INTER-AGENCY HUMANITARIAN
EVALUATION

INTER-AGENCY HUMANITARIAN
EVALUATION ON

GENDER EQUALITY

AND THE EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

COMPANION PIECE

REVIEW OF PROGRESS:

MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS INTO THE HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT, AND PEACE NEXUS AGENDA

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This Review was commissioned by the Management Group for the <u>Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG)</u> of 2020, which focused on gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian programme cycle. The Review identifies constraints that need to be addressed to achieve greater inclusion of GEEWG in the triple nexus and suggests practical measures to be undertaken to this end.

A team from KonTerra conducted the Review.

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Review Team [The KonTerra Group]

Tony Beck

Rutendo Chabikwa

Ofelia Garcia

Review Management

OCHA Review Managers: Kelly David, Anne Danker, Verena Lauer

Review Management Group: Caitlin Shannon (CARE), Hicham Daoudi (UNFPA), Henri van den Idsert (UNHCR), Carlotta Tincati (UNICEF), Mari Honjo (WFP)

KonTerra Management

KonTerra Review Manager: Belén Díaz

Quality Assurance: Terrence Jantzi - The KonTerra Group

The KonTerra Group - 700 12th St NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA

Disclaimer

The contents and conclusions of this Review report reflect the opinion of the authors, and not necessarily those of the United Nations, OCHA, donors, or other stakeholders.

Acronyms

CCA	Common Country Analysis
DOCO	Development Operations Coordination Office
DPO	Department of Peace Operations
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GEEWG	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls
GTG	Gender Theme Group
HDP	Humanitarian, Development, and Peacebuilding
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations
IAHE SG	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation Steering Group
IANWGE	Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
JSC	Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration
KII	Key informant interview
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
SADD	Sex- and age-disaggregated data
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WPS	Women Peace and Security

Glossary of Terms

Accountability to affected populations	Accountability to affected populations (AAP) is an active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian organizations seek to assist.[1] The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has endorsed four commitments on AAP and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA):
	Leadership: Demonstrate their commitment to AAP and PSEA by enforcing, institutionalizing and integrating AAP approaches in the humanitarian programme cycle (HPC) and strategic planning processes at country level, and by establishing appropriate management systems to solicit, hear and act upon the voices and priorities of affected people in a coordinated manner, including for SEA, before, during and after an emergency.
	Participation and Partnership: Adopt agency mechanisms that feed into and support collective/coordinated people-centred approaches that enable women, girls, boys and men, including the most marginalized and at-risk people among affected communities, to participate in and play an active role in decisions that will impact their lives, well-being, dignity and protection. Adopt and sustain equitable partnerships with local actors to build upon their long-term relationships and trust with communities.
	Information, Feedback and Action: Adopt agency mechanisms that feed into and support collective and participatory approaches that inform and listen to communities, address feedback, and lead to corrective action. Establish and support the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for reporting and handling of SEA-related complaints. Plan, design and manage protection and assistance programmes that are responsive to the diversity and expressed views of affected communities.
	Results: Measure AAP- and PSEA-related results at the agency and collective level, including through standards such as the Core Humanitarian Standard and the Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA, and the Best Practice Guide to establish Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms and its accompanying Standard Operating Procedures.[2]
Building back better	Building Back Better (BBB) is an approach to post-disaster recovery that reduces vulnerability to future disasters and builds community resilience to address physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities and shocks. BBB applies to all aspects and sectors of post-disaster recovery. BBB also applies to cross-cutting issues such as environment, gender, and governance.[3]
Empowerment of Women and Girls	The ability of a woman or girl to control her own destiny. This implies that she must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but that she must also have the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions.[4]
Gender	A social construct built through cultural, political, and social practices that defines the roles of women, girls, men, and boys as well as the social definitions of what it means to be masculine or feminine.[5]
Gender mainstreaming	Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.
Gender-based violence	Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or in private.[6]

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[1] IASC (no date). *Accountability to Affected Populations: A Brief Overview*.
[2] IASC. 2017. *Commitments on Accountability to Affected People and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, November 2017*, IASC Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
[3] World Bank/GFDDR (2018): *Building Back Better in Post-Disaster Recovery*.
[4] IASC Gender Policy.
[5] *IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action*. 2018.
[6] *IASC Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Emergencies*. 2019. Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility. Global Protection Cluster.

Gender equality	Equal enjoyment by women, girls, men and boys of rights, opportunities, resources, and rewards. It does not mean that women and men are the same, but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male.[7]
Gender-responsive humanitarian programming	Gender-responsive programming refers to programmes where gender norms, roles and inequalities have been considered, and measures have been taken to actively address them. Such programmes go beyond raising sensitivity and awareness and actually do something about gender inequalities.[8] Gender-responsive programming recognizes that the needs and vulnerabilities of women, men, girls and boys in humanitarian settings are specific and different, and use the analysis of the gender relationships, roles, access to and control over resources, and constraints different groups face relative to each other to inform the design and implementation of interventions. The concept of participation of women and girls must have as its starting point their meaningful engagement (separately from men and boys) in the design, implementation, and monitoring of humanitarian programmes. In addition, it is important to consider that a person's experience of a crisis is intersectional and depends on the multiple identities people hold and their real-world implications in the context of the crisis. The complexity of human identities and power relations shape the experience of the phenomenon, and any response should be tailored to the specific and multi-layered needs and experiences of various individuals and groups and also consider the agency people may hold.
Gender-sensitive programming	Programmes and policies that take into account the particularities pertaining to the lives of both women and men, while aiming to eliminate inequalities and promote gender equality, including an equal distribution of resources.
Gender-transformative programming	Programmes and policies that seek to transform gender relations to achieve gender equality. Transformative results would contribute to changes in social norms, cultural values, power structures and the root causes of gender inequalities and discrimination. Furthermore, transformative change involves changes to social structures and relations, including addressing economic and political disparities and patterns of stratification also related to class, ethnicity, religion, or location. This requires changing both norms and institutions that shape the behaviour of people and organizations in the social, economic, environmental, and political spheres.[9]
Linking Relief, Rehabilitation & Development	The concept of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) aims at improving integration and coordination between humanitarian actors and development actors in transitional contexts.[10]
Localization	Localizing humanitarian response is a process of recognizing, respecting, and strengthening the leadership by local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations and to prepare national actors for future humanitarian responses.[11]
New Way of Working	The New Way of Working (NWOW) calls on humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively together, based on their comparative advantages, towards collective outcomes that reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years. A collective outcome is a concrete and measurable result that humanitarian, development and other relevant actors want to achieve jointly over a period of 3-5 years to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increase their resilience.[12]
Triple nexus	The "triple nexus" refers to the inter-linkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors. In the UN's "New Way of Working (NWoW)," these actors are expected to work towards collective outcomes over multiple years, when appropriate.[13]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] UNICEF. 2018. *Gender Responsive Communication for Development: Guidance, Tools and Resources*.

