against these principles? Finally, governance institutions and agencies need to consider the practical approaches they will use to bring greater gender equality to their institutions and practices, including how they will apply more gender-aware principles to bring about effective governance (see Chapter 6).

3.5.1 Developing a gender-sensitive definition of governance

A holistic, gender-sensitive definition of governance needs to acknowledge governance processes at all levels – and the diversity of citizens through their gender, sexuality and ethnicity. It also needs to recognise that existing policies, processes and traditions are imbued with inequalities, which need to be addressed for gender-sensitive reform to take place. So a more progressive and gender sensitive definition of governance and of good governance requires:

- Clarity on the gendered mechanisms of governance – what are the gender dynamics of the institutions, processes and relationships through which the everyday work of governance is done?

- Clarity on the goals of governance in terms of achieving gender equality

- Clarity around the stakeholders of governance – how do governance institutions understand 'citizenship'? Who do they see as participants in governance, and who do they see as recipients?

- Clarity around what makes governance effective from a gender equality perspective – what does 'gender-sensitive governance' mean, and how can it be assessed?

Some suggested ways to think through and reframe governance are provided below.

3.5.2 Looking at the mechanisms of governance through a gender lens

Definitions and understandings of governance need to recognise that the mechanisms of governance – its institutions, processes and relationships – are gendered and need to be challenged. This will enable greater clarity in identifying *what* needs to change, *where* these changes are needed and *who* needs to make the changes. To assist this process, below we provide a gender perspective on some of the key components of governance.

Governance as gendered institutions

Institutions are only one element of governance, but they are arguably the most important sites for change, since they so often replicate gendered inequalities through their structures, processes and policies. *Institutions* are the often hierarchical structures and mechanisms, such as Parliaments, that have usually long been established. However, institutions also exist in less tangible forms of social 'contracts', such as marriage, that are often accepted as the norm. In either case, institutional divisions are imbued with and reproduce social power relations that are rooted in class, racial and gender differences and which privilege certain actors – often educated white men (see Goetz 1997, 2007). Inequalities are perpetuated through institutions because those who are in power usually fail to challenge them, continuing to favour others like themselves for positions of authority. To effectively change institutions, it is helpful to understand how and why particular hierarchies exist, why institutional buildings and bureaucratic systems have been designed in a certain way and why certain practices have become normalised (Goetz 1997).

Governance as gendered processes

Institutions provide the foundations for the *processes* that drive governance. These processes range from high-level decision-making around policy changes and implementation of new legislation, to the routine, day-to-day administration that is an integral part of governance at global, national and local levels. Governance processes happen between, as well as within, institutions. Governance processes often reinforce divisions between those working in governance institutions because of the way in which duties and responsibilities are assigned. Individuals with greater institutional presence and authority, including Members of Parliament (MPs), CSO board

members or senior civil servants, are often involved in processes that have significant, traceable implications and which carry weight. Those lower down the institutional ladder – who are often likely to be women because of institutional barriers that block their progression in jobs – are likely to be responsible for the routine, clerical tasks that often remain invisible. There are other factors that reinforce these divisions and forms of exclusion. For example, often the type of language used in high-level decision-making implies a particular educational background and training from which certain people are excluded on the grounds of gender, sexuality, class, race or ethnicity (Ashworth 1996: 2; Dovi 2002, 2007).

Governance as gendered relationships
Central to institutional processes are *relationships* – the ways in which people interact within institutions and the way they behave towards people outside them. Of primary significance in this report are the often unequal power dynamics between women and men in formal and informal institutions. But it is also important to consider how men from different social strata relate to one another. Good gender relations are key to the success of gender-focused reforms in governance. For example, gender mainstreaming is unlikely to be taken seriously if working relationships have not been established between gender advisors and actors in mainstream government institutions and sectors. It is also vital to enable dialogue between those involved in different levels of governance to ensure that women's and men's concerns feed upwards to national policymakers via local government and consultative processes, and to ensure gender-sensitive laws are effectively implemented (see, for example, the case study on gender-based violence laws in the Philippines, Chapter 4).

3.5.3 Reframing citizenship through a gender lens
Humans are embedded in interlocking social networks at family, community and national levels Yuval-Davis 1997; Bulbeck 1998). Because of this, the notion and experience of citizenship cannot be understood in isolation from a person's gender or other aspects of their identities. For example, if women are subject to forms of discrimination that are reinforced by culture, religion or law – such as the inability to ask for divorce or leave the house in order to vote – it is difficult to see how they would be able to exercise full, equal citizenship before those areas of discrimination were addressed (Jayal 2003: 104; Tambiah 2003). A truly citizen-led approach, therefore, needs to embrace the complexity of citizens, taking into account their often conflicting loyalties and challenging social and cultural barriers to equality. The BRIDGE *Cutting Edge Pack* on Gender and Citizenship identifies how a gender perspective on citizenship is needed (see box below).

Examining citizenship from a gender perspective means:

Challenging the idea of a 'public'–'private' divide:
- Linking 'private' wrongs – such as domestic violence – to public solutions
- Including 'private' gender needs in policy, such as extending rights to include welfare and childcare services
- Redefining the 'political' to include informal and private or community decision-making

Mobilising for change by promoting active gendered citizenship:
- Raising women's awareness of their exclusion
- Supporting women's groups and NGOs
- Creating spaces for interaction between citizens and institutions

(Adapted from Meer and Sever 2004a: 22–30)

3.5.4 Reframing the goals of governance through a gender lens

Once organisations have a clearer notion of the mechanisms of governance that need to be gender-sensitive to enable change, they need to clarify what they mean by good or effective governance. What are their goals of effective governance, and are they sufficiently focused on gender equality? What are the principles they see as crucial for achieving these goals, how gendered are their understandings of these principles, and how will they assess progress towards the goals through the application of the principles?

Gendering democracy

Institutions promoting decentralised, democratised governance approaches grounded in the governance principles of accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and so on may see democracy as a primary goal. Yet, how gender-sensitive is their understanding of democracy? Does it put rights and equality – particularly gender equality – at its centre? Does it specify the need for governance institutions to be accountable for their performance on achieving gender equality and for their commitment to creating equal partnerships between men and women in governance processes? Does it stress the need for responsiveness to men's and women's needs?

Gendering poverty reduction

The way institutions define and understand poverty will affect the effectiveness of their strategies in addressing gender inequalities. If they view poverty reduction purely as an increase in material goods and financial resources for individuals and societies, they may not address the social dimensions of poverty, such as unequal access to resources or opportunities, that reinforce gender inequality. A capabilities approach to poverty, on the other hand, requires institutions to focus on whether citizens have equal access to resources and opportunities, including education, good health and rights and choices – which are seen as necessary for well-being. According to this approach, gender inequality is an aspect of poverty, and needs to be addressed before poverty reduction can be achieved.

Gendering the realisation of rights

International human rights legislation provides a formal structure – a set of universal 'norms' and standards against which countries' legislation and procedures can be assessed, albeit often informally. It is important, however, that governance institutions address women's rights explicitly. Too often, rights are considered gender-neutral – i.e. that they apply to all people regardless of their gender. But when the 'rights-holder' is a woman, the ability to claim those rights can be significantly compromised. While there are few official channels for ensuring states' compliance, governments ratifying conventions such as CEDAW nonetheless have an *obligation* to promote the realisation of rights within their constituencies. They are also mandated to provide the *enabling conditions* for people to claim their rights, including national laws grounded in rights, democratic legal systems and effective accountability mechanisms (Jayal 2003: 104).

Gendering social justice

Social justice refers to societies where everyone enjoys full citizenship and is treated with equal respect. This means women and men should be entitled to an income, shelter and other basic necessities, and the same opportunities and life chances. They should also not be subject to discrimination for any reason.

Gender equality

Gender equality entails women and men having equal opportunities and equal outcomes in life, including equal access to, ownership of and control over resources and decision-making. It also entails that women and men are equally valued and have the freedom to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations

set by rigid gender roles, prejudices and discrimination. Further, it requires that all human beings – women and men – are able to realise their fundamental human rights (Esplen 2009b: 2).

3.5.5 Reframing the principles of governance through a gender lens

Below, we consider how the principles of good governance outlined in Chapter 2 might be framed so they enable greater gender equality.

Gendering accountability

There are three clear steps to achieving more gender-sensitive accountability mechanisms and relationships. First, it is vital to ensure that the policies, laws and budgets and other products of decisions are informed by gender issues and concerns. For this to happen, an equal gender balance is needed in all decision-making, not only those that are seen to affect women primarily. For example, a strong female voice within these decision-making processes is likely to result in issues such as the need to address domestic violence being far higher up the policy agenda (see UNIFEM 2008). Second, women need to be fully aware of and involved in stakeholder accountability processes, whether these are formal or informal. Third, clear measures of accountability are needed that include indicators on the performance of governance institutions on gender equality, both within these institutions and in the policies they deliver. These measures need to be appropriate, reflecting the quality of gender-sensitive accountability as well as the numbers of women involved. They need to be developed through participatory processes that draw on diverse meanings of accountability for men and women. Performance assessments based on these measures need to be conducted internally as well as through external audits.

Gendering transparency

Governance processes need to be transparent for *all* citizens. This means thinking about what transparency means for women and men in particular social or cultural situations, considering what the constraints to such transparency might be, and addressing them. Organisations need to find appropriate modes of communicating information – for example, if women have poor literacy because of unequal access to education, information could be shared verbally, through the radio or television, or other forms that do not involve the written word. Information about governance processes should also be made available in local institutions and rural areas, as women may not be able to travel to towns because of cultural restrictions on their mobility or because they need to care for dependents in the home.

Gendering inclusiveness

In formulating a gender-sensitive definition of inclusiveness it helps to start by considering who might be excluded from governance processes and what would the reasons be for this. For example, women may not be present in consultations and meetings, or able to vote in elections, because there is no expectation that they should or would attend. Questions also need to be asked about who *is* included. Are those attending these consultations representative of a diverse range of citizens – for example, is there a strong minority presence? Are disabled people represented? Do all those included have an equal voice – are they able to speak freely, and are their opinions respected? Some useful approaches for making governance more inclusive are presented in Chapter 6, and throughout the report.

Gendering responsiveness

Governance institutions cannot be responsive unless they understand the needs and situations of women and men. This not only means including more women in governance processes but also listening to women and

providing spaces where they can speak freely. Effective measures for assessing levels of responsiveness are also vital – this means developing, for example, indicators that show whether changes in services have been effective in serving the needs of all members of communities, and being prepared to learn from what has not worked.

Gendering principles of equity

Governance institutions need to promote gender equity as a guiding principle for their policies – for example, ensuring women and men have equal access to resources. Gender equity should also be a *goal* for institutions – it is about sharing institutional power and opportunities equally between women and men, and ensuring they are equally rewarded for their input. It is also a broader social goal – enabling women and men the same life choices and rights to resources as well as opportunities such as education.

Naripokkho – challenging gender inequalities in Bangladesh

'Women in Bangladesh were of interest to political parties only in so far as we were vote banks. We were of interest to development agencies only in our roles as mothers and carers of families and households. In either case our concerns were subsidiary to the more "important" issues at hand – issues of state power and rule, and of poverty "alleviation". Fundamental inequalities in the formal rights and freedoms and in the reality of everyday life were not addressed. Above all there was no understanding of the need to alter the embedded meanings of what it is to be a man or a woman in our world.'

(Shireen Huq, Naripokkho, a women's activist organisation founded in 1983, in Meer and Sever 2004b: 3)

Gendering upholding of rights

A commitment to respecting human rights is essential for all effective governance, but distinctions need to be made between women and girls and men and boys, where rights are concerned. Women's rights refer specifically to the freedoms and entitlements of women and girls of all ages, particularly those that have been denied or ignored because of gender inequalities. Women's rights are violated in some capacity in most societies. For example, everywhere there are cases where women's right to equal pay, equal voice and equal recognition are ignored. Other factors such as cultural or religious background, social norms, and poverty levels can further undermine women's rights. Customary laws may prevent women from having the right to inherit or own property or seek an education; statutory laws may fail to recognise women's right not to be victims of domestic violence, while in some places women still do not have the right to vote.

Gendering commitments to upholding the rule of law

A gendered approach to following the rule of law would entail ensuring legal frameworks and legislation are not discriminatory in any way and are grounded in principles of gender equality and human rights – including women's rights. Importantly, the bodies entrusted with enforcing the laws need to have an equal gender balance, particularly in their own decision-making.

3.6   Practical approaches to gender-sensitive governance

The final, but most challenging, step to achieving gender-sensitive governance is thinking about what practical approaches should be taken – what needs to happen to bring about some of the changes talked about above. If governance institutions and actors want to ensure that any changes they make are sustainable and make a difference in the long term, they need to:

- **Identify the problem.** Where do gender inequalities exist, including in specific governance institutions, processes and relationships – and how are these created and perpetuated by inequalities in societies? This will help to provide 'transformatory' goals for governance institutions in terms of achieving gender equality.

- **Find targeted, appropriate solutions and strategies.** Once the extent of the problem has been revealed, solutions are needed that will not only address existing gender inequalities but will *enable* greater gender equality in future processes. These include enabling women's entry into governance institutions and building women's capacity to participate effectively.

- Recognise that **there is no blueprint for achieving gender sensitivity and gender equality** in governance processes. Rather, those who want to ensure these deep-rooted changes happen need to 'identify the critical elements of existing best practice…and adapt these to the contingencies of each country' (Ashworth 1996: 14).

Key points from Chapter 3

- Despite governance reforms, there has been a fundamental failure to challenge the entrenched unequal gendered power relations and other forms of exclusion in societies and institutions.

- Decision-making processes in all types of governance institutions tend to exclude women. And if they are involved, they tend to be marginalised.

- Governance cannot be effective unless it is gender-sensitive – in terms of both the gender balance of decision-makers but also of its policies and decisions and their outcome for women, the realisation of their rights and the achievement of gender equality.

- Gender-sensitive governance must have gender equality and social justice at its centre – recognising the different needs of women and men, actively challenging gender inequalities in society or the community, and based on equitable institutions, processes and relationships.