[9] UN-SWAP 2.0. 2019. *Accountability Framework for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in United Nations Entities, Version 2.*

[10] VENRO. 2006. *Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development*, February 2006.

[11] C. Fabre. 2017. Localising the response: World Humanitarian Summit, Putting Policy into Practice, The Commitments into Action Series, Paris: OECD.

[12] United Nations Joint Steering Committee To Advance Humanitarian Development and Collaboration. *The New Way of Working.*

[13] ICVA. 2018. *What is the Triple Nexus?*

Executive Summary

About the Review of Progress on mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus agenda

Scope

In 2019, the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) Steering Group launched an evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG). Key informants indicated that GEEWG is not yet adequately considered within the new nexus processes. Subsequently, the IAHE Management Group commissioned a light Review to analyse the state of gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus, and entry points for helping humanitarian stakeholders to strengthen programming linkages with development and peace-building actors, in support of longer-term gender transformative initiatives. The Review is thus intended to: 1) make suggestions to Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) partners on possible entry points for gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus, and 2) present for consideration further initiatives required to deepen understanding and action to achieve this end.

Review questions

The Review sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the key policy, governance, resource, or other constraints that need to be overcome to achieve greater inclusion of GEEWG considerations in planning and implementing the nexus agenda?
- What are some of the immediate and medium-term practical measures that IASC governance can undertake to address these constraints?

Use

The main users of the Review are intended to be the: Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, UN Sustainable Development Group, individual UN agencies, NGOs and research bodies working on the triple nexus. The actions presented for consideration to these bodies are in support of enabling operationalization at the country level.

Methodology

The Review's scope is global and covers the 2015 to 2020 period. It was conducted by external independent consultants between October 2020 and February 2021. It included a desk review of some 100 documents, 33 key informant interviews at both headquarters and country levels, and light, country level consultations in the DRC, Somalia, and Sudan.

A validation workshop with 25 participants, including most key informant interviewees, was held in January 2021 to discuss the main findings and actions for consideration, and input from its participants was integrated into this report as appropriate.

Review findings, conclusions, and actions for consideration

There is broad consensus that promoting GEEWG is key to achieving each of the individual elements of the triple nexus. Given the recognized importance of GEEWG to the three nexus sectors, it makes intuitive sense that GEEWG should be a central part of also achieving the nexus itself, and for ensuring linkages between the three elements. However, the international system is in new territory when considering promoting gender mainstreaming into the nexus process in its current iteration.

The need for a clearer system-wide understanding of what the triple nexus itself means in practice, and for clarification of what gender mainstreaming in the nexus process means, offers an opportunity. There are important precedents in the UN system of gender providing similar clarification: the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) and the UN-Country Team (UNCT) Performance Indicators were the first effective systematic system-wide accountability frameworks introduced in the UN, and offer an important precedent for gender mainstreaming in the nexus process, because they clarified on a practical level what UN resolutions and the UN system-wide policy on gender mainstreaming meant, as well as what UN accountability to this end looks like.

The opportunity is therefore that focusing on a cross-cutting theme such as GEEWG could help clarify for the system what the nexus means in practice, as well as making clearer what gender mainstreaming means in the nexus process. Additionally, several areas identified as the nexus "glue" linking humanitarian, development and peace initiatives are also of particular importance in relation to gender mainstreaming, including cash transfers, social protection and localization, which adds to the argument for a specific focus on GEEWG. **Further, better understanding what gender mainstreaming in nexus processes looks like could enable a better understanding what transformative change in the context of the triple nexus means.**

Main Finding 1 There is very limited discussion of GEEWG in triple nexus documents and processes. This absence is substantially greater than in other UN processes, where there has been an improvement in gender mainstreaming over the last 10 years. Light country level consultations found that key humanitarian, development and peace planning documents inadequately reflect GEEWG in collective outcomes. And further that there was: a gap between gender analysis and the formulation of collective outcomes; very limited focus on gender as an area that can support transformative change; and consensus on the need for gender-sensitive needs assessments.

Main Finding 2 There is no strategic vision and/or overarching framework for mainstreaming gender into the triple nexus process. Without this, initiatives are less likely to be coherent, coordinated and add up to more than the sum of their parts.

Main Finding 3 UN inter-agency coordination structures at headquarters and the country levels examined do not adequately promote gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process, and without this coordination, progress is likely to be limited.

In relation to these main findings, there were two other findings:

- Reflection of gender in the main guidance documents is often unspecific – guidance is not adequate to give non-gender specialists a solid understanding of what mainstreaming gender in the triple nexus means in practice.

- The literature which includes a focus on GEEWG and the triple nexus concentrates on four areas: localization, gender-based violence (GBV), Women Peace and Security (WPS), and joint needs assessments.

Constraints to strengthened gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process are as follows:

- There is a lack of capacity and resources towards this end.

- The lack of a strategic vision and/or overarching strategic plan as to what gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus means, and how it can be operationalized, hinders progress in this area.

- The way in which the triple nexus/New Way of Working is conceptualized as a somewhat technical process led in country tends to exclude cross-cutting themes as gender equality.

- Coordinating bodies – including the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration – have not to date paid adequate attention to mainstreaming gender in the triple nexus.

- Existing inter-agency gender accountability frameworks at headquarters and country-level do not cover the triple nexus.

Given the findings of this Review, there is considerable work to be done to promote strengthened mainstreaming in the triple nexus process.

ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION 1: Coordination

The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) should establish a resourced two-year Task Force to coordinate work on gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process at headquarters and country levels. UN Women has the coordination mandate for gender mainstreaming across the whole of the UN system, including humanitarian, development and peace pillars. IANWGE, chaired by UN Women, has membership from across the UN, and promotes gender mainstreaming according to decisions made by its membership. There is therefore already a coordinating structure in place to promote gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process.

Resourced in this case means one full-time P4 staff member dedicated to this role with an appropriate budget (e.g., for preparation of guidance and organization of meetings), to complement existing mainstreaming mechanisms. Without this resourcing, the Task Force is highly unlikely to function effectively.

Among the priorities for this Task Force are:

- Considering the development of a strategic vision and overarching strategic plan for gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process;

- Ensuring consistent coordination and information flows across the various triple nexus stakeholders, including: the IASC Gender Reference Group; UNSDG Task Teams on Transition and Recovery and Gender Equality; regional and country level mechanisms for gender equality, including Gender Theme Groups and issue-based coalitions and other coordination mechanisms at the regional level; and the OECD-DAC network;

- Strengthening and ensuring implementation of existing guidance in strategic planning documents. In particular, there should be guidance on joint gender analysis in Common Country Assessments (CCA) so that these reflect humanitarian and peace dimensions; and

- Determining how accountability for gender mainstreaming should be strengthened, e.g. expanding existing accountability mechanisms, and including additional minimum standards in the UNCT-SWAP Scorecard and/or IASC Gender Accountability Framework. An example of a minimum standard is requiring that at least one collective outcome focuses specifically on GEEWG, and/or all other collective outcomes are gender mainstreamed, as appropriate and dependent on the country context

The work of the Task Force should be reviewed at the end of two years to determine if it needs to be continued.

ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION 2: Pilots at the country level

Undertake resourced two-year pilots in two countries to determine:

- What GEEWG mainstreaming in the triple nexus process actually means, dependent on the country context. This would focus on required levels of gender analysis, tying gender analysis more closely to sex-disaggregation of data, and to formulation and operationalization of collective outcomes;

- The level of capacity and resources required to achieve GEEWG mainstreaming;

- How to operationalize GEEWG mainstreaming in practice within and across humanitarian, development and peace action;

- How this can be scaled up across the system; and

- Ways in which representative women-led organizations and gender equality networks can be fully involved in the triple nexus process, including in a leadership role.

The rationale for a two-year pilot is that putting in place appropriate capacity, analysing what gender mainstreaming in the triple process means, and learning lessons to promote scaling up, will require at least that amount of time. Two countries are recommended for pilots as this was what key informants thought would be feasible and would allow for comparison in different locations.

These pilots should be coordinated by the IANWGE Task Force in collaboration with relevant coordination and accountability mechanisms; be fully resourced including relevant staffing; and build on gender expertise and on-going work at the country level, including that of the Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap), and the IASC Results Group 4 engagement with 40+ countries undertaking a CCA and/or UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in 2021 to ensure that they take a nexus approach.

1. Purpose, scope, and use

1. In 2019, the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHE) Steering Group launched an evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG). While the evaluation's focus was on the joint humanitarian programme cycle, key informants indicated that GEEWG is not yet adequately considered within the new nexus processes. Subsequently, and given the opportunity to build on the GEEWG evaluation, the IAHE Management Group decided to commission a light review to analyse the state of gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus, and entry points for helping humanitarian stakeholders strengthen programming linkages with development and peace-building actors, to support longer-term gender transformative initiatives. The Review is thus intended to: 1) make suggestions to IASC partners on possible entry points for gender integration in the triple nexus, and 2) present for consideration further initiatives required to deepen understanding and action to achieve this end.

2. Specifically, the Review was expected to answer the following questions, with a greater focus, at the request of the IAHE Management Group and in order to ensure the Review was manageable and focused, on questions 2 and 3:

    1. To what extent do humanitarian, development and peace actors have a coherent and consistent understanding of GEEWG in relation to the triple nexus?

    2. What are the key policy, governance, resource, or other constraints that need to be overcome to achieve greater inclusion of GEEWG considerations in planning and implementing the nexus agenda?

    3. What are some of the immediate and medium-term practical measures that Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) governance can undertake to address these constraints?

    4. What initial steps could be taken to ensure gender is mainstreamed in field implementation efforts across the triple nexus, with a particular view to analysis, planning, coordination, programming, and monitoring and evaluation?

3. The main users of the Review are intended to be the: Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration (JSC), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), individual United Nations agencies, and NGOs and research bodies working on the triple nexus. The actions presented for consideration to these bodies are in support of enabling operationalization at the country level.

4. It is important to note that GEEWG should not be considered in isolation from other cross-cutting themes, and that an intersectional approach analysing the ways in which gender considerations interact with other considerations such as age, disability, and ethnicity, should always be taken. Further, that adequate analysis is required to determine which are the most important cross-cutting themes in particular contexts.

2. Context

5. The emphasis on connecting humanitarian action and development dates back to at least the early 1990s and has been expressed in various forms; e.g., Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development, and Disaster Risk Reduction. In practice, humanitarian and development actors have faced challenges working in a complementary fashion.[14]

6. The context for this Review is the renewed attempt to connect humanitarian action and development through the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and subsequent initiatives, and its extension to the triple nexus, that is to include peace as a result of the United Nations Secretary-General's Vision Statement upon taking office in December 2016.[15] The concept of a triple nexus was reinforced in 2016 by United Nations resolutions emphasizing that sustaining peace requires a comprehensive approach.[16]

7. While there is no single definition of the triple nexus, humanitarian, development, peace and donor communities have created a common conceptual understanding of modes of collaboration.[17] In particular, the "nexus process" should be understood as an approach involving sharing analysis across humanitarian, development and peace actors that informs the definition of collective outcomes (COs) aimed at reducing humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability. Based on these collective outcomes or common priorities, humanitarian, development and peace actors can join up their programming through their respective strategic planning documents. These approaches should also be anchored in existing tools, guidelines and products from the humanitarian, development and peace spheres. The triple nexus has been described by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as follows: "Humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding are not serial processes: they are all needed at the same time in order to reduce needs, risk and vulnerability. Collaboration can be achieved by working towards collective outcomes, over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors."[18] Further, the UN Sustainable Development Group notes that the nexus process should be context specific, based on complementary planning and programming, effective leadership/coordination, financing beyond project-based funding, and sequencing in formulation and implementation.[19] The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) further clarifies that the triple nexus aims to overcome silos and improve policy and operational coherence, with an overall goal of ending humanitarian situations.[20]

8. As such, mainstreaming gender into the triple nexus process involves both enhanced mainstreaming in humanitarian, development and peace interventions, and seeking synergies between the three triple nexus elements that can further promote GEEWG, dependent on specific country contexts, analyses, and priorities.