- Governance institutions wanting to be more gender-sensitive need to examine their goals and principles through a gender lens. They need to assess their practices and the impacts of their processes in terms of gender equality to identify gaps and problems, then find appropriate solutions and strategies.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine government and global governance institutions and the types of barriers to gender equality that may exist in national, local and global governance institutions – as well as case study examples of what has worked.

4. GOVERNMENT AND GENDER

'Even if the need to go beyond the state is indisputable, the importance of state intervention for disadvantaged social groups cannot be underestimated.'

(Jayal 2003: 99)

While governance goes beyond the institutions of the state, we start by assessing barriers and opportunities for gender-sensitive national and local government[16] because of the immediate influence of these institutions on men and women, and because this is where much of the current literature lies. This chapter critically examines some of the gender equality reforms, including electoral quota systems and women's machineries that have been introduced at the levels of national and local government. It reflects on the way these reforms have been implemented in diverse global contexts, and considers their effectiveness in the achievement of gender-sensitive governance. The chapter also looks at the potential for decentralisation to enable effective participation of women in governance, considering local government structures such as the *panchayat* system in India and consultative, citizen-led processes that inform service delivery. It considers the role of CSOs, particularly those linked to the women's movement, in catalysing and sustaining change. The chapter identifies current obstacles as well as areas of good practice from different global regions that can be adapted to specific cultural, political and social contexts. While our examples are drawn primarily from developing counties of the South, it is important to remember that 'bad' and 'good' governance can be found both in governments of the North and South.

4.1 What is 'the state'?

A common perception is that the state[17] is a unitary institution, but states are in reality far more complex, encompassing the diverse offices of government, including: civil service functions and local councils; the police and judiciary; the military; schools; and health services, to name a few, each of which are further divided by function (Randall and Waylen 1998: 4). As emphasised in Chapters 1 and 2, national governing processes are becoming increasingly decentralised, with some attention paid to consultation and participatory mechanisms. Yet, however decentralised governments become, the state retains a level of authority that makes it a key mechanism for institutionalising change and endorsing decisions. In line with their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and relevant UN conventions such as CEDAW, governments need to take responsibility for ensuring that basic services are provided for and accessible by all citizens and are of adequate quality (UNDP 2008: 5).

National governments are increasingly seen as players in global networks as a result of their membership of global and regional institutions such as the WTO, EU and African Union, their status as aid recipients or donors, or their commitment to international human rights legislation (see Chapter 5). Partly due to these global and

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16 Government is the body within any organisation that has the authority to make and the power to enforce laws, regulations, or rules. Typically, the government refers a civil government – local, provincial, or national – but commercial, academic, religious, or other formal organisations are also administered by governing bodies (Source: Wikipedia).

17 A state is a political association with effective sovereignty over a geographic area and representing a population. These may be nation states, sub-national states or multinational states. A state usually includes the set of institutions that claim the authority to make the rules that govern the people of the society in that territory, though its status as a state often depends in part on being recognised by a number of other states as having internal and external sovereignty over it (Source: Wikipedia).

regional links, many country governments have pledged to contribute towards meeting MDG3 on gender equality, honouring CEDAW and respecting the recommendations of the BPfA by taking up the issue of gender equality and women's rights as a national concern.

The Beijing Platform for Action

The BPfA provides a strategic set of goals for participating nations, which can be summarised as: setting a timetable to end all discrimination against women, in line with CEDAW; initiating measures towards achieving a long-term goal of 50 per cent representation of women in national decision-making positions; and enabling greater access to political and economic opportunities for women (Beijing Platform website). The Platform promotes gender mainstreaming as a key vehicle for the advancement of gender equality, to be mediated through specific institutional machinery, such as women's ministries, and through the allocation of national and international resources. These are viewed as essential steps towards ensuring women's access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

(Karam 2000: 17)

Gender and the MDGs

In 2000, world leaders from 189 countries made a pledge at the UN Millennium Summit to meet the eight development goals of: ending hunger, achieving universal education, achieving gender equality, focusing on child and maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, achieving environmental sustainability, and creating global partnerships. MDG3 is concerned with promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; it is based on seven priorities: strengthening post-primary education for girls, guaranteeing sexual and reproductive rights, investment in gender-sensitive infrastructure, guaranteeing women's and girls' property rights, eliminating gender equality in employment, increasing women's share of seats in national and local government, and combating violence against women and girls.

4.2 What are some of the gender inequalities in government?

In light of the BPfA, MDG3 and CEDAW, a significant number of governments have stepped up existing gender-sensitive measures and initiated new ones. The most visible of these are the establishment or strengthening of women's ministries and gender units, renewed attention to the development of gender action plans, and the introduction of quotas to promote women's representation in national and local decision-making bodies. The strengths and weaknesses of these reforms are examined in Section 4, but in this section we focus on areas where governments are failing to deliver on gender equality and women's rights.

4.2.1 Government institutions themselves reinforce an unequal gender power balance

Gender inequalities are embedded in the processes, rules and relationships of government institutions. These in turn influence decisions that shape gender relations and identities at national, local, household and individual levels, contributing to the perpetuation of gendered inequalities. The field of politics is the arena in which these inequalities have been most evident, with men holding the vast majority of powerful positions in national and

local government (see Ashworth 1996; Waylen 2008; Shvedova 2005: 35). Not only do those with authority in political parties tend to be male, but they are expected to embody a stereotypically heterosexual type of maleness, and may risk losing credibility if they are 'outed' as homosexual (Randall and Waylen 1998: 8). There are also differences *between* women – an analysis of quota systems shows that, although fundamental to increasing women's overall representation, they do not adequately make indigenous women's perspectives visible and do not guarantee the exercise of their democratic rights (Ranaboldo et al. 2006; see also Dovi 2002, 2007). Previously we discussed some of the barriers to women entering governance more generally, which apply to all levels of government – including government institutions and global institutions. We now turn to the challenges women face once in government, before looking at some of the solutions.

4.2.2 Women have to struggle against the system once in government

There is a general consensus that, even when quotas facilitate women's entry into government, leading to increasing numbers of women in elected state posts, there are still a huge number of barriers, largely within state institutions, that prevent their full participation in governmental life and decision-making processes. Until these are addressed, quotas can only provide the first building block in the creation of gender-sensitive state machinery. Some of these barriers are explored below.

Social barriers to inclusion

A social and cultural environment that discriminates against women through its laws, customs and expectations will impede the effective participation of women in political life, particularly if there are constraints on their mobility and freedom to engage in debates with men. This means that even if women have the capacity to participate in governance processes they may be restricted from doing so.

The double burden

When women are elected to government offices they can often expect to work long, inflexible hours, including working in the evenings and at weekends. Because women are so often expected to take on the unpaid work of caring for dependents and household duties, they may find themselves faced with a 'double burden', balancing their professional and home lives. For some the strain of trying to reconcile and meet both these demands can affect their career progression and in some cases lead to their resignation from government posts. A study conducted in Britain in 1994 indicated that 85 per cent of women under 45 left government for non-electoral reasons, and in 63 per cent of cases this was because of the difficulties of balancing home and work life (Van Donk 1997, quoted in Evertzen 2001). Encouraging men to share some of these responsibilities could enable women's participation in governance, but social attitudes about male and female roles also need to shift if this is to happen.

Discrimination

Women may also be subjected to personal discrimination based on their gender, with further discrimination if they are also black or disabled, for example. Discrimination can be passive – for example, women may be ignored in meetings. It can also be overtly abusive, expressed through verbal attacks that are often sexualised, reflecting the ambivalent attitudes of some men towards women who may be crossing cultural boundaries and defying traditional expectations in order to participate in government (Tambiah 2003), as well as towards those who depart from normative expectations of gender and sexuality. Even the physical spaces of government can alienate women MPs. A former Ugandan woman MP explained: 'We used to have one toilet, and then the men have about six, and then you see all these men just walking in and out, and going back. So, one time I went to the men's toilet, and they asked me, excuse me, what are you doing here?' (Hon. Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi,

personal communication). In turn, transgender people face much discrimination, and, depending on the cultural context, men who are known to be homosexual may experience such intense prejudice that these spaces become virtually impossible to enter or engage in.

Institutional barriers to inclusion in high-level processes

Commonly accepted misperceptions of women's and men's differential abilities and vested interests, coupled with an unwillingness to share the 'real' issues in government with women, mean that highly charged political issues and their related high-level decision-making processes often remain in the hands of the privileged men who tend to dominate governance institutions. Women are likely to be assigned 'soft' ministerial duties dealing with education or health issues, while men tackle the 'hard' topics of trade and finance (Tambiah 2003: 84; Pedwell and Rennons 2007: 17). It is also expected that issues directly relating to women, such as reproductive health, will be under entirely female administration, which has the effect of separating women's issues from the broader context of gender power relations and undermining attempts to promote and cooperation and understanding with men working in state institutions.

Lack of the connections often needed to 'get on' in politics

Without financial or political leverage many women with the potential for leadership are not considered for office, particularly at the national level. A lack of family connections can present a major barrier to women's capacity to attain positions of authority in government. Systems of patronage and kinship networking mean that many women in national state positions are members of elite, established political dynasties, although the lack of connections may be less of a barrier to election at local level. For example, studies on *panchayat* – local government institutions in India (see below) – indicate that demonstrated initiative, participation in community activities and personal relationships of trust and cooperation, or social capital, have been instrumental in enabling women's entry to a local political arena (Basu 2003).

Lack of the finances needed to support political campaigns

Even when these opportunities exist, because of their unequal access to capital in the form of land or other resources, women are often unable to leverage the funds necessary to support strong political campaigns. Additionally, their relatively low wages compared to men and the professional barriers to their promotion to high-earning positions mean they are less likely to be able to save money for this purpose. Poor and marginalised women are disproportionately affected by this situation, with little hope of entering a political race that is largely defined by financial capacity (Tambiah 2003; Pedwell and Rennons 2007). Technology offers ways to move beyond these financial constraints, however, as the example of the Philippines women's party Gabriela demonstrates (in the section on women's parties below). The internet and mobile phones can provide cost-effective ways to reach thousands of potential voters, both locally and internationally – although of course access can be an issue.

Lack of the capacity needed to participate in government

> *'More women are now more courageous to get into politics, or to positions of decision making, because there has been a precedent, and their role models, there are people to look up to. So, it means a new generation is saying: "If so and so can be in, why not me?" The challenge we have so far is now improving the quality of the women that get in there.'*

> *(Hon. Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi, Uganda, personal communication)*

A key concern is that in many cases women – particularly those from poor backgrounds – may lack the capacity to be able to fully exploit their positions in government. They may not have confidence or leadership skills, or they may lack basic literacy. This can lead to ridicule and criticism by their male counterparts (Tambiah 2003: 68). In some cases, male relatives of female candidates or representatives may take advantage of this situation to push their own agendas, with the women acting as mouthpieces for their concerns (Tambiah 2003: 71; Vyasulu and Vyasulu 2000: 42). Capacity-building programmes provided by state services or CSOs are beginning to address the problem (see Section 4.7), but investment in inclusive, gender-sensitive education of a high quality is the only long-term solution.

4.2.3 Gender equality and women's rights are not often seen as a priority

Even when there is greater representation of women in government this does not automatically result in greater visibility of gender equality or women's rights issues. Women can find it difficult to bring forward gender issues, such as domestic violence, or women's specific needs in health and other services. Because of the typically low profile of gender and women's rights issues in government policy, women in politics may feel isolated in promoting their importance over other issues (Corner 1998: 37; Ashworth 1996: 7; Basu 2003: 25). Rather than struggling to raise the profile of gender equality and women's rights issues, they may choose or be forced into taking up more mainstream positions or following their party line in order to move forward in their careers (Corner 1998: 38). Women in government are also not always united around the same issues – they may come from very different backgrounds or be serving needs of very different constituencies. This can result in fragmented messages around gender issues, and a lack of collective strength. It can even result in the marginalisation of other women (see Dovi 2002, 2007).

4.3 Gender-sensitive reforms in government: opportunities and barriers

As noted above, a significant number of governments have initiated reforms aimed at creating greater gender equality in government. The most visible of these are the establishment or strengthening of women's ministries and gender units, renewed attention to the development of gender action plans and reports under CEDAW, and the introduction of quotas to promote women's representation in national and local decision-making bodies. Here we critically examine some of these mechanisms, in addition to offering recommendations on how to make them more effective tools for promoting gender equality.

4.3.1 Women as voters

Women now have the right to vote in 95 per cent of countries, but they often fail to do so for a number of reasons. If they have poor access to education or information, they may not be aware of the importance of voting or they may allow their husbands to choose the candidate they vote for. Due to childcare responsibilities they may not have the time to vote. And because of cultural norms they may be restricted from travelling to and entering polling booths, or unable to have their photos taken for voter registration cards because they are not permitted to show their faces (Evertzen 2001: 12; Tambiah 2003). Consequently, female political candidates lose thousands of potential supporters.

4.3.2 Quota systems: a critical assessment

'The numbers matter. Because, if you are two in [government], you won't change anything. Two against 200, what are you? Nothing. You just get sucked in. Before you know it, after five years you are a man in a woman's skin. So, we need the numbers.'

(Hon. Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi, former MP, Uganda)

Electoral reforms are also being realised in the form of electoral quota systems, which can be applied at three different stages of the election process. Quotas may be deployed during the selection process, in the form of a rule that requires that a certain percentage of women are represented in the list of candidates to be shortlisted for consideration as electoral candidates. Quotas may come into play at the point of nomination, where parties are required to ensure that up to 50 per cent of candidates to be placed on the ballot are women. A third use of quotas requires that a certain percentage of parliamentary or local council seats are reserved for women. This is becoming the most common form of gender quota assignment (see Dahlerup 2005: 25).

There is evidence that quota systems have had positive impacts on gender parity in legislative bodies. For example, in Rwanda, largely because of a constitutional quota that reserved 24 out of 80 seats in the lower house and 30 per cent in the upper for women, the 2003 elections resulted in a significant increase in women elected to the national assembly. This has led to a situation whereby 'among all national Parliaments, Rwanda is closest to reaching equal numbers of women and men' (Shvedova IDEAS 2005: 35). In Latin America 11 countries have adopted quotas that establish minimum levels for women's participation in elections, and this, in combination with other factors such as social and economic development and democratisation, has resulted in a clear rise in women's political representation in some countries – for example, Brazil. From an average of 9 per cent in 1990, women's representation in the lower houses of national Parliaments increased to 17 per cent in 2005, while the number of seats held by women in senates rose from 5 per cent to 13 per cent.[18] Conversely, after the quota system expired in Bangladesh, the percentage of female MPs dropped from 10 per cent to 2 per cent (Palmieri and Jabre 2005).

How effective are quotas in enabling women's entry into government?
Despite these encouraging figures, feelings are mixed as to whether or not quotas are an effective way of ensuring gender equality in decision-making processes. There is a general consensus that the quota system is a good start, attracting a 'critical mass' of female representatives into the state machinery, who can have more of an impact than they would individually (Hamadeh-Banerjee 2000). However, there are worries that quotas will be treated as upper limits, rather than a minimum goal for women's participation and voice in government. Furthermore, creating opportunities for women candidates may be viewed in instrumentalist terms, as a means to encourage more women to vote and thereby to increase party power, without any intention of making the parties more gender-sensitive or giving women any real authority once they are elected (Al-Jraibi 2000).

Even when quotas result in a significant percentage of female representatives on electoral lists, they are often placed at the bottom of lists, thus reducing their chances of being elected. An effective way to avoid this situation is through the use of 'zebra' lists, alternating men and women rather than separating them (Beall 2005: 4; Ogunsanya 2004). Another method is through the use of 'results-based quotas', where women are elected to a pre-determined number of seats via a 'women only' list, or where the woman with the most votes is elected to

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18 It should be noted that these gains are not evenly distributed. For cultural and other reasons, women's representation in some countries is high, while in others – including Guatemala and Honduras – it is much lower.

the legislature even if she has fewer votes than a male candidate, until the quota is filled (see Larsevd and Taphorn 2007). Evidence suggests that quotas are most successful when they are deployed through a proportional representation[19] system, and protected through one of the methods above, with zebra listing proving a popular solution (Evertzen 2001: 15).

4.3.3 Women's parties: an effective means to an end?

One way of bypassing the drawbacks of party lists as a channel for getting women into government is to create a party that represents women and gender equality concerns (see case study on Gabriela below). However, according to some commentators, the risk of women's parties is that they create boundaries around gender issues, rather than encouraging broad change across all political parties and government processes. They also address a narrower range of issues than 'mainstream' political parties.

Gabriela, the Philippines

Gabriela began as a women's organisation based in the Philippines, which began to build a party constituency and campaign for parliamentary seats in 2000. Support for the party was gained through direct campaigning in rural and urban areas, campaigns run through internet sites such as YouTube, and mobile (or cell) phones, which were able to reach many Philippines nationals living overseas.[20] By the time the party ran for Parliament in 2004 it had more than 100,000 members, and by 2007 it had two seats. Members of Gabriela view the political party as an extension of the women's movement, enabling the MPs to bring women's rights and gender equality issues directly into government, rather than having to lobby government officials. The MPs receive ongoing support from their party, and are expected to retain their links with their constituents through consultative processes involving leaders from the women's movement, poor women, and female lawyers, through which a legislative agenda is developed. Recently a gender-sensitive divorce bill has been drafted in this way, and is currently being debated in Parliament. This is highly significant, given that currently divorce is not legal in the Philippines. The bill also recognises the existence of abuse in marriage as a reason for divorce, and as a problem that needs to be addressed.

(Based on an interview with Christina Palabay, National Secretary General of Gabriela)

4.3.4 National women's machineries: barriers and opportunities

The need for such national women's machineries, in the form of women's ministries or national commissions, in state governance institutions was first identified in 1962 by the UN Commission on the Status of Women and was further endorsed through the World Plan of Action that was launched in 1975 at the start of the UN Decade for Women (Byrne, Laier et al. 1996: 8). By 1985, 90 per cent of countries had established NWMs, and this number increased following the BPfA in 1995.

Women's machineries usually take the form of either a single ministry or unit with a responsibility for gender and development, or a centralised unit that monitors and influences gender-focused planning across all development

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19 Proportional Representation (PR) is an electoral system that aims to ensure that the outcome of the election reflects the proportion of support gained by each competing group. It is different from the majoritarian principle, where the party gaining the largest number of seats or votes wins an election (Source: Politics.co.uk: http://www.politics.co.uk/briefings-guides/issue-briefs/domestic-policy/elections/proportional-representation/proportional-representation-$366642.htm).
20 Gabriela campaigners circulated a text back campaign for families of migrant workers. Party supporters living in the Philippines were encouraged to send a text about Gabriela to five or ten people outside the country, who were asked to text another five.

sectors. Gender 'focal points' are employed to facilitate links between NWMs and other government ministries. The most visible output from these processes is the gender in development action plans that NWMs are tasked with producing, which articulate strategies for integrating gender into central planning. There have been some positive impacts resulting from the work of the women's ministries. For example, the Women in Development Ministry in Uganda launched a nationwide consultative process in the mid-1990s to elicit women's views on the country's constitution, as a means to increase women's influence on national politics (ibid: 73). However, NWMs are often considered inadequate in many ways, lacking real power or resources to be effective, and often remaining isolated from the central administration, with the result that the goal of gender mainstreaming and policy influence is hampered (Mukhpadhyay 2004: 13).

Constraints to the effectiveness of NWMs
The two main barriers to the success of women's machineries are lack of adequate resources and lack of a clear mandate. Women's machineries generally receive a tiny budget in comparison to other ministries, and are usually the first to feel the effects of cutbacks, forcing them to adopt 'coping strategies' such as focusing on one key activity (Byrne, Laier et al. 1996: 16; see also Jad 2006: 12). Because they are so poorly funded they rarely have enough staff to be able to plan and implement comprehensive plans. Even with adequate funding, many NWMs are not given a clear mandate that sets out their power and roles or their relationship to other decision-making bodies. Additionally, even when women's machineries implement strategies, poor mechanisms of accountability can lead to policy evaporation (Byrne, Laier et al. 1996: 24; see also Jad 2006: 40).

Commitment towards the machineries themselves is not automatic, even from those working within them, particularly when the initiatives are seen as a condition of aid, and '"blue print" agendas for women's empowerment' (Jad 2006: 39) are felt to be imposed, rather than derived from contextualised needs. In addition, frequent or major changes of administration make it difficult for women's machineries to achieve consistency and continuity. For example, the views of the new Women's Minister under the recently elected Hamas government in Palestine differ from her predecessor in ways that have yet to be felt across the ministry (ibid: 27).

4.4 Alternative state models and gender-sensitive governance

While advocating for a radical shift in the model of state government is not a practical strategy, lessons can nonetheless be learned from governments that differ significantly in structure and philosophy from Western state models. For example, the Chinese Communist Party's ideological emphasis on equality has resulted in a specific focus on women's rights across party policies, and the establishment of powerful women's ministries. The All China Women's Federation (ACWF) was established in 1949 and has played an active role in promoting gender-sensitive legislation and in maintaining a focus on gender discrimination in the party policy agenda. It has been instrumental in the passing of legislation to protect women engaged in work in export processing zones (EPZs) and other aspects of global production chains. The Federation has also promoted the importance of legislation to guarantee women's freedom from other forms of abuse (Howell 1998).

4.5 Gender-sensitive governance in fragile states

There are many types of states that can be classed as fragile – they include 'weak' states, conflict areas, post-conflict environments and states that are unresponsive to the needs of their citizens and remain outside of the

international community. What fragile states have in common is that they are 'countries where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor' (DFID, quoted on the GSDRC website). Fragile states pose obvious challenges for the achievement of gender-sensitive governance. Often leadership and administration are fragmented to the extent where it is impossible to make clear decisions and even more difficult to try and put them into practice. This means that policy changes on gender issues are likely to be slow and ineffectual.

There is a risk that processes of decentralisation will be destabilising and even lead to conflict at local and national levels. This is especially the case where there are ethnic or religious divisions, or where warlords and conservative local authorities fill the power vacuum in ways that exclude women and minority groups. Basic service delivery is also likely to be threatened, especially in situations where services have been removed from state control and could fall into the hands of militant groups who prevent access to certain people, including women. In fragile states the presence of a strong, centralised government is an essential building block to the creation of a gender-responsive bureaucratic culture that can establish clear principles of democracy, accountability and transparency as well as gradually introducing closely monitored mechanisms of governance, including regional and local government offices, spaces for citizen voices that include women, and gender-sensitive institutional and policy (See Suporting Resources Collection,, Demetriades 2009, for case study on gender-sensitive governance in Sudan).

4.6 Decentralised models of governance: spaces for gender equality?

Increasing decentralisation of government functions is being realised through the establishment or strengthening of local councils and other governance institutions at regional, district and village levels, as well as in urban settings. These bodies are being granted greater power to respond to local needs and priorities and capacity to raise revenue locally to pay for improved services. It is generally accepted that the flexibility and immediacy of local government systems potentially offer more opportunities for the involvement of ordinary citizens as well as opening up spaces for women and other groups traditionally sidelined in conventional state politics. Participation in local government is being viewed as being more practical for women than at the national level because 'eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent, and local government is the closest to women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children' (Evertzen 2001: 3). Citizen-focused consultations are viewed as a means for women to express their own needs and to facilitate changes that will benefit whole communities, because their roles and responsibilities within the household mean they are primary users of sanitation, solid waste disposal and water services, while their caring roles give them more vested interests than men in good health and educational provision.

However, even when women are more involved in local government and in citizen-led processes, this does not guarantee *quality* of participation. The increasing emphasis on decentralisation and power attached to local bodies can mean greater interest in involvement at the local level by men, and greater likelihood that women will be sidelined, even when quota systems are in place (Evertzen 2001). There is also no guarantee that local governance will be more responsive to women's needs or interests. In fact, it is often more difficult to create distance between local government institutions and traditional, entrenched social norms that are deeply patriarchal, because of the power of traditional authorities who protect them (Beall 2005: 10). Finally, even where there is evidence of women's greater, effective involvement in local governance, this should not obscure

the goal of getting more women into influential positions in state executives, including cabinet offices, since lasting change needs to be endorsed at state government level.

4.6.1 Gender-sensitive models of local government

Some models of local governance, such as the *panchayat* system in India, have set precedents in terms of their mobilisation of the quota system to bring more women into local political arenas, while also ensuring a level of representation from other disadvantaged groups such as scheduled castes.

The *panchayat* system of governance in India

The *panchayat* is a three-tiered system of governance in India, of which villages form the basic units, known as *panchayats* (assemblies) and the other two levels are blocks (groups or associations of villages) and districts. At its ideological roots, the system makes each village responsible for its own affairs, but in practice the system operates under the auspices of a powerful national government. Although there were attempts to increase women's representation on these local bodies in 1976, through the introduction of nominal quotas, the real breakthrough came in 1983 when the state of Karnataka in the south reserved 25 per cent of *panchayat* seats for women, resulting in the election of nearly 50 per cent women in 1987 – many of whom were participating in politics for the first time. Other states followed suit, with similar results. *Panchayat* elections, to be held every five years, were mandated throughout the country in 1992, and the reforms called 33 per cent of seats to be reserved for women, as well as for scheduled castes and tribes. This process has resulted in the election of 700,000 women (Basu 2003).

Benefits and drawbacks of the *panchayat* system

Positive examples of women's influence from within *panchayats* are beginning to emerge. The most notable impacts are linked to elected female representatives' former experience as activists in social movements. Women from a fishing village who had been active in protests against large-scale trawling used the platform of the *panchayats* to demand the right to work. In another village in Maharashtra a nine-woman panel defeated the male-dominated rival party in local elections. Reforms they introduced included changing land and property rights that discriminated against women, investing in educational provision, establishing a bus service, building public toilets for men and women in the village square, and acquiring a water tank (Basu 2003).

Other reports show that women's participation in these local councils has focused increased attention on children's education and on improvements in infrastructure, such as building roads and providing electricity. There are also indications that involvement in the *panchayats* is enabling women to challenge socially embedded gender inequalities. For example, in some areas they have come to recognise that illiteracy and a lack of education can prevent effective participation in public activities (see Jayal 2006). As a result, women are starting to insist that their daughters get an education before they are married. However, the presence of more women in elected bodies does not guarantee a more gender-balanced system of governance. Certainly, in some cases, women may be elected to act as proxies for male members of their families, or may lack the capacity to function effectively in their posts. They may also face the intransigence of established, male-dominated constellations of power at village and district level (Vyasulu and Vyasulu 2000).

4.6.2 Service delivery reforms

Many of the reforms associated with the new vision and mobilisation of governance revolve around the delivery of public services. The way in which basic services are defined depends on the agency defining them. For example, the Philippines government views basic services as those that give everyone the opportunity to lead healthy, fulfilling and productive lives, to earn a decent living and learn new skills. The World Bank, by contrast, sees basic services primarily in terms of health and education, with an emphasis on water supply and sanitation (see UNDP 2008: 3). A central aim of service delivery reforms is to increase the social accountability of state institutions and agencies or companies with which they are linked towards the users of services for which they have ultimate responsibility.

In principle this accountability is exercised through different collective agents such as neighbourhood and community associations, CSOs, social movements and advocacy NGOs, usually through non-elective mechanisms. In some cases they are initiated by state representatives, in partnership with local groups or individuals. In other cases they are independent of the state and are given legitimacy through formal channels of communication, such as consultative advisory mechanisms (Houtzager and Joshi 2008). A core aim of these processes is to ensure that the state's failure to meet its obligations on service delivery, including to poor communities, is publicly exposed through high-profile lobbying of elected representatives, media coverage, or public protests. The actors involved in raising awareness of particular shortfalls in service provision often rely on human rights or other legal frameworks to legitimise their claims and promote them at various levels.