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[14] (FAO 2020; UNEG 2018).
[15] https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2016-12-12/secretary-general-designate-ant%C3%B3nio-guterres-oath-office-speech
[16] UN GA resolution 70/262 and UN Security Council resolution 2282.
[17] Including through the OECD-DAC (2019) recommendations, the IASC (2020) light guidance on collective outcomes and the UNSDCF guidance, including the UNSDG (2020) companion piece.
[18] OCHA (2018: 2).
[19] UNSDG (2020).
[20] OECD-DAC (2019).

9. Further, the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review[21] (which provides direction from Member States to the United Nations Development System at the country level) also emphasizes the importance of the triple nexus. It, "Recognizes the positive role that sustainable development can play in mitigating drivers of conflicts, disaster risks, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies, and also recognizes that a comprehensive whole-of-system response, including greater cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace, is fundamental to most efficiently and effectively addressing needs and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals."

10. The Review is organized as follows: Section 3 covers the Review methodology, and Section 4 analyses the potential for gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus. Section 5 analyses the various ways in which GEEWG and the triple nexus have intersected in general nexus literature and guidance on the triple nexus, and also discusses gender mainstreaming in inter-agency coordination and at the country level, and the reasons for the lack of attention to GEEWG in the triple nexus process. Sections 6 and 7 present conclusions and next steps. The Annexes include the three light country level consultations.

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[21] https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/233

3. Methodology[22]

11. The Review's scope is global, and covers the 2015 to 2020 period after the WHS. It was conducted by three external independent consultants between October 2020 and February 2021. It triangulated data from the following:

Desk review

12. The team reviewed some 100 documents, including: IASC, UNSDG, and JSC policies, guidance, think-pieces, and meeting minutes; country-level documentation, which included: Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs); Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF), and gender strategies. Both these and IASC, UNSDG, and JSC documentation were reviewed against a gender-responsive screen (see Annex 1); and recent conceptual and programmatic literature produced by individual agencies and researchers, including those specific to gender and the triple nexus (see Bibliography).

Key informant interviews

13. The team conducted 33 key informant interviews (KIIs) at both UN headquarters and country levels, selected jointly by OCHA and the Review authors, with an intended balance between the main headquarters coordination structures, nexus specialists, gender specialists, country-level informants, and donors. Annex 2 includes a list of key informants, and Annex 3 the generic interview guide, which was adapted for individual interviews.

Country level light consultations

14. Given the light nature of this Review, the team conducted a limited number of consultations at the country level to determine the extent of gender mainstreaming in nexus processes. Three countries – DRC, Somalia, and Sudan – were selected from an initial eight based on extensive KII input and an initial literature review, using the following screens: potential for responding to the Review questions; existence of good practice; likely availability of KIIs; whether the country was a JSC priority country or not, or an IAHE or ECHO[23] evaluation case study country; and the existence of a peacekeeping mission. The country consultations involved a document review (see above) and 3-4 KIIs per country. Details of these consultations can be found in Annexes 4, 5, and 6.

15. A validation workshop with 25 participants, including most key informants, was held in January 2021 to discuss the main findings and actions for consideration. Input from workshop participants was integrated into this report as appropriate.

16. The Review was overseen by the IAHE SG and managed by an OCHA-chaired Management Group, consisting of evaluation specialists from CARE, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP. A global Advisory Group consisting of senior gender experts from UN agencies, donors and NGOs also provided technical inputs and guidance throughout the process (see Annex 7 for a list of its members).

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[22] Further methodological details can be found in the Review Inception Report, available from OCHA.
[23] ECHO (2020).

Limitations

17. As this was by design a light, exploratory Review, an extensive analysis of programming and gender and the triple nexus at country-level, as would be expected in an evaluation, was not included. Further, only a limited number of key informant interviews were undertaken, and the affected population was not consulted. It was also not possible to access Integrated Strategic Frameworks for any of the countries.

The Review questions were therefore designed accordingly.

4. Why is GEEWG important for the triple nexus?

4.1 The necessity of gender mainstreaming in the nexus

18. There is broad consensus that promoting GEEWG is key to achieving each of the elements of the triple nexus separately. For example, evidence indicates that women and girls are uniquely positioned in their families and communities to play powerful, effective roles as peacemakers in societies that are conflict-affected or transitioning out of crisis, and in fragile states. Increasing the legal capacity and social ability of women to participate meaningfully in peace and political processes often results in more effective and enduring outcomes. Further, facilitating women's participation in decision-making; promoting women's roles in the prevention of, and recovery from, conflict; and strengthening efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, can help ensure that investments in relief and recovery are effective and responsive to the different needs and priorities of women and men, and also support safe and equitable access to assistance for women and girls.[24] Given the recognized importance of GEEWG to the three nexus sectors, it makes intuitive sense that GEEWG should be a central part of also achieving the nexus itself and for ensuring linkages between the three elements. However, the international system is in new territory when considering promoting gender mainstreaming into the nexus process.

19. Several areas identified as the nexus "glue" are also of particular importance in relation to gender mainstreaming and cut across the three nexus elements. The most systematic review of nexus implementation in the United Nations to date[25] identifies cash transfers, social protection and localization as areas that bridge the gaps between the three areas of the triple nexus, and where there has been success in promoting a more coherent approach. Each of these areas has important gender mainstreaming implications. While there is considerable debate as to the extent to which cash transfers promote gender responsive change, gender equality is clearly central to each of the pivotal nexus areas, and as humanitarian, development and peace actors are all working on cash transfers and social protection, a focus on these areas offers an opportunity for greater collaboration in programming. Eliminating gender-based violence and promoting women's greater participation are other areas that interviewees highlighted as those in which HDP actors are each working.