Yet, despite the apparent benefits of service delivery reforms, they are often critiqued. In some cases they are a condition of loans or aid, imposed on governments by the World Bank and other agencies as part of structural adjustment or public-sector reform programmes that require governments to reduce their spending (UNDP 2008: 6; see also Chapter 1 of this report). This has led to negative impacts on poor people, particularly women and girls, who are unable to pay user charges. Furthermore, in practice the 'democratic spaces' (Cornwall 2004 associated with community decisions and accountability processes linked to service delivery often fail to live up to their promise, especially where the inclusion of women and other marginalised people is concerned. Questions are being asked about how representative and inclusive these spaces actually are – for example, who participates, and who is able to participate? To what extent do the groups replicate existing inequalities, failing to integrate marginalised groups or sidelining their opinions? And how far is gender equality an integral aspect of these new participatory forms of planning? Below we consider these questions in the context of some of these new consultative mechanisms.

New public management

New public management (NPM) processes were introduced as a governance strategy in the 1990s by a range of actors. Drawing from private-sector practices, they aimed to improve public-sector performance in service delivery. NPM revolves around the principle of pluralisation, with different providers competing for customers, with the aim of ensuring more competitive and better services. In poor communities the element of choice was reinforced through the provision of vouchers to households for services such as schools and health centres. There is some evidence that this has had a positive impact on women and girls. For example, in Bangladesh educational stipends were provided for girls, which enabled families to choose which schools they attended, and reduced drop-out rates (Joshi 2008: 11). However, a major concern is that NPM strategies treat households as single units, without taking gender power relations into consideration. This perception of the household is based on the assumption that decisions about resource distribution within the household are made by a responsible male household head whose main aim is to maximise the welfare of his family. This can reinforce existing

gendered inequalities in the ways in which resources such as food, healthcare and education are distributed, while erasing any gains female members may have made in these household decisions (Joshi 2008).

Partnerships

In many cases, citizen engagement in service delivery is managed through different types of partnership with state institutions or representatives. At one extreme, the state may delegate aspects of service delivery to local CSOs, while maintaining a degree of authority and responsibility. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a local health insurance scheme was initiated by local health facility staff and staff from other development-related sectors, assisted by members of village committees and supported by a Congolese NGO. The initiative enabled access to hospital in-patient care for local people on payment of a small annual premium, and about 36,000 people joined within four weeks of its launch (see Goetz and Gaventa 2001: 25).

Other forms of partnership focus on a range of services and bring together stakeholders from different interests and sectors. One example is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) model initiated by the UK government (see box below).

UK Local Strategic Partnerships

LSPs comprise local people, public-sector representatives, voluntary and community organisations, and businesses, and aim to improve the planning and delivery of local services. The LSPs are responsible for producing a strategy that sets out priorities for an area in ways that will improve the environmental, social and economic well-being of a community. These partnerships could provide very effective entry points for involving women in planning and implementing local services, both empowering them and resulting in more gender-sensitive service provision.

However, the little available evidence suggests that these opportunities are being lost. Despite the introduction in 2007 of the UK Gender Equality Duty, which requires public authorities to promote equality between men and women at all levels, a recent study showed that women's representation in LSPs was low, particularly at senior level. These gender inequalities may be linked to the unchallenged social positioning of certain men in decision-making positions, low confidence of women about their capacity to participate, and timing and location of meetings that were difficult to combine with childcare, work commitments and other responsibilities.

(Gudnadottir et al. 2007, Oxfam)

Informal consultative processes

Consultative events or processes are fairly simple mechanisms used by service providers to gauge public opinion. In theory these provide spaces for citizens to participate in shaping interventions and pointing out gaps where new services or policies are needed.

Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) processes in many southern African countries, including Uganda, Zambia and South Africa, call on local people to communicate their own understandings and experiences of poverty and help to develop meaningful indicators for their area for use in planning and performance monitoring. The aim is to build a more nuanced and relevant picture of needs at a local level to better inform policymakers. PPAs led to greater emphasis being given to water provision and security issues in Uganda in the national Poverty Eradication Action Plan (Rakodi 2002: 18).

A major criticism of these outwardly democratic and participatory processes is that they often fail to account for local hierarchies and divisions that ensure certain voices and opinions are muted. Women are among those who tend to be less visible or influential in these settings, particularly if they are further marginalised because of age or ethnicity. Childcare and other commitments may place further constraints on women's capacity to participate in these democratic spaces (Goetz and Gaventa 2001). PPAs are criticised in particular because insufficient time is taken to generate the information, those consulted may not include women or other marginalised groups, and there are poor linkages between the information gathered and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), despite the understanding that PRSPs are participatory processes (see IMF website 2009)[21]

4.7 Towards greater gender-sensitivity in national and decentralised government

Evidence from different countries reveals several common factors that contribute to the establishment of national and local government with a strong commitment to gender equality. These include: an active and united women's movement; a gender-sensitive social and cultural environment; the desire or potential for change among existing governmental actors; women's involvement in changing the political status quo; and the support of male government actors. They are explored below, with case study examples of what has worked, where and why.

4.7.1 A positive social and cultural environment is needed for gender-sensitive government
The shift towards more gender-sensitive state institutions and processes often happens in relation to broader social and cultural changes in terms of women's empowerment and gender equality, which are translated into constitutional changes, as the following example demonstrates.

Finding political will in Rwanda

Rwanda underwent a major shift in gender awareness during and following the genocide of 1994. During the conflict, women were subjected to horrific levels of gender-based violence including rape, sexual assault and breast oblation. They also witnessed terrible acts of cruelty against members of their families and communities, in addition to experiencing displacement and loss of livelihoods. A large number of women also lost their husbands, so assumed the role of household heads and community leaders. Women are still in the demographic majority in Rwanda, comprising 54 per cent of the population. The hardships faced by these women, coupled with the responsibilities they have taken on have contributed to changing the way they see themselves and also the way they are perceived in the public consciousness. A major consequence has been the significant political will shown towards the need for gender parity in government and for male delegates who are committed to equal gender power relations.

(Powley 2005)

4.7.2 Gender-sensitive assessments of government institutions are needed

Government institutions at local and national levels need to reflect on their own internal practices. They need to look beyond increases in the number of women due to quotas and ask questions about the *quality* of women's participation. Do women in government have the same opportunities as men, do they have an equal voice in decision-making, and are their opinions respected? Are relationships between women and men respectful and equal? Is the culture of the institution, including the codes of behaviour and the facilities provided, appropriate for women and men? Have institutions adopted a gender mainstreaming approach? If so, are they investing time and resources in the provision of ongoing gender training and assessing the impacts of mainstreaming on gender-awareness and shifts in levels of equality? Assessments are also needed of policymaking processes. To what extent are they responsive to gender issues such as domestic violence and equal rights, and are new gender-sensitive laws backed by adequate resources to ensure their effective implementation? To what extent does public spending reflect the needs of both women and men? Are women's ministries adequately resourced to support these gender-sensitive policy processes? (See Chapters 1, 5 and 7).

4.7.3 For long-term change men within and outside government must be on board

Since men often hold many of the influential positions in government and have the power to instigate changes, it is important that these men understand the gender inequalities that persist within government institutions and in laws and policies, and see how this undermines both women's rights and the effectiveness of government itself. Obtaining the support of strong male ministerial figures who are willing to champion gender equality concerns is very important, as they can act as role models for other men who may fear being ostracised or ridiculed for taking such a stance (Hon. Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi and Patricia Munabi Babiha, personal communication). For example, DFID has 'gender champions' who are high up in the organisation and who are accountable for delivery on gender equality. It is also crucial to provide training in gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and other awareness-raising activities, particularly for younger men at the start of their careers in government.

4.7.4 Gender-sensitive budgets are needed to ensure greater responsiveness

Gender-sensitive budgets are viewed by many as an essential strategy towards ensuring resource allocation takes into account the different needs of women and men. They are not a gender-sensitive addition to existing budgets but an integral part of main budgeting processes, based on an initial gender-sensitive analysis that is conducted by gender advocates. Lessons learned from the South African Gender Budget Initiative showed that alliances between parliamentarians and CSOs – who are internal and external to government – were more productive in bringing about successful gender budgeting.

Gender budgeting in the UK for better-value services

Oxfam UK has produced a CD-Rom to help service delivery and regeneration initiatives in the UK to take gender into account. The CD draws on discussions with people across the UK who are conducting, lobbying for or benefiting from gender budgeting at the local or national level. The aim is to use the results to encourage government use of gender budgeting techniques, which trace the money that a government or organisation spends, and find out how women and men experience the impacts of the spending. It is a flexible tool, which can work at any level – from the smallest organisation to national government. The inspiration for this CD came from a gender budgeting learning exchange to South Africa and Yemen. The exchange involved sharing experiences of using gender budgeting with other governments and organisations. Participants included those working in or with local and national governments in England, Scotland and Wales, and Oxfam staff.

4.7.5 Gender-sensitive laws and gender equality goals must be translated into practice

Performance indicators as a means to achieve gender-sensitive local governance

It is clear that the existence of a gender policy does not guarantee its implementation at the local level. One way of translating national goals on gender equality into practice in local governance is by assessing performance through well-chosen indicators, as the Ugandan case study below illustrates. For guidance, UNDP has developed a 'User's guide to gender sensitive basic services delivery: indicators and methods of measurement' (UNDP 2008).

Local governance gender performance assessment in Uganda

Uganda has a strong local government system, but, despite the recognition for a strong gender equality policy, outlined in the PRSP, gender was not initially mainstreamed into all actions at the local governance level. In response, a strategic gender performance assessment initiative was developed through the Local Government Development Programme. Local government offices are assessed on their commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming by way of a performance assessment framework, part of a broader incentive framework against which their eligibility for funding is measured through indicators. The performance assessment instrument for gender mainstreaming has been very successful, leading to civil-society-led training on gender budgeting for local government officials, training on gender issues for male and female councillors and civil society monitoring of local government expenditure.

(Tibamwenda and Kyomukama 2008)

Implementing gender equality legislation through participatory processes

There is massive potential value in participatory processes for enabling more gender-sensitive governance, if time is put into ensuring they are relevant to local conditions, sensitive to local needs and truly inclusive. Initiatives in the Philippines demonstrate how local governance offices have been instrumental in mobilising local communities and households around gender-based violence issues.

Using decentralised governance processes to tackle gender-based violence in the Philippines

Research shows that gender-based violence is a major problem in the Philippines. In response, new laws were passed that grant the state power to intervene in cases of household violence or abuse against women and children. Yet the power of the legislation lies in the way in which it has been introduced. Recognising that the effectiveness of these laws is contingent on public awareness of gender-based violence, and 'buy-in' from local authorities, interlinked participatory processes have been established in different local government units, down to the *barangay (*village) level. In the three years since the project was launched, there has been a notable increase in the number of abuse cases being reported.

(Based on information from Maritona Victa Labajo; see the SRC and *In Brief* for a detailed case study.)

4.7.6 A strong women's movement is vital for enabling gender-sensitive government

Evidence indicates that the close involvement of women's organisations with female representatives and women's machineries has proved an important factor in promoting greater gender-sensitivity in governments across different regions. Women's organisations can contribute to gender-sensitive governance processes in local and national government in many ways:

Lobbying government to promote greater gender-sensitivity

Women's organisations are pressurising governance institutions to introduce policies and other measures designed to address gender inequalities and eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination.

Working within and outside the state in Brazil – the dual strategy of the women's movement

In Brazil the women's movement followed a dual strategy in the 1980s. While some pressurised the state into responding to the demands of people at grassroots level, others worked within the state system through platforms like the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement and local councils. This approach succeeded in promoting women's issues at a high level. One notable impact was the development of a safe, non-coercive family planning policy that fit with governmental objectives without undermining women's rights.

(Basu 2003: 28)

Supporting women in government

Some organisations work proactively with women in government, either in an advisory role or by providing spaces for women representatives to come together and address gender-focused issues outside the confines of their party concerns (see Pedwell and Perrons 2007: 20).

Working towards a gender-sensitive constitution in Rwanda

In Rwanda, women's organisations have been heavily involved in advisory processes around the new constitution established in the aftermath of the genocide in 1994. Through an intense consultative process, an umbrella organisation called Pro Femmes, comprising representatives from various NGOs, reported their members' concerns to members of the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The three main groups in this process contributed to a policy paper that set out specific recommendations for making the constitution gender-sensitive and increasing women's representation in government. This was followed up with a mobilisation campaign by Pro Femmes that encouraged women to support the adoption of the new constitution in a country-wide referendum.

(Powley 2005: 158)

Playing a watchdog role

CSOs, particularly women's organisations, are holding national and local government officials to account for the gender-focused national policies to which they have committed, such as CEDAW (see case study on Egypt, Chapter 5) and the BPfA. CSOs can also be instrumental in raising awareness of particular issues and mediating dialogue between citizens and governance officials. They can, for example, demand accountability in contexts where participatory processes around the delivery of services and the provision of rights are compromised by poor or corrupt local governance, whether in rural or urban areas. They are also able to represent people who are marginalised for reasons that include poverty, race and ethnicity (see Pedwell and Perrons 2007: 23).

Working on advocacy with indigenous women in Guatemala

Tierra Viva in Guatemala, is an organisation that lobbies governance institutions at local and national levels to take women's rights issues into account at all levels of decision-making. The organisation works with local, mostly indigenous women, enabling them to develop advocacy agendas on sexual and reproductive rights and gender-based violence, and to voice their own concerns.

(Pedwell and Perrons 2007: 21)

Awareness-raising

Women's organisations are playing a key role in raising awareness of citizens', and particularly women's, rights to vote and hold governments accountable through various modes of communication, including carefully designed posters and leaflets, radio programmes and training sessions at community level (see example of Emang Basadi below). Importantly, men need to be part of these strategies to ensure they do not discourage their wives and daughters from voting independently. The interventions do not stop once female candidates are elected: women's organisations are strengthening this sense of entitlement by creating links between local groups of women and governance representatives as a way to get their voices heard in policymaking and reform processes.

Political education campaign for women in Botswana

Emang Basadi (Stand Up Women), an NGO in Botswana, launched a Political Education Project a year before elections were held, with the aim of increasing the number of women in local and national governance offices and strengthening political parties' commitment to gender equality issues. The NGO held 'voter education seminars' in political constituencies and also held campaigning workshops to help female candidates get their message across. As a result, women's representation in Parliament increased from 4 to 11 per cent.

(Evertzen 2001: 13)

Capacity building

'I was the one who was elected. But I was not allowed to go out, never to speak. I have learned to speak, to use the microphone. Now the mike has come into my hand, it will remain with me all my life – nobody can take it away.'

(Murawarunissa, India, cited in Mukhopadhyay 2004: 37)

Women's organisations and other CSOs are playing a key capacity-building role to develop their leadership skills and confidence to participate in decision-making processes. This both enables women already in office to promote gender equality issues more effectively, and facilitates the entry of more, better-equipped women into positions of influence. It also contributes to building credibility and legitimacy for women in governance. Many of these initiatives aim to include groups who are marginalised because of race, ethnicity, poverty levels, sexuality and so on (see case studies below).

Building the capacity of women councillors in local governance in India

COVA, an NGO in India, works with women councillors from marginalised communities who have been promoted to local governance positions by virtue of the quota system. Most of the women had been expected to play a 'puppet' role, while their male relatives would use the positions to their own advantage. COVA aimed to build the women's capacity and establish their legitimacy as political actors through a series of workshops. As a result the women gained the confidence to take on a more public role by participating more in meetings and demanding the space to do this.

(Mukhopadhyay and Meer 2004a: 37)

Training up potential women leaders in Kyrgyzstan

'We are not that much interested you simply win and sit there as a woman. We also think it would be good if there is a space for you where you can learn, not only to win, but to be a good governor.'

(Olga Djanaeva, personal communication, 2008)

In Kyrgyzstan the quota system states that 30 per cent of political party members must be women and that every fourth person on the party list should be female. This legal requirement means that political parties are eager to enlist strong female candidates who can win votes. Alga, a rural women's NGO based in Kyrgyzstan, takes the view that women need to exploit these opportunities in order to gain seats in Parliament and, once there, need to be already equipped with the skills and knowledge that will make them excellent politicians able to promote gender equality issues. The organisation provides training for potential women leaders on aspects of governance, such as budgets and financial policy, as well as on specifically gender-focused issues such as gender-based violence, and helps them to shape policy positions. It also runs campaigns for female candidates and helps build support for them at local and national levels. In a few years the organisation has contributed to getting three women into Parliament.

(Based on an interview with Olga Djanaeva, Alga Rural Women's NGO, Kyrgyzstan)

4.7.7 CSOs need to examine their own levels of gender-sensitivity

Not all CSOs and women's organisations are progressive with regard to women's rights. Some may promote conservative views – for example, supporting laws that deny women the right to abortion or advocating that women should not be part of the public sector. This may be because their decision-makers are largely male, but it can also be due to women's conservatism. CSOs, therefore, need to examine their own governance practices and understandings of gender, considering whether their attitudes and approaches may in fact be contributing to gender inequalities in governance.

4.7.8 Citizen-focused processes need to be inclusive

As Section 4.6.2 on service delivery reforms revealed, participatory processes are not always inclusive. It is, therefore, vital to assess the quality of women's participation, particularly if they are from very poor backgrounds or are marginalised in other ways – because of their ethnicity, for example. If they are not attending citizen groups, research is needed to understand what is inhibiting them from doing so. It is also important to monitor whether women who *are* attending such groups have opportunities to speak and have the confidence to do so. Understanding the gender dynamics of these processes will enable some of these problems to be addressed. Solutions may include developing more effective participatory tools or adapting existing ones, focusing on

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capacity building to build confidence of women in public speaking, and providing childcare so that women with dependents can attend meetings.

Key points from Chapter 4

- Government – as a key institution of the state – has a vital role to play in facilitating gender-equitable change, because of its power to endorse gender equality and women's rights on a national scale through gender-sensitive policy and laws.

- It is, therefore, crucial to ensure there are reforms in all government institutions to ensure they are more responsive, accountable, well resourced and focused on gender equality in their own practices, in the policies they produce and in the way they measure their impacts.

- Quota systems are enabling increasing numbers of women to enter government, but once they are there they are often constrained by many factors, including deep-rooted gender discrimination, a lack of capacity building and leadership training, and inflexibility towards many women's 'double burden' of caring for dependents *and* working outside the home.

- Even when women are more involved in local government and in citizen-led processes, this does not guarantee *quality* of participation.

- Strategies are needed that: enable women to enter government; support women in government and build their capacity while they are there; tackle underlying prejudices in institutions; raise the profile of gender issues; and ensure public spending targets meet women's as well as men's needs.

- Women's organisations and gender-focused CSOs are playing a key role in facilitating these processes of capacity building and awareness-raising, but government institutions also need to take on these responsibilities.

As stated in the Introduction, we wish to focus on a broad range of governance institutions, but we chose government as an entry point for considering gender-sensitive governance because this is what many people associate with governance, and because it is where much of the literature lies. The next chapter focuses on global governance, with an emphasis on the UN system and the implications of global trade policy.

5. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND GENDER

'A gendered analysis of global governance can enhance our understanding of the key concepts and frameworks as well as institutions and strategies of transformation.'

(Rai and Waylen 2008: 17)

Many of the reforms associated with government processes have been motivated, to a large extent, by the growing importance of global frameworks and conventions endorsing human rights and regulating international trade. Given the potential influence of these frameworks in shaping government policy at national and local levels, particularly around gender equality and women's rights in diverse contexts, it is crucial to approach an understanding of how global processes are governed. This chapter therefore focuses on two spheres of global governance which play an important influencing role in many countries: the United Nations – with a focus on its human rights agenda; and trade policy and institutions. The potential for civil society to engage with these international mechanisms and raise awareness of international policy at a local level is also explored. The chapter asks how gender-sensitive decision-making processes at the global level are – not only in terms of whether women are involved but in terms of how far they reflect gender equality concerns. It also traces some of the different impacts of global policy on women and men at the local level. Finally, it explores potential channels for achieving greater equality and participation within global governance practices and for ensuring they lead to positive, gender-sensitive outcomes.

5.1 What is global governance?

Global governance is fragmented, hard to trace to individuals or even particular agencies. It has been described as 'governance without government' (Rosenau 1992), as a 'contested terrain' (Woehl 2008: 67), 'peopled by shadowy figures' (Rai 2008: 31), and operating in multiple, overlapping sites (Jayal 2003: 96). There is consequently little consensus over the meaning of the term. For the purposes of this report we understand global governance to be the institutions, processes, rules and frameworks through which international policies are determined, coordinated and regulated, a definition endorsed by the Commission of Global Governance (Grugel and Piper 2007: 3). However, it is important to also recognise that international policies are, or should be, the product of negotiations that may include civil society actors, in addition to representatives from national governments and the private sector.

Players and actors in the field of global governance include representatives of national governments and transnational corporations, the global trade and financial institutions of the WTO, World Bank and IMF, the various components of the UN, and regional associations such as the African Union and the EU (Grugel and Piper 2007). Global civil society – including international NGOs with a lobbying function, representatives of global interest groups such as the trade union movement, and international gender-focused groups such as the International Trade and Gender Network (ITGN) – is considered by some to be an integral element of global governance (Jayal 2003). It has grown alongside these institutions, challenging them to demonstrate accountability in their policies and actions.

Global governance processes are not located in one place but are scattered, coming together in different formulations with different actors, depending on the issues being debated or negotiated (Grugel and Piper 2007:

7, quoting Wilkinson and Hughes 2002:21). The direct and indirect impacts of these processes are filtered through state policies, consumed at community, household and individual levels through goods available in supermarkets, and experienced through international measures and laws linked to global security, the environment, human rights and women's rights. For example, trade arrangements between countries, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, may mean that poorer countries are able to export their goods to wealthy markets such as those in the US, but the local impacts of these arrangements may be a 'flood' of cheaper manufactured goods or food products against which local producers – often women – cannot compete. The immediate result can be a loss of livelihoods and increased poverty.

5.1.1 How gender-sensitive is global governance?

Despite the fluidity of global governance processes, there are clear power relations within and between institutions, with developed countries forming an 'inner circle' that is endorsed through configurations such as the G8,[23] while poor and marginal people are deprived of a direct voice in these arenas. Power relations within global governance institutions are also highly gendered. Despite some indications of progress on gender equality achieved through the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies,[24] global governance institutions and processes remain gender- and class-blind, with executive and other decision-making bodies often dominated by men who are already privileged as a result of factors that include social class, family connections and educational background. Furthermore, the international emphasis on macro-economics and neo-liberalism means that the 'hard' institutions dealing with trade and finance, which tend to be least responsive to the need for gender equality and most prone to internal gender imbalances, often have greatest influence in a global governance hierarchy (Floro and Hoppe 2005).

5.2 Gender, global governance and the role of the UN

The UN was established as a global governance mechanism – to achieve international consensus and cooperation on issues of security, law, economic development and social progress, and to provide a platform for dialogue and diplomacy. The UN system provides a global focal point for the setting of international human rights conventions and standards. UN agencies have developed comprehensive legislation, conventions and frameworks relating to the individual rights of men and women who are recognised as being embedded in societies, communities, workplaces and families. It has also established indicators for assessing progress on poverty reduction, embodied in the MDGs (see Chapter 4, Section 4.1).

Yet the UN has been criticised for being overly bureaucratic, ineffectual, wasteful of resources and distanced from the realities of poor people. Many feel that the power of UN conventions and frameworks is weakened by poor systems of accountability, and some countries – including the USA – have reacted against the concept of universal rights, seeing certain UN conventions as imposing external standards. The MDGs have also been subjected to scepticism around their ability to tackle the roots of poverty – for example, MDG3 focuses on measurable aspects of gender equality such as girls' access to education and increased numbers of women in politics, but it pays less attention to the need to shift social gender norms in order for changes to be long-lasting and meaningful.

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23 The Group of Eight (G8, and formerly the G6 or Group of Six) is an international forum for the governments of eight nations: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK, and the USA; in addition, the EU is represented within the G8, but cannot host or chair.
24 See Hafner-Burton and Pollack, 2002, for a critical assessment of gender mainstreaming in the World Bank.

This section considers the role of gender-focused human rights instruments in achieving and maintaining gender equality at national and international levels. It looks particularly at the capacity of CEDAW to be an effective accountability mechanism for national governments. The section also asks to what extent potential reforms of UN agency governance would enable greater coherence and focus towards combating gender inequalities and the violation of women's rights.

5.2.1 The significance of human rights frameworks for gender-sensitive governance

The UN system is grounded in the notion of universal human rights, embodied in the Universal Declarations of Human Rights in 1948 and 1997, which hold that all humans should be regarded equally and accorded certain freedoms, such as the freedom to criticise their governments. Central to the Declaration are the principles of equality, freedom and dignity for all human beings (see Chapter 1). Since the initiation of the UN, these basic tenets have been translated into conventions and treaties that member countries are expected to ratify and uphold as a legal obligation. International human rights instruments with an explicit focus on gender equality are: CEDAW; the Convention on the Political Rights of Women; the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women; and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict. As noted in previous chapters, governments have a strong role to play in terms of endorsing the UN conventions they have ratified – or committed to upholding (Gruger and Piper 2007; Jayal 2003), but clear plans for implementation are required, that are developed in participatory ways through local governance bodies and citizen networks, and mediated through CSOs. Below we focus on CEDAW, examining its usefulness as a catalyst and accountability mechanism in promoting gender equality in a global context.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. States that have ratified the Convention commit themselves to planning and undertaking a series of measures to combat discrimination at all levels of society, including through ensuring equal opportunities in political and public life, and equal access to employment, education and health. The Convention is unique in its affirmation of the reproductive rights of women. It also calls for the modification of cultural and social practices of men and women where these are likely to undermine the goal of gender equality.

CEDAW's enforcement mechanism is based on a reporting system: countries that have ratified the Convention are required to submit a report on the status of women within a year of ratification, and thereafter to submit a report every four years on their progress in removing obstacles to equality since the first 'baseline' report (Tang 2000: 8; CEDAW website). The UN CEDAW committee stipulates that CSOs should play a 'watchdog' role in this process, ensuring governments are not simply reporting on their achievements. This official input from CSOs is presented in the form of shadow reports, accompanied by informal presentations (see the case study below).

Perhaps the most important step forward is the introduction of the Optional Protocol in 1999, which gives individuals and groups the right to complain to CEDAW about women's rights abuses, and also allows the CEDAW commission to conduct enquiries into these abuses in countries that have ratified the Convention. Under the Optional Protocol, state parties can be asked to explain and address complaints about serious violations, and investigations can be launched. Although there are as yet no legal enforcement mechanisms from the UN Human Rights Committee, the investigating commission has the power to make the violations public, and 'such adverse publicity is potentially very damaging' (Tang 2000). CEDAW could, then, potentially be

used as an instrument to overcome the limitations of a domestic legal system, but those appealing through CEDAW need to demonstrate they have exhausted all domestic legal channels (ibid.).

How effective is CEDAW for promoting gender equality?