20. The need for a clearer system-wide understanding of what the triple nexus itself means in practice, and for clarification of what gender mainstreaming in the nexus process means, offers an opportunity. There are important precedents in the United Nations system: the 2012 United Nations System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) and the 2008 UNCT-SWAP Scorecard.[26] These mechanisms are the accountability frameworks for the implementation of the United Nations Chief Executives Board 2006 system-wide policy on gender and have been recognized as good practice by United Nations Member States and the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit,[27] which directly led to significant improvements in gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system. They were the first effective systematic system-wide accountability frameworks introduced in the United Nations and offer an important precedent for gender mainstreaming in the nexus process because they did three things.[28] The first was to clarify on a practical level what United Nations resolutions and the

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[24] IAHE (2020); UN Women (nd). For example decreases in gender equality have been demonstrated to negatively impact peace and security (World Bank 2018).

[25] Zamore (2019).

[26] https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability

[27] JIU (2019).

[28] Ibid.

United Nations system-wide policy on gender mainstreaming meant in practice. The second was to reinvigorate the United Nations gender equality network around a common vision. The third was to clarify more clearly for the United Nations what accountability meant in practice – after many years of Member States' requests for strengthened accountability. The success of the UN-SWAP can also be seen in the more recent development of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy[29], which replicated its approach.

21. **Focusing on a cross-cutting theme such as GEEWG could, in the same way as the UN-SWAP, help clarify for the system what the nexus means in practice, as well as making clearer what gender mainstreaming means in the nexus process.**

22. Based on past experience, a focus on gender mainstreaming in the nexus process will also likely mean that planned interventions are more effective, as:

- Gender dynamics are addressed through gender analysis, anticipating and mitigating factors that may otherwise derail an intervention's planned results.

- Specific gender groups, including women, are identified as marginalized and/or as agents of change, which can promote more effective support to the right population groups.

- "Building back better" can become an opportunity to increase gender equality and the empowerment of women (for example opening spaces for women in male dominated sectors).

   One potential area that focusing on gender mainstreaming could support is understanding what transformative change means. In line with the WHS and Sustainable Development Goals Outcome Documents, at its core the triple nexus is intended to make transformative changes to the structures and situations that cause conflict, poverty, and inequality – referred to by the OECD-DAC[30] as the "root causes and structural drivers" of conflict. Transformational change is also central to the United Nations mandate on GEEWG, and can be defined as contributing to changes in social norms, cultural values and power structures and the root causes of gender inequalities and discrimination.[31]

23. Given that gender inequality and women and girls' disempowerment will not end without changes to structures and root causes and not without rights holders fully accessing their rights, a focus on gender mainstreaming could also help define what real transformations the nexus can induce (e.g., through support to women-led and gender equality organizations). It could help answer a question such as: How far is it possible to lay the groundwork for transformative change and make forward linkages during an initial humanitarian response (e.g., for a sudden onset emergency) and make forward and backward linkages from chronic emergencies that may switch between emergency and development situations?

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[29] https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/
[30] OECD-DAC (2019).
[31] E.g. ECOSOC 2020; https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/

5. Discussions of gender and the triple nexus to date

24. This section reviews the nexus literature from three perspectives. The first focuses on the extent to which the policy documents, guidance, research, and academic literature on the triple nexus mainstreams gender considerations; the second on ways in which guidance on key strategic planning documents mainstreams gender perspectives. It then discusses how the limited literature found for this Review that focused both on gender equality and the triple nexus discusses the relationship between the two. It also covers findings related to gender mainstreaming in coordination mechanisms, triple nexus processes at country level, and the reasons for lack of attention to GEEWG.

5.1 Reflection of GEEWG in the general nexus literature

25. **While reflection of GEEWG has been found to be inadequate in many UN contexts by a number of reviews and evaluations,[32] this review of key documents and KIIs suggests that the absence is greater in the case of the triple nexus. Where the nexus is discussed, GEEWG is not usually covered. And where GEEWG is the central focus, discussion of the nexus is usually inadequate (see below for details).** Even detailed and very insightful overviews of implementation of the nexus[33] cover GEEWG only in passing. The same can be said for most references reviewed, which are also the references most often quoted in discussions of the triple nexus.[34]

26. The WHS Outcome Document does recognize the importance of gender equality to the triple nexus: "The skills and experience of women of all ages and their role as leaders and agents of change are pivotal to sustaining conflict prevention and resolution, to peacebuilding and to building resilient communities." [35] This has not translated into reporting on the gender equality/nexus intersection in a systematic way in reports on the Agenda for Humanity. For example, while the 2019 report includes extensive discussion of GEEWG, substantive discussion is limited to Core Responsibilities 1 and 3:

- Under Political Leadership to Prevent and End Conflicts, the report notes the involvement of women in relation to the triple nexus and the steps taken to empower women as peacebuilders, mediators, peacekeepers, and civil society leaders.

- Under Leaving No-one Behind, the report covers donor programming on GEEWG in relation to the triple nexus, and UN agencies' work on the empowerment of women and girls.[36]

27. One of the few documents in the general literature reviewed that included a focus on both gender equality and the nexus was the UNICEF evaluation of the humanitarian-development nexus, which reviewed the practical application of the nexus to GEEWG and pointed to some constraints, including a lack of a common understanding and capacity. It notes: "We saw little or no evidence of consideration of how gender-sensitive humanitarian programming might link to gender-sensitive development programming. In more development focused contexts, gender specialists and focal points emphasize policy and advocacy issues in relation to gender equality and are

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[32] E.g. AfDB (2012); IAHE (2020); ECHO (2019).

[33] E.g. Zamore (2019), which is based on an extensive literature review and over three hundred interviews with UN Country Teams, government and civil society, and three country visits (Chad, Nigeria and Somalia).

[34] E.g. Barakat (2020), Dubois (2020), FAO, NRC and UNDP (2019), Macrae (2019), Oxfam (2019), Howe (2019), and Weishaupt (nd).

[35] WHS (2016: 8).

[36] OCHA (2019)

sometimes not equipped or with the mindset to address gender in more delivery focused emergency programming. Gender advisers were often not sufficiently connected with emergency teams to ensure that emergency programming was gender-responsive and linked to gender responsive development programming. As one interviewee said, 'I don't think we are anywhere near understanding the intersection of our nexus work and gender equality'."[37]

28. The OECD-DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus is one of the few general nexus documents that has a consistent focus on gender, in particular the need for: "joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict;" "promoting a focus on gender equality and women's leadership across humanitarian, development, development and peace actions as essential elements in achieving sustainable progress;" and "striving to ensure that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding is designed and delivered in a gender-sensitive way, based on a suitable gender analysis and on an informed understanding of risks of exploitation, abuse, and do no harm."[38] This sends a clear message to OECD-DAC concerning the importance of GEEWG in a way that most other documents have not achieved.

29. Although this Review is not a general assessment of the implementation of the triple nexus, it is relevant to point out that the need for a clearer understanding of what the nexus means in practice, as noted by several KIIs and in some of the literature reviewed,[39] has implications for the mainstreaming of gender considerations into the triple nexus process. Those interviewed noted that unless the concept of the triple nexus itself is clearer, it will remain challenging to mainstream cross-cutting themes such as gender equality due to the challenge of reaching consensus on the target to which gender mainstreaming should be aimed. Related to this, the challenges of integrating peace into the humanitarian-development nexus noted by interviewees also has implications for gender mainstreaming, as these challenges further complicate the development of a common understanding of what the triple nexus means in practice.

5.2 Reflection of GEEWG in guidance for strategy development and programme planning, and implications for working across the nexus

30. UN guidance is key for ensuring that cross-cutting themes, such as GEEWG, are included in strategic plans. Responding to question 1 of this review, Table 1 presents evidence from nine guidance documents mapping the extent to which gender mainstreaming is reflected in the discussions in these documents about the nexus; and, for documents which include a dedicated section on gender equality, whether this section on gender equality includes a focus on the nexus.

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[37] UNICEF (2020: 70).
[38] OECD-DAC (2019: 7, 9).
[39] E.g. FAO (2020), UNICEF (2020) and Zamore (2019).

Table 1: The intersection of GEEWG and the triple nexus in key strategic planning guidance

Document	Reflection of gender in nexus discussion in document	Reflection of nexus in gender equality discussion in the document	Examples of where gender equality and/or nexus could be further reflected in the document
IASC (2020) Light Guidance on Collective Outcomes	Limited – four references to gender equality as part of a list of cross-cutting areas to cover; one reference to data, three passing references to women and women's empowerment.	Not included	• In the definition of collective outcomes • References to women-led organizations in discussion of stakeholders • Disaggregating references to "affected populations" • Ensuring a gender perspective is adequately mainstreamed in joint analysis • Promoting systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated data • Gender-related examples of the nexus in practice
HRP Template and Instructions (2020)	Not included	Not included	As above
HNO Template and Instructions (2020)	Not included	Not included	Guidance on analysis could centre gender equality more adequately with the potential of bringing out the opportunities for actors to coordinate through the triple nexus
Humanitarian Programme Cycle Step by Step Guide (2020)	Not included	Not included	At both analysis and planning stages there is emphasis of WHS commitments and the Grand Bargain – gender considerations could be incorporated into this in relation to commitments
UNSDCF (2019) Guidance	Not included	Not included	As there is discussion of the nexus as a cross cutting theme, gender equality could be considered as one of the main elements of the nexus
UNSDG (2020) HDP Companion Piece	Overall the strongest document. Good reference vis-à-vis joint analysis, including the need for participation of women-led organizations. Limited reflection in discussion of collective outcomes although one good practice example refers to gender equality. Short paragraph on gender analysis in section on joint programming	Not included	Mainly in reference to development of collective outcomes

DPO planning Toolkit (nd)	Not included	Not included	The Technical Assessment Mission Checklists (TAM) on prioritising and sequencing early peacebuilding interventions notes that it can be complemented with other programming guidance. This is an opportunity for introducing specific guidance on gender equality and the nexus.
Integrated Assessment and Planning Handbook (2013)	Not included	Not included	• The Senior Leadership forum that ensures high-level coordination could approach its work through the lens of gender equality and the triple nexus • Synergies that the senior leadership forum should promote could emphasize mainstreaming gender considerations more explicitly • The Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) is an opportunity to cover the triple nexus and gender equality more explicitly
World Bank Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence (2019)	The WBG plans to deploy joint mechanisms in a gender-sensitive manner engaging humanitarian, development, and peace actors.	Not included	• While the nexus is mentioned in UN WBG partnerships, gender equality could be included as a point of collaboration and focus • Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRA) could consider potential for a gender equality and triple nexus approach.

31. **In summary the table demonstrates that very limited discussion on the triple nexus and GEEWG is present in any of the key guidance documents on strategic planning.** The fullest reflection is in the UNSDG HDP companion piece[40], particularly in relation to joint planning.

5.3 GEEWG in the nexus: What the literature that speaks to both identifies as key leverage points

32. The literature reviews and reports that specifically focus on gender equality and the triple nexus are few and far between. Outside of references to gender-sensitive needs assessments, six publications were found that have a focus on, or substantive references to, gender equality and the triple nexus. The main issues raised in these publications are localization, gender-based violence (GBV), gender equality and peace processes, and joint gender-sensitive needs assessments, all covered below.

33. **The IASC policy** on GEEWG in Humanitarian Action begins with an emphasis on: "progressive thinking on humanitarian preparedness and response, peace building, and development, to be transformative, inclusive and uncompromising towards achieving the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in humanitarian action."[41] However, the main focus of the policy is, as would be expected, humanitarian action, and there is also limited substantive focus on the triple nexus in the IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action. **The IASC Policy and Handbook on GEEWG do not, therefore, provide a strategic vision or overarching framework for gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus, nor was this their intention. This vision and**

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framework were not found in any other guiding documents, pointing to a gap that needs to be filled before the work can be taken further.