> *'We have seen a tangible change in women's status through using CEDAW. We have felt it. We have lived it. So, we advise any NGO anywhere in the world to use this machinery. It's very important and it can make a lot of difference in women's lives.'*

> (Dr Afaf Marei, Director of the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement, personal communication, November 2008)

There are mixed reviews on the effectiveness of CEDAW as an international instrument, partly because there have been few formal reports on its implementation and impacts on governance at national and local levels. This is not due to a lack of positive impacts, but to the fact that stories of change involving CEDAW have simply not been recorded.[25] The little recorded evidence suggests that CEDAW and the shadow reporting process has contributed to more gender-equitable legislation in some countries, including: changes to a Turkish law which defined adultery on different grounds for men and women; the enactment of an Equal Employment Law in Japan; and the creation of a Committee for Women's Affairs in the Ukraine (McPhedran et al. 2000). International pressure to address gender inequalities, expressed through the BPfA and MDG3 and reinforced by women's rights and gender equality platforms, has led to greater acknowledgement of CEDAW and adherence to the shadow reporting process in many countries, including those of the Middle East. A member of the shadow reporting committee for Egypt noted:

> *'For instance, in Saudi Arabia we heard about civil society organisations that are working on women's rights and enforcing women's rights, and preparing shadow reports for those countries. Nobody could believe that this could happen in Saudi Arabia, but it happens. Things are changing, things are changing, because there is an international environment which supports that and there is an international machinery which is approved by the country…And the civil society is getting stronger in those countries, more aware of their rights, more aware of their machineries.'*

> (Afaf Marei, personal communication, 2008)

Although CEDAW has been ratified by 185 countries, a major concern is that it is yet to be ratified by many, including the USA. In fact, because the USA has so far failed to ratify CEDAW, the City and County of San Francisco introduced a regulation to implement CEDAW at the local level. As part of the implementation, the City department must undertake a gender analysis of its budget allocations, service delivery, and employment practices (San Francisco CEDAW Task Force/Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 2000). Even when governments have ratified CEDAW, there is no guarantee that they are not simply seeking the approval and goodwill of the UN and its member states (Grugel and Piper 2007: 8). A major drawback is the lack of international global governance mechanisms to ensure member states' accountability in complying with CEDAW and other international human rights instruments, and implementation is left to the will of states to incorporate the principles into their domestic laws (Tang 2000). This means that, in many cases, governments put reservations on CEDAW articles, citing inconsistencies with statutory law or customary laws, including Shari'a.

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[25] Personal communication from Dorcas Coker-Appiah, Ghana, member of CEDAW committee

The CEDAW shadow reporting process

The CEDAW shadow reporting system provides one official vehicle for ensuring governments and other national instruments of governance adhere to their commitment – it can address all aspects of gender equality in a country or take one specific issue, sector or region of the country. This is illustrated well by the UK's sixth periodic reporting to CEDAW in 2008:

Shadow reporting in the UK

In 2008, in addition to the official government submission, there were a number of CEDAW shadow reports submitted, including:

- The Women's National Commission – an advisory non-departmental public body – addressed the country-level;

- The Women's Resource Centre focused on the state of the women's NGO sector;

- The Northern Ireland Women's European Women's Platform focused on the situation of women in Northern Ireland;

- The London School of Economics and the London Metropolitan University submitted the 'Violence Against Women in the UK Shadow Thematic Report'.

(Sen and Kelly 2007)

But the usefulness and transparency of this system is contingent on the capacity and power of civil society actors to expose gender inequalities and other violations of rights, and to publicly demand accountability from their governments. The role of CSOs in mobilising CEDAW for more gender-sensitive government policy is examined below through the case study of the Egyptian shadow reporting processes.

Shadow reporting in Egypt

Although the Egyptian government ratified CEDAW in 1981, little changed until 2000, when strong Egyptian NGOs formed the CEDAW Coalition and the Egyptian National Council for Women (NCW), an organisation affiliated to the Egyptian presidency was established. The role of the Egyptian NGO CEDAW Coalition is to facilitate the implementation and enforcement of CEDAW. Established in 1998, the Coalition includes approximately 40 organisations from across Egypt, working on a wide range of issues. It has lobbied government on diverse issues related to CEDAW, and completed its first shadow report in 2001. The Coalition, backed by the NCW, has been instrumental in enforcing CEDAW as a mechanism to advance women's rights and gender equality. Coalition members have also played a role inside the NCW as committee members.

There have been several changes to the law, assisted by these accountability mechanisms. For example, women now have the right to pass their nationality to their children, whereas previously only men could do so, and many legal obstacles to divorce that previously faced women have been lifted, as have many of the restrictions on the freedom of women's movement – for example, women can now apply for passports without having to seek the approval of their husbands. However, despite these advances, barriers remain to the implementation of CEDAW. The Coalition is part of a campaign to promote the adoption of the Optional Protocol and the lifting of reservations.

Based on an interview with Dr Afaf Marei, Director of the Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement, November 2008

5.2.2 UN reform and gender-sensitive governance

A major criticism levelled at the various agencies of the UN has been their lack of coherence, which has been seen as responsible for impeding the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the UN system and its ability to contribute to international development goals. In response, plans are under way for the most dramatic reform process it has ever seen, involving a major review and reorganisation of its mandate, structures, budget, governance and management. There is no guarantee these changes will go ahead, but if they did they would entail the creation of greater coherence among programmes on humanitarian assistance, the environment and sustainable development – including a major review of the UN's gender architecture. A consultation process that included representatives from women's groups and CSOs across the world led to recommendations to unify and consolidate the separate gender-focused agencies of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) and the Office of the Secretary General's Special Advisor on Gender Issues (OSAGI) into a single organisation with greater power and with a new under-secretary who would have higher status than current leadership of the UN gender agencies.

This new governance structure could potentially facilitate a much higher profile for gender issues and women's rights than is currently the case in UN decision-making processes. Those supporting the changes see them as a means to dramatically increase resources earmarked for gender equality and women's rights work conducted through the new agency. This increased investment is much needed, given the current gross inadequacy of funds for UN gender-focused agencies and the sidelining of women's issues and concerns within the UN architecture – for example, UNIFEM's budget in 2008 was nearly $100 million (Aruna Rao, personal communication), compared to a proposed budget for the UNDP of around $780 million (UNDP/UNPF 2007). The process is also seen as an opportunity to put gender issues and women's rights at the centre of development, and as a new chapter that will help to revitalise and re-politicise gender mainstreaming processes across the UN system. According to one commentator:

> '…*Without a lead entity, gender equality continues to be everybody's and nobody's responsibility. Gender mainstreaming will work best only when it co-exists alongside a strong women's agency that can demonstrate leadership and advocate at the highest levels and hold the system accountable*'
>
> (Rao 2006).

However, there are still concerns that, if the new entity was realised, its power would be minimal compared to other UN institutions.

5.2.3 Towards more gender-sensitive governance in the UN

Promoting the UN reform process

The fact that recommendations are in place for gender-sensitive UN reform does not guarantee this will happen. Gender-focused UN institutions, therefore, need to put forward strong, unified demands for change and provide evidence for why changes are needed and how they could be implemented. Gender-focused CSOs should support those within the institutions by lobbying for reform and calling UN officials to account on their commitments to gender equality. Plans for reform need to state that the new entity will be able to set policy on key issues of gender equality and women's rights, it should have the authority and capacity to ensure accountability on gender mainstreaming throughout the UN system, and it must have a field presence to conduct

and shape UN operational activities, to ensure that gender and women's rights programming are conducted effectively.

Enabling more effective gender mainstreaming for UN organisations

Since the BPfA called for the use of gender mainstreaming as a strategy, this has been adopted – to varying degrees of success – by UN agencies. Gender mainstreaming 'fatigue', however, within organisations and at policy level often happens because the degree of change required, and the time and resources required to achieve it, has been vastly underestimated (Moser and Moser 2005). Ongoing training is, therefore, essential to increase understanding of the need for gender equality and a mainstreamed approach in the UN and other large, global organisations. Deep analyses of existing institutional culture in these global organisations are also needed in order to assess what needs to change and where this change is needed (see Chapter 6 and the SRC).

Improving accountability mechanisms

Weak accountability mechanisms are partly to blame for the failure of many governments to adhere to gender-focused and other human rights agreements. More instruments like the CEDAW Optional Protocol are needed that can be used to 'shame' governments into honouring their commitments. However, human rights legislation and the associated accountability processes are only useful if people know they exist and feel confident in using them. It is, therefore, also vital to fund the work of CSOs at national and local levels in building the capacity needed to promote shadow reporting, raising awareness of CEDAW and the Optional Protocol as well as other relevant human rights mechanisms, and helping to take cases of rights abuse to the national and global level.

5.3 Trade, global governance and gender

Trade policies at the global level, led by organisations such as the WTO, are increasingly influencing economic policy at the national level. These policies are gender-blind, focused on the broad effects at the level of the macro-economy,[26] rather than considering the negative impacts they often have on women (see Section 4.5.2). The decision-making processes through which they are generated are also not gender-equitable. This section establishes some of the positive and negative impacts that policies formulated at a global level have on many women, particularly those in developing countries who may be subsistence farmers, traders, factory workers and workers in 'informal' industries such as street trading, in addition to being wives and mothers. It argues that transforming the governance of international trade so that it responds to the different needs of women and men could help to mitigate against policy that creates gendered inequalities, and contribute to the realisation of gender equality and women's rights.

5.3.1 The role of the WTO in governance of trade and labour

The WTO is one of the most influential players in the governance of global trade. It was established in 1995 to provide a global 'meeting point' where trade rules could be established, members could negotiate new or modify existing agreements, and conflicts could be resolved in a 'neutral' setting. The WTO is not a UN specialised agency, but it has maintained strong relations with the UN and its agencies since its establishment.[27] The WTO

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26 Macro-economics is concerned with the behaviour of the whole economy in a particular country or region.
27 The WTO–UN relations are governed by the 'Arrangements for Effective Cooperation with other Intergovernmental Organizations-Relations Between the WTO and the United Nations' (see WTO website 2009).

is also a vehicle for the promotion of trade liberalisation,[28] and membership is contingent on agreeing to follow these principles. Yet these policy interventions have been criticised for their failure to take into account or properly analyse gendered impacts at international, national, household and individual levels (Floro and Hoppe 2005). Some of the gendered implications of trade liberalisation and global trade policy are explored below, along with examples of good practice for addressing gender inequalities in the governance of labour at the policy level and in the workplace.

5.3.2 Gendered perspectives on governance of global manufacturing processes

In many countries increased trade and investment as a result of trade liberalisation has stimulated economic growth, boosting industry and increasing women's participation in the labour market (Randriamaro 2005:16). Studies conducted in 2000 revealed that almost 35 per cent of the manufacturing workforce in Latin America and 80 per cent of workers in export industries of South East Asia were women (Sexton, Nair and Kirbat 2004). This situation has many clear benefits for women, enabling them to earn an income and empowering them economically. There is evidence that paid employment can improve women's autonomy as well as their economic status. There are also indications that it can improve women's well-being and decision-making power at the household level and within the community, contributing to a shift in power relations (Tzannatos 1992; Fontana, Joekes and Masika 1998; Kabeer 2000). However, this increased financial and social status of women often comes at a price, largely because employment practices are often governed in ways that evade human rights and undermine gender equality.

The drive for investment is undermining women's rights in labour governance

Multinational companies such as Nike and Microsoft are part of a growing global phenomenon that cuts across national borders. The key characteristic of multinationals is that production of their goods often happens in two or more countries through global 'chains of production' (see Auret and Barientos 2004; Randriamaro 2005: 16). Often these companies establish factories in Export Processing Zones (EPZs), one or more special areas of a country where some normal trade barriers such as tariffs and quotas are eliminated. In many cases governments lower labour standards for these EPZs in the hope of attracting new business and foreign investments. This can mean that minimum wages - often already very low - are not applied, and workers are denied the right to unionise. Because they constitute the largest number of workers in EPZs, Women often suffer disproportionately from these measures designed to boost investment (see Ethical Consumer website 2009).

Women workers are subjected to poor working conditions

Women employed in factories and service industries in developing countries often work long hours, sometimes in cramped, unhealthy and uncomfortable conditions. Female employees' rights are often minimal – in many cases unions are actively discouraged – and their employment status is insecure (Auret and Barrientos 2004; Omeria, Esim and Alissa, 2008: 5). Some employers fail to give formal contracts, relying instead on work conducted in the home or in local community centres, where the number of hours worked and the conditions of labour cannot be easily monitored. Even when they are contracted, employers may find excuses to force redundancy on pregnant or sick or older women. Add to these forms of unequal, unjust treatment the fact that women's wages are significantly lower than men's, and a clear picture of discrimination on the basis of gender emerges.

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28 Trade liberalisation, or free trade, refers to the reduction of trade barriers, such as import tariffs, as a means to promote international trade and cooperation. Critics of free trade argue that poor countries are at a disadvantage in these trade agreements because of their low production capacity compared to industrial giants such as the USA and EU, whose surpluses are often 'dumped' in poor countries.

The 'double burden' of care work and paid work for women is being overlooked

The fact that women are earning an income outside their home does not mean that there is a reduction in their workload within the home. The expectation that women will take on the care of children and elderly relatives in addition to maintaining other aspects of a household, such as cleaning, means that they are faced with a 'double burden' of work responsibilities. This unpaid labour is not calculated by many governments as part of the national income in the majority of countries (see Hoskins and Rai 2007); nor do states devote resources to the provision of services such as crèches or home help which could help to ease the burden. Global trade policies also fail to recognise women's double burden, while most employers continue to benefit from women's labour without taking their caring roles into account (see Esplen 2009a).

5.3.3 Towards more gender-sensitive governance of global trade and labour

Greater respect is needed for labour standards promoting gender equality

Minimum international labour standards on employment practices, conditions of work, rights of workers, maternity leave and other areas have been defined through various conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO).[29] These have been ratified by many countries and provide the basis for country-level codes of practice, such as the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) in the UK, which was formulated through a multi-stakeholder group that included companies, trade unions and NGOs. The ETI base code stipulates that employers provide clean, safe working conditions, treat workers fairly and without discrimination, allow workers to unionise, and do not use any forced labour practices (Auret and Barrientos 2004: 3). The UN Global Compact (see below) provides another means for holding businesses to account on issues of women's rights and gender equality, and on their commitment to international labour standards

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The Global Compact

The Global Compact is a corporate social responsibility framework for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. It provides a vehicle through which employers' responsibilities towards both male and female employees can be assessed. At present, businesses and multinational companies sign up voluntarily to the Compact, but there is scope for the model to become a compulsory international standard that could be applied to trade liberalisation processes at macro and micro levels of impact.

(UN Global Compact website 2009)

As noted in Chapter 2, even when countries have ratified these international conventions and other agreements, this does not guarantee that they will be realised in practice. For example, many countries in the Middle East and North Africa have ratified Convention number 100 on equal pay for equal value of work. However, because of assumptions about women's natural traits such as caring, nurturing or capacity for detailed work, certain jobs are considered the natural domain of women and remain poorly paid (Omeria, Esim and Alissa, 2008: 5). Country governments, as well as labour employers therefore have a responsibility to ensure that solid accountability mechanisms, such as workplace assessments, external audits and evaluation reports, are in place.

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29 ILO codes of conduct include a convention to ensure women are granted adequate maternity leave; conventions governing the number of hours worked, hygiene of the workplace, and the minimum age of employees; and conventions that make paid holiday leave a condition of employment. See http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/convdisp1.htm.

Employers need to conduct participatory social audits

One way of making international codes of labour practice, including the Global Compact, directly relevant to workers is to include them in participatory social auditing processes. These processes are designed to encourage workers to express their concerns in a 'safe space'. They are particularly effective for enabling women to reflect on their working experiences, since they often have less awareness of their rights and less confidence to voice their complaints. Properly conducted participatory social audits can also raise awareness of socially and culturally embedded notions of gender difference that shape forms of inequality in the workplace (Auret and Barrientos 2004: 7).

Greater policy coherence on gender equality in global trade is needed

There is a clear role for the WTO and IFIs in setting international standards around gender equality in the context of trade. The WTO needs to ensure that gender assessments are conducted prior to the signing of binding agreements, and that the impacts of these agreements are closely monitored by CSOs, trade unions and external auditors. This requires greater coherence between global trade and financial institutions and the human rights frameworks and conventions promoted by UN organisations than is currently the case (Floro and Hoppe 2005). To be sustainable and meaningful, these mechanisms must be underpinned by a strong commitment from national governments to protecting the rights of the women and men who are affected by trade policy, including supporting their right to form unions, exposing abuses of labour standards and bringing cases to human rights courts where necessary.

Greater involvement of citizens and CSOs is needed

More spaces need to be opened up for CSOs and citizens to be involved in consultation around trade policy and to ensure their perspectives inform these processes. Funding is needed to expand and create new initiatives such as the International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN; see the case study below), to promote greater understanding among women and men of the impacts of trade policy on them and of what they can do to hold individuals, organisations and companies to account.

The International Gender and Trade Network

IGTN is a Southern-led network of feminist gender specialists that provide technical information on gender and trade issues to women's groups, NGOs, social movements and governments in order to build South–North cooperation and promote a critical feminist perspective and global action on trade and globalisation issues. A key aim of the organisation is to influence the development of more just and democratic trade policy. IGTN is organised in seven global regions.[30]

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[30] See the IGTN website: http://web.igtn.org/home/.

Key points from Chapter 5

- Global governance is fragmented, hard to trace to individuals or even particular agencies. It has been described as 'governance without government'.

- Global governance institutions and processes remain gender- and class-blind, with executive and other decision-making bodies often dominated by men who are already privileged as a result of factors that include social class, family connections and educational background.

- The UN can play a role in holding national and local governments to account on gender equality through human rights instruments such as CEDAW. However, a reformed UN system – with better-resourced gender agencies, greater credibility and stronger accountability mechanisms – is essential if this is to happen.

- Global trade and labour governance by governments and the private sector have positive impacts on women's opportunities but can also undermine their rights in many ways. Measures such as greater compliance to international labour laws and human rights legislation – by the WTO, governments and employers – is vital to ensure women are not disadvantaged.

The last two chapters have set out aspects of gender inequalities in governance at national, local and global levels, as well as providing some examples of good practice in gender-sensitive governance. Chapter 6 provides some clear steps for governance institutions at all levels that are inspired to identify where problems exist in their own practices, and to move towards more gender-sensitive governance.

6. GENDER-SENSITIVE GOVERNANCE: VISION AND PRACTICAL APPROACHES

6.1 A vision for gender-sensitive governance

So what would gender-sensitive governance look like? While it is difficult to generalise about such a complex arena that operates on global, national and local levels, there are some core conclusions that can be drawn from our discussions so far.

Gender-sensitive governance would mean:

- More women – and men who do not conform to a heterosexual stereotype – will be in decision-making positions in governance institutions, whether they be local government authorities, UN agencies or in the home. This particularly includes areas of governance that have been considered the province of (heterosexual) males, such as trade and finance in government and international institutions, and community-level politics.

- Women and men will be actively involved in *shaping* these governance institutions, processes and policies in order for transformations to take place within these governance institutions, and in society more broadly, towards gender equality goals.

- More women will be involved in CSOs that are holding governments to account and involved in governance processes such as participatory budgeting.

- Gender-sensitive governance will be responsive to the different needs, interests, priorities and responsibilities of men and women. It applies and measures principles of responsiveness, accountability, transparency, equity and inclusiveness in ways that recognise gender inequalities and differences.

- Governance institutions and processes will follow the rule of law and are committed to its implementation, with a clear focus on promoting human rights – particularly the rights of women.

- Above all, governance institutions will have the upholding of principles of gender equality and social justice as central principles as well as goals of governance in their own right.

- Political will at the highest levels of the governance institution will be driving this gender-sensitive approach to governance.

- Strategically placed and well-resourced teams of gender specialists will promote capacity building on gender equality, and will have the power to hold individuals to account for performance against clear institutionally agreed indicators.

- Organisations promoting effective or good governance – such as bilateral and multilateral development agencies and CSOs – will apply the same governance goals and principles to their *own* institutions.

- All women will be recognised as citizens of the country where they are living – regardless of their ethnicity, race, caste, disability, income, lifestyle, refugee status or country of origin – and are able to claim the full rights of their citizenship.

6.1.1 Reframing the goals and principles of governance

We come back to the question – 'how can governance be effective if it does not lead to a more equal world, where gender inequalities are challenged, where women also have choices, and women's rights are realised?' This is the challenge laid down before *all* governance institutions as well as those promoting effective or 'good' governance. It requires:

- questioning the *problems* governance is seen as addressing, as well as the *goals* it wishes to achieve;

- questioning how these problems are *prioritised;*

- providing evidence for gender inequality to be tackled as a priority, both in the institution itself and in society more broadly (see Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 on assessing the problem);

- devising strategies for addressing gender inequalities through governance institutions and processes, embracing the governance principles of accountability, equity, inclusiveness, responsiveness and so on (see Section 6.3); and

- presenting a vision of the outcomes required (i.e. of gender equality).

The next section focuses on how to assess the problem – how to uncover gender inequalities that are embedded in social and cultural rules and norms, and how to uncover the gender inequalities within governance institutions themselves. If possible, these assessments should be conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods, including participatory methodologies. These assessments – whether undertaken by the institutions themselves, independent researchers or by CSOs – should provide the basis for identifying possible solutions, supported by the recommendations and examples of good practice in this report. Those responsible for implementing the solutions also need to carefully consider which strategies, frameworks, tools and approaches will best assist them towards their goal of gender-sensitive governance within their own context. Some suggested questions for guiding these assessments are suggested below:

6.1.2 Identifying problems at a social level using research and audits

A range of actors could undertake this research – providing there are resources allocated to it – including NWMs, human rights institutions, research institutes, and CSOs. Such research often forms the basis for reports to the CEDAW Committee – both the official and shadow reports from CSOs – along with strategies for change.

What gender inequalities exist in societies where governance institutions are located?
Governance processes and institutions are located within societies with particular, culturally-defined gender rules that affect levels of equality and shape perceptions of male and female behaviour, relationships and roles. There are also social constraints to women's participation in decision-making at all levels, that include unequal access to resources, including time, education, land and money; and the caring responsibilities women are often expected to take on. Qualitative as well as quantitative research is therefore needed that can uncover some of these inequalities, to identify how they are manifested in specific social and cultural contexts and to understand how they are reproduced in governance institutions and practices.

How can unequal access to rights prevent women's participation?
In some societies women's unequal access to rights can seriously undermine their opportunities to engage in governance processes. For example, if they are not permitted to move freely or speak in public, they will find it very difficult to exercise their right to vote or participate in accountability processes. If their right to education is

restricted they will be unable to stand as representatives in local or national government. In turn, if women are denied citizenship because they are migrants or refugees, participation in formal politics is unlikely.

6.1.3 Identifying problems at an institutional level

Despite the commitment of many institutions to the principles of gender equality and the introduction of measures in line with a gender mainstreaming agenda, there is often a lack of self-awareness – a failure of institutions to look critically at themselves and identify areas of concern, which can then begin to be addressed. Critical analyses are therefore needed, tailored to individual institutions and to the cultural context. These institutional analyses should be undertaken by the governance institutions themselves or by independent analysts – failing this, it may fall to gender equality and women's organisations to attempt an analysis from the outside. There are available frameworks to assist this process that can be adapted accordingly, such as participatory gender audits and institutional gender analysis (see below, Chapter 5 and also Demetriades 2009).

One useful framework facilitates the initial analysis by breaking down institutional processes according to: rules – the norms, values and traditions that determine or constrain what is done and how it is done; activities – what is done routinely in practice to meet particular goals; resources – what is used and produced by institutions; people – who is included and excluded, and how tasks are assigned; and power – who has authority and makes the rules, and how these rules are legitimised. The findings from analysis of each of these elements should provide the basis to identify 'desirable conditions' to work towards (Kabeer and Subrahmanian 1996). (See the SRC for more information on this framework.)

Questions to ask during the analysis of governance institutions include the following:

How gender-sensitive is the institutional culture?

What is the institutional 'culture' – the often implicit processes and rules that shape the ways they think about and 'do' governance? Institutional culture influences who has authority and status, who has the power to speak, who is listened to, and how opportunities, benefits and responsibilities are divided (see Goetz 1997). These rules do not only affect women in unequal ways – many *men* working within and affected by the systems may also find their institutional culture alienating and oppressive (see, for example, Collinson and Hearn 1996). Some potential areas for analysis are:

Assess the gendered power relations of institutions. How equal are relationships between men and women within and between governance institutions? What social, cultural and institutional factors may prevent women from having an equal voice and status? To what extent are women afforded the same respect as men in similar positions, and in what cases are they excluded or their opinions disregarded? Do women and men work together or separately? Additionally, what relationships exist between men in positions of power and those who are considered subordinate – for example, because they are poor?

Assess the gendered power dynamics of decision-making and policy implementation. How inclusive and transparent are decision-making processes? Are both women and men involved, and do they have enough opportunity to speak and be heard? Are decisions being informed through local-level consultations, and are women participating effectively in these processes? Is the 'real' decision-making happening in informal situations that exclude women, such as in bars or clubs outside of working hours (Goetz 2007)?

Assess ways in which policies are designed and implemented. How is the information that shapes policymaking at global, national and local levels gathered? Who participates in providing and compiling the information, and is data gender-disaggregated? How far are women involved in influencing service delivery? To what extent do policies incorporate a rights perspective or reflect international human rights legislation and frameworks such as the BPfA?

Assess institutional language and codes of behaviour. What are the codes of behaviour in governance institutions? Are they aggressively masculine to the extent that they may alienate women and non-heterosexual men? For example, is sexist language often used between colleagues?

Assess the capacity of institutional members to address gender equality. Do women as well as men in institutions understand what constitutes gender inequalities and why these need to be addressed? Are the right training, mentoring processes, guidelines and systems in place?

Assess the commitment of women and men to gender equality. Are they fully committed to change, or do they simply accept gender-focused measures because they have no choice? Are senior managers committed to achieving gender equality and providing the necessary leverage and political will?

Assess modes of entry into institutions. Are they inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory? Do they meet quota requirements? Do selection criteria and job descriptions include a need for capacity in gender issues?

Assess institutional accountability processes. How far are women involved as equal partners in assessing the decisions made by governance institutions? Do they have access to information on their right to hold these officials to account, and do they feel empowered to do so?

Assess rights of institutional members. Do men and women have the same rights in the institution? For example, are women receiving the same pay as men? Are women entitled to paid maternity leave and men to paid paternity leave?

How responsive are institutions to the needs of women and men?
Are governance institutions – including those they contract to deliver services, such as private-sector service providers and CSOs – responsive to women's needs in terms of providing good-quality, affordable services they can access easily? For example, are there health clinics with qualified staff within reach of women with childcare responsibilities? Do schools have separate toilet facilities for girls and boys? Is there good law enforcement and security that enables women to be mobile without fear of attack? To understand what women really think of the services, it is important to ask them. There should be an opportunity for honest feedback, which may entail keeping responses anonymous. Better methodologies need to be developed, as many participatory methodologies pay insufficient attention to gender dynamics, meaning that women are excluded yet again.

6.2 Identifying solutions

Clearer assessment of what the problems are – in terms of gender inequality and inequalities within the institutions – will lead to better solutions. These, of course, will vary, depending on what is being addressed, the type of institution where the need for more gender-sensitive governance has been identified, and who is pushing for the change. However, it is possible to provide some broad recommendations for gender-sensitive institutional

and social reform, drawing largely on the issues discussed in this report. Women need to be active and equal participants in shaping these changes; otherwise, they will continue having to fit into processes that have not been designed with them in mind (see Kabeer and Subrahmanian 1996). Suggested recommendations are grouped according to the principles of inclusiveness, accountability and so on that were defined through a gender lens in Chapter 3. At the end of the section we reinforce the importance of 'shifting mindsets' on governance by demonstrating good practice and by effectively communicating the potential that lies in governance processes for enabling the participation of women and men across society.

6.2.1 Enabling greater inclusiveness in governance institutions and processes

- **Enable women's entry into governance.** Ensure that effective quota systems are in place, and employ more female directors and senior managers of CSOs, banks and global organisations such as the UN and WTO. This means providing financial resources for women – and, particularly, poor women – to enable them to compete for office at local or national levels, building their capacity by improving their literacy and leadership skills, and challenging forms of nepotism that enable only privileged, well-connected men and women to enter governance.

- **Ensure all forms of discrimination are addressed in governance institutions and processes.** Governance institutions need to ensure marginalised groups such as people from ethnic minorities, disabled people and LGBT people are an integral part of governance.

- **Ensure women in institutions are given equal opportunities and treated equally. I**n cases where women attain positions within government they need to have equal access to jobs in all sectors. It is also crucial to create opportunities for women to attain positions of authority.