34. **Localization**. The limited literature points to the need for a greater focus on working with women's organizations, for example as in the following quote:[42]

> *Localisation is at the heart of the Grand Bargain. Yet local women's organisations and women responders have been largely overlooked and continue to struggle for resources, recognition, and support … Women in communities, and their groups and organisations, are rooted in intimate and detailed knowledge of their contexts. They are uniquely able to work across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in ways that respond to short-term immediate needs with an eye to the longer-term needs that are rooted in the pre-crisis period, before disease pandemics, floods or famine, or armed conflict hit their community.*

35. In addition, several KIIs noted that humanitarian, development, and peace actors all tend to work with the same women-led/gender equality local organizations. The Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict[43] expert level consultation, focused on the Pacific, highlighted that the only way to successfully mainstream gender perspectives into the triple nexus was through supporting and funding local peace operations. This approach is further elaborated by CARE,[44] specifically on gender equality and the nexus in projects in the Middle East and North Africa region. The report argues that the best way to operationalize the triple nexus in a gender-sensitive way is through a bottom-up approach based on nine core principles: localization, participation, evidence-based analysis, politically smart programming, gender-transformative empowerment, resilience-based programming, adaptive management, experimentation and piloting, and re-investment in program quality and accountability.

36. **Gender-based violence.** One of the best examples of a GBV focus was found outside of the UN system, by a Development Initiatives[45] report on Syria, one of the few country-level reports to focus on gender and the triple nexus. Although it focuses more on the humanitarian-development connections, it also brings in the women, peace and security agenda and emphasizes the ways in which GBV, and therefore solutions to it cut across the nexus divide. It introduces caution about shifting to government-led delivery: "The transition from humanitarian delivery of GBV services, dominated by UN agencies and international NGOs, to a development approach is not as simple as shifting to government-led delivery. Although working with the public sector to improve the quality of GBV services across sectors including health, education, law enforcement and justice is crucial, the gap in trust in public services to address women's protection concerns is massive in many contexts." A VOICE[46] report proposes that GBV should be one of the nexus "enablers," since working on certain cross-cutting themes, like GBV or protection, could make it easier to shift from a humanitarian to a development response and vice versa.

37. **Women Peace and Security.** There is recognition, as noted in the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) report,[47] that: "Holistic and coordinated action across the peace-development-humanitarian nexus should prioritize "peace" as a critical element," and that this should be done through local women's organizations, as also noted by Lafrenière et al (2019). In a side event to the General Debate of the 2019 United Nations General Assembly, the Women's

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[42] Lafrenière *et al* (2019: 190/1).
[43] GPPAC (2020).
[44] CARE (2018).
[45] Development Initiatives (2020: 4).
[46] VOICE (2019).
[47] GPPAC (2020: 7).

International League for Peace and Freedom argued that the "WPS Agenda already embodies a cross-sectoral approach in line with SDG 5 on gender equality and 16 on peace."[48]

38. **Joint gender-sensitive needs assessment.** There is consensus in the literature reviewed and from those interviewed on the importance of gender-sensitive needs assessments serving as a starting point for gender-sensitive nexus programming.[49] Lafrenière et al make the same point noting that: "Policy commitments have been made, both through the IASC Gender Policy and the Grand Bargain to ensure 'joint and impartial needs assessments' which are 'unbiased, comprehensive, context-sensitive, timely and up-to-date.'"[50] However, this Review found that gender analysis did not always feed into gender-sensitive results statements or programming at country-level (see Section 5.5).

5.4 Gender mainstreaming in global and inter-agency coordination

39. Given how it cuts across multiple streams of work, which themselves contain multiple agencies and coordinating bodies, there are many stakeholders involved in, or who could be involved in, gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus (e.g., at headquarters (HQ): the JSC, IASC Gender Reference Group and Results Group 4, GenCaps, UNSDG, UN Department of Peace Operations, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, UN Women Coordination and Humanitarian Divisions, and the OECD-DAC Adherence Group). Gender advisors and focal points at regional and country-level can be added to this list. Coordinating these multiple stakeholders is a major challenge in itself.

40. The JSC was established to be the central United Nations mechanism for the promotion of greater coherence of humanitarian action and development in crises and transitions to long-term sustainable development and has also added peace to its mandate. The Terms of Reference for the JSC do not reference gender equality and, based on a review of meeting minutes, attention to gender mainstreaming in JSC meetings appears to be somewhat limited. Interviewees of this Review noted that to date the HQ coordinating bodies that focus on the nexus have not paid sufficient attention to gender equality, and those focusing on gender equality have not paid sufficient attention to the nexus. A synthesis of JSC reviews (2020: 1) found that: "Issues around prevention, peacebuilding, peace and security, and references to human rights and gender equality were not prominent in the reviews despite being at the root of the crises." At the country level, the Review also found that coordination mechanisms did not necessarily prioritize gender equality.

41. Within the United Nations system, UN Women was established with a mandate to lead, promote, and coordinate efforts to advance the full realization of women's rights and opportunities. It does so through a range of mechanisms, including the Inter Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE). IANWGE is a network of Gender Focal Points in United Nations offices, specialized agencies, funds, and programmes and is chaired by UN Women, and UN Women also serves as the Secretariat for the Network. The Network has played a central role in promoting gender equality throughout the United Nations system and in following up on the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and other gender-related recommendations emanating from other recent General Assembly special sessions, conferences, and summits, especially by ensuring effective cooperation and coordination throughout the UN system. The Network also

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[48] WILPF (2019: 1).
[49] E.g. JSC 2020; OECD-DAC 2019; World Bank and UN 2018; WPS 2019; UN-World Bank Partnership Framework 2017.
[50] 2019: 196.

monitors and oversees the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the programmatic, normative, and operational work of the UN system. Currently, all UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination member entities and Departments within the UN Secretariat receive invitations to the annual meeting of the IANWGE, which usually takes place in the first quarter of each year. The effectiveness of IANWGE has varied since its creation in 1996, but it has recently been reinvigorated (UN Women 2016) and is probably the strongest thematic network in the United Nations.[51] Thematic work is taken up by Working Groups; for example previously IANWGE had a Working Group on Security Council resolution 1325, which included 20 UN agencies and four NGO observers.