- **Ensure policymaking processes are more inclusive.** It is important to include women in policymaking processes, whether through consultative groups at the local level or in high-level decision-making.

- **Adopt or adapt methodologies that facilitate equal participation in 'citizen-led' governance approaches.** Efforts are needed to ensure women are fully integrated into and leading citizen-focused governance processes. For this to happen, certain conditions need to be in place, such as subsidised childcare, and capacity building in literacy and leadership.

- **Build women's capacity.** Training should be available for women in advocacy, lobbying and leadership skills, as well as in confidence-building and literacy. Women's organisations are playing a key role in these processes, but governments also have a responsibility to support them.

6.2.2 Increasing gendered responsiveness of governance institutions

- **Create a gender-responsive environment in governance institutions.** Gender equality needs to be a high-level goal of all governance institutions, backed up by the visible political will of senior staff. Gender-awareness exercises, training and mentoring should happen on an ongoing basis, to ensure continued will around gender mainstreaming strategies and other mechanisms designed to increase equality. Men should be active collaborators in institutional gender assessments and in implementing changes that occur as a result.

- **Create stronger national women's machineries in government** and gender equality or women's units in other governance institutions that are properly resourced to carry out their role in inspiring and monitoring action, and have strong links with mainstream government sectors.

- **Create a working environment supportive of those with caring responsibilities.** Measures such as flexible working hours and subsidised childcare provision would ease the double burden of many women and reduce the likelihood of their quitting posts in government or staying at home when citizen meetings are held. Strategies are also needed to enable men involved in governance to share caring responsibilities with their partners, by offering more flexible working hours and longer paternity leave.

- **Ensure gender-sensitive changes are adequately funded.** Significant increases in budget are needed to ensure that policy addresses the needs of women and other marginalised groups.

- **Develop policies that are responsive to women's and men's diverse needs.** Policymaking needs to be informed by diverse information from men and women in different social circumstances. Alliances between civil society, government and global governance actors can facilitate these flows of information.

6.2.3 Improving accountability and transparency of governance institutions

- **Create, without delay, a stronger UN gender architecture** with stronger accountability processes attached to ensure that UN legislation carries weight and is supported by a strong infrastructure.

- **Guarantee freedom of speech and information.** Citizens cannot hold governance institutions to account if they are restricted from being openly critical or are unable to scrutinise government information such as public expenditure due to lack of transparency.

- **Improve assessments of institutional performance.** Governance institutions and those holding them to account, such as CSOs, need to develop clear, appropriate indicators and data collection methods. These must include indicators related to performance on accountability, responsiveness and other key principles of governance emphasised in this report (see the SRC; and the BRIDGE *Cutting Edge Pack* on Indicators, 2007, for more details).

- **Ensure that incentives are in place for individuals to deliver on gender equality.** This includes clear gender-sensitive indicators for their work and staff performance assessments including gender equality.

- **Improve assessments of policy impacts.** Different impacts of policies on both women and men need to be measured through qualitative and quantitative research, and through indicators that are relevant, appropriate and culturally sensitive, and developed through participatory methods. Indicators should be able to capture small changes as well as mapping broader shifts. It is also vital to make sure information feeds into further decision-making (see Moser 2007; Corner 2005).

6.2.4 Improving processes for those holding governance institutions to account
- **Ensure there is a strong, properly funded civil society** to hold governments to account and also to assist in providing services and raising awareness of gender issues.

- **Build alliances with other social justice movements and organisations** to create a strong, unified message about the need for gender-sensitive governance, and to champion gender equality and women's rights.

- **Fund rights awareness and gender equality training and mentoring** to enable a range of actors to effectively hold governance institutions to account: this includes citizens, CSOs and journalists.

6.2.5 Ensuring institutional standards of equity and adherence to the rule of law

- **Ensure relevant human rights instruments such as CEDAW are not only ratified but implemented,** backed by a clear national gender action plan.

- **Ensure that rights are central to internal practices and policymaking.** More effective processes of accountability are required around international human rights instruments to ensure that a commitment to these instruments does not evaporate at the level of implementation.

- **Strengthen the judiciary and other legal mechanisms** so that they deliver justice for women as well as men.

6.2.6 Improving citizens' rights, particularly those of women

- **Improve women's access to voting.** Raise awareness around the importance of voting and the possibilities for women's involvement in governance processes. For this to happen, certain enabling factors need to be in place – for example, it may be necessary to involve using trusted intermediaries to vote on behalf of women whose religion prevents them from entering public spaces.

- **Raise women's awareness of their rights**, including on how to campaign for rights and how to claim them, how to engage in governance processes (at all levels), and how to hold local, national and global governance institutions to account.

- **Ensure that all women can claim citizenship** from the country where they are living. This may require recognising or campaigning for the recognition of refugee and migrant women.

6.3 Cross-cutting strategies

6.3.1 Gender mainstreaming

'Gender mainstreaming' is the term used to describe the process of ensuring that the different needs of women and men are taken into account in all forms of development and political processes, and that they have equal opportunities. In principle, this approach entails addressing every aspect of institutional culture, from administration and staffing procedures through to policymaking processes (Razavi and Miller 1995; Hafner-Burton and Pollack 2002; Waylen 2008). Mechanisms to achieve these goals include establishing women's ministries or gender units, distributing gender equality guidelines and other forms of capacity building, developing gender equality action plans, and appointing gender advisors and focal points who are expected to advise on gender issues across mainstream sectors (Moser and Moser 1995). Mainstreaming also requires that impact assessments and other accountability processes are conducted, using tools such as gender mainstreaming scorecards and gender equality indicators (see Moser 2007).

A barrier to the success of mainstreaming is (often male) resistance within institutions and a failure to address existing institutional inequalities such as male-dominated decision-making processes (Clisby 2005). There are also worries that the goals of gender equality and women's empowerment have been diluted by mainstreaming gender into broad sectoral issues. Others have argued that gender mainstreaming has the potential to be transformative but that it is necessary to imbue it with new life and find ways to overcome 'mainstreaming fatigue' (see for example Jahan 1995; Porter and Sweetman 2005 To support these transformatory goals there is a need for ongoing, relevant, culturally sensitive training. Effective accountability systems should be put in place, which reward good practice rather than simply being punitive. Monitoring and evaluation processes are also needed, which can capture impacts and outcomes of gender mainstreaming through appropriate indicators, rather than only measuring short-term inputs such as numbers of female beneficiaries of programmes or female staff members (see Moser and Moser 2005). Above all it is important to remember that gender mainstreaming is an ongoing process rather than a goal, and that even the tiniest interim changes should be seen as achievements (ibid: 14).

6.3.2 Developing effective gender and governance indicators

Even the most detailed, well-designed plan to initiate change across governance structures, processes and relationships needs to be regularly monitored and assessed to identify both shortcomings and successes. Not only does this enable the identification of flaws in design but it can also provide evidence that new policies and approaches are working. The development of clear, appropriate indicators is key to this process. These should be: formulated through participatory methods where possible; simple to apply; relevant to social, cultural and institutional context; and able to reflect the degree of change through statistical markers as well as the quality of change through personal communication (see Corner 2005; Moser 2007). Of particular interest is the work of UNDP on indicators: they have developed a guide to indicators and methods of measuring gender-sensitive basic services delivery (Corner 2008) and also a framework for mainstreaming pro-poor and gender-sensitive indicators into evaluations of democratic governance (UNDP 2006). A set of key questions are used to formulate the indicators, with each question being accompanied by a particular indicator (see Governance SRC, Demetriades 2009).

6.3.3 Using a rights-based approach to governance

As we have noted in this report, it is not enough for governance institutions to ratify international rights conventions. Strategies are needed to make these rights 'real' in practice through targeted rights-based approaches. The most effective rights-based approaches are concerned with transforming behaviour and practices (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004). For example, UNDP promotes a multi-pronged strategy, recognising the need for capacity building and awareness of the importance of human rights in governance institutions, the need to reach out to marginalised groups, and the importance of CSOs in bringing local concerns to state bodies (ibid: 18). Its activities are grounded in a broad spectrum of rights, many of which can be drawn on in the promotion of gender equality, including the right to participation and the right to equality. CSOs can also play an important role in raising awareness of instruments such as CEDAW at the local level – for example, by providing training for people to be able to claim their rights in a human rights tribunal, and lobbying governments around their obligations to uphold the principles (Grugel and Piper 2005; see also Chapter 5, case study on Egypt).

A focus on rights can help to re-politicise the issue of women's rights that many feel has been dulled through the gender mainstreaming agenda (see Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004: 4). However, with it comes caution – with a focus on women's rights 'the realities are complex, the strategies variable, and the outcomes not straightforwardly positive' (Cornwall and Molyneux 2008: 14). (See Cornwall and Molyneux 2008 for a discussion of the dilemmas for feminists in using a rights-based approach.)

6.3.4 Creating new institutions and mechanisms

Those who hold the power and make decisions must answer for their performance in advancing gender equality and women's rights. And the women most affected by their decisions must be included in oversight processes – they must be entitled to ask for explanations and justifications (UNIFEM 2008). There are insufficient accountability mechanisms when it comes to gender equality, so the creation of new mechanisms or institutions may be required. For example, in South Africa there is the Commission on Gender Equality and in the UK the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which is currently threatening legal action against 100 local authorities over their failure to provide specialised services for women who have experienced violence (EHRC website 2009[31]).

6.4 Shifting mind-sets

To achieve more progressive goals of governance, we need far more engaged citizens, who know they can and should get involved in governance processes and that change is possible if they push decision-makers to be accountable. This will involve:

- challenging 'common sense', accepted ideas embedded in the public consciousness that associate governance with male-centric, top-down institutions that act for rather than with citizens (see Rai 2008: 32–35); and

- creating shared understandings of what democratic governance could mean for ordinary people in terms of enabling their participation – for example, raising public awareness of accountability mechanisms with which they can engage at local levels or online through e-governance tools.

The need to challenge entrenched gender inequalities in society
To guarantee women's long-term participation in these processes, citizens should also be examining and addressing their own prejudices and assumptions about the social roles of men and women. Attitudes need to change among their male partners and relatives, and those in positions of influence can assist this process by:

- **promoting positive representations of women** in the media and in educational material that challenge preconceptions that women cannot participate in governance;

- **providing positive role models of women engaged in all levels of governance;**

- **challenging the unequal distribution of assets and resources** that prevents women from engaging in politics in particular – for example, women often lack funding for electoral campaigns;

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[31] http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/Pages/default.aspx

- **challenging the unequal care burden** which limits women's ability to engage in activities outside the home; and

- **working with women and men – and their communities – to explore and challenge social norms that define women's legitimate space as being in the 'private' sphere of the home and men's to be in the 'public',** thus opening up the possibility and legitimacy of women engaging in formal and informal politics.

7. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, gender-sensitive governance will mean a world with better choices, opportunities, access to resources and life outcomes for women, through governance policies and actions that challenge entrenched gender inequalities in society and are supported by strong accountability mechanisms. Changes in governance approaches over the past few decades, with their emphasis on decentralised, democratised processes and principles of accountability, responsiveness and inclusiveness, have great potential to enable this vision to become reality. However, as this report has shown, much of this potential is unrealised. There has been some progress in redressing the gender imbalance in national and local governance processes and institutions – most notably, electoral reform has meant the inclusion of more women in government institutions, particularly at a local level. These reforms are a good start, but they need to be viewed as one part of a far more comprehensive process that involves governance institutions addressing ways in which they reinforce gender inequalities through their own practices and policies and thinking carefully about how to achieve the long-term goals of equality and social justice. A vital message is that increasing the number of women in positions of authority will only result in a more equitable system of governance if the quality of their participation is guaranteed. This requires a shift in assumptions about the roles women and marginalised men should play in governance processes, and the creation of an environment where people are viewed in terms of their capacity rather than their gender or sexuality. It requires the critical assessment of institutions and institutional relationships at global, national and local levels, the introduction of new, gender-equitable ways of working, and a commitment to monitoring their effectiveness.

Identifying barriers to gender equality in institutional culture and relationships can provide entry points for change, but without the will for transformation, gender-sensitive policies and mainstreaming strategies can soon evaporate. Therefore, it is important to enable clear, shared understandings around the need for gender equality across governance institutions on global, national and local levels. These understandings need to go beyond instrumentalist arguments about women's capacity to reduce corruption or contribute to economic growth through their participation in the workplace. They should also reinforce women's right to be active partners in governance processes – particularly those who have been traditionally excluded because of ethnicity, poverty or other forms of marginalisation.

These processes of awareness-raising and transformation need to happen at all levels of governance, not only in local and national government institutions. At a global level, institutions such as UN organisations and the WTO should not only be examining their own practices through a gender lens but ensuring that gender policy is consistent across all institutions, given their influence on national and local governance. At the same time, better processes of accountability are required for national and local governments around the implementation of international human rights instruments such as CEDAW that could facilitate gender-sensitive governance and respect for rights. The potential of strong states to endorse and finance far-reaching, centralised policy that can reshape public perceptions of men and women, their roles in public life and in the household and community should also not be underestimated, particularly in situations of fragility and fragmentation such as conflict or post-conflict.

At a local level, as we have argued in the report, participatory, citizen-focused and other local governance processes are not always as gender-inclusive as they outwardly appear and should be critically assessed with

the aim of identifying and addressing the root causes of exclusion. CSOs, including women's organisations, have an important facilitating and mediating role at all levels of governance, but they also need to examine their own internal governance practices and ideas about gender to be as effective as possible in these roles.

However, real change needs to start with the conceptual foundations of governance. It is crucial to acknowledge the points of tension between notions and practices of governance, challenging, for example, assumptions about the capacity of decentralisation and other aspects of governance to be intrinsically more inclusive and gender-aware. At global, national and local levels, all governance institutions need to contribute towards the creation of revised ideas about governance at the level of the public consciousness by demonstrating good practice and by effectively communicating – through the media and other channels – the transformatory potential of governance processes. Their messages should challenge existing 'common sense' perceptions of governance as the domain of privileged males, removed from the realities of ordinary people. They should enable women everywhere to identify and claim their place in governance institutions and processes that are designed with, not for, them.

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