42. IANWGE is supported by other networks, particularly the network of the UN-SWAP, which also meets annually. The UN-SWAP has been the main instrument for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations for the past nine years.

43. UN Women, therefore, has the mandate to coordinate work on gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system in the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding spheres, as well as the mechanisms to do this. This Review therefore suggests actions for consideration concerning strengthened coordination of future work on gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process in Section 7, in the context of UN Women's UN coordination mandate.

5.5 Gender mainstreaming at country level

44. This Section summarizes the findings from the consultations in three countries – DRC, Sudan, and Somalia. For further details, please see Annexes 4 to 6, which include tables assessing the nexus/gender intersection in key strategic planning documents.

45. Documents reviewed included HNOs, HRPs, CCAs, UNDAFs or equivalent, and country-level gender equality strategies.

46. Reflection of gender equality tended to be stronger in UNDAFs, or their equivalent, than in HRPs. This finding is supported by more general analysis of gender mainstreaming (e.g. ECOSOC 2020, 2019). In HRPs, the disconnect between gender analysis and formulation of collective outcomes[52] is notable. Even where stronger gender analysis exists, it does not always guarantee gender mainstreaming in collective outcomes. As a result, what actually gets measured and reported will provide inadequate attention to GEEWG.

47. For example, in the DRC, the 2020 HNO gives attention to the gender needs of the affected population, and a women and girls empowerment approach is found in two sub-cluster sections – GBV and housing, land and property. However, while there is one collective outcome on GBV in the HRP, the discussion on the nexus makes no reference to GEEWG, and there are no gender-related indicators for the other three collective outcomes, even though the incorporation of a gender perspective is essential to achieve all of the remaining three collective outcomes (food security and nutrition, displacement, and access to basic services). The fact that there is no DRC

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[51] JIU (2019), UN Women (2016), and lead author's view, based on experience as the lead consultant on the UN-SWAP and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

[52] A collective outcome is a "concrete and measurable result that humanitarian, development and other relevant actors want to achieve jointly over a period of 3-5 years to reduce people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities and increase their resilience." (OCHA 2018: 2). Collective outcomes are a key strategic planning mechanism for humanitarian, development and peace actors agreeing on joint action.

UN-Gender Strategy is likely to constrain the mainstreaming of gender considerations within the HDP nexus. Furthermore, all evidence collected indicates that gender equality was inadequately mainstreamed in planning documents related to the Ebola and COVID-19 responses, both of which stretch across the triple nexus.

48. In the case of Somalia's 2017-2020 UN Strategic Framework, while there is some gender analysis, and gender equality is listed as one of three cross-cutting themes, none of the Strategic Priorities explicitly mention gender issues, including the fifth priority where there are clear key GEEWG implications: "Supporting socio-economic opportunities for Somalis leading to meaningful poverty reduction, access to basic social services and sustainable, inclusive and equitable development." One of the eight Priority Objectives does have a gender-targeted reference: "Preventing, protecting and mitigating the impact of conflict, taking into account specific needs of women and children" and the Strategic Framework does link its Strategic Priorities to SDG 5 on gender equality, but neither of these references is as important as including GEEWG at the strategic priority level. Those interviewed noted that the development of collective outcomes is difficult, and mainstreaming gender considerations into collective outcomes also poses challenges in relation to technical capacity.

49. Use of Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) is variable across the documents reviewed, which is a common finding from many reviews and evaluations (e.g. IAHE 2020, IOM 2021), although there is greater sex-disaggregation than previously. This offers an opportunity to both link SADD to a stronger gender analysis (IOM 2021) and translate this more fully into collective outcomes. There were almost no references to the potential transformative change that could occur as a result of mainstreaming gender equality more fully into the triple nexus. For example, in the Sudan HNO, there was adequate consideration of the root causes of gender inequality, but these were not linked to the triple nexus. Similarly, in the UNDAF, there is no discussion of the ways in which a focus on the triple nexus could be transformational vis-à-vis gender inequalities.

50. In terms of working through local organizations, out of the 11 key strategic planning documents reviewed, none referred to either participation of gender equality/women-led organizations in either the formulation of the strategic plan or as partners in implementation. This is clearly a major gap in the localization process and echoes the findings of Lafrenière et al (2019) noted above and is also noted in IOM (2021).

51. **Overall findings on these strategic planning documents are similar to findings on the literature on the nexus, with limited intersection between the nexus and GEEWG.** This is partly because the attention to GEEWG itself is somewhat limited, except in the case of GBV, a finding supported by the IAHE (2020). One reason for this may be the lack of attention paid to gender mainstreaming and the triple nexus in strategic planning guidance (see Table 1 above). A second reason, emphasized by interviewees, is that UN Women and gender specialists often do not have the resources and/or capacity to participate fully in collective strategic planning processes. Similarly, those interviewed at the United Nations headquarters level also emphasized difficulties participating in all of the coordination mechanisms. Language on GEEWG in the strategic plans tended to follow a typical pattern, using gender-blind language (beneficiaries, migrants, vulnerable populations) and/or including women and girls in a list of "vulnerable groups."

5.6 Reasons for the absence of nexus/gender intersections

52. The analysis in this section is relevant to the second question of this Review: "Key policy, governance, resource or other constraints that need to be overcome to achieve greater inclusion of GEEWG considerations into planning and implementation of the nexus agenda."

53. Typically, GEEWG evaluations and reviews highlight four factors that contribute to the lack of adequate attention to GEEWG mainstreaming: leadership/accountability, strategic planning, resources, and capacity.[53] Those interviewed identified all four factors. On accountability, they noted that none of the main gender-related United Nations system-wide accountability frameworks – the UN-SWAP, the complementary UNCT Performance Indicators on GEEWG, which constitute the accountability framework on GEEWG for the United Nations system, and the IASC gender accountability framework – refer to the triple nexus.[54] In relation to capacity, interviewees and recent reports all note the importance of establishing longer-term capacity to address root causes.[55] To help alleviate and address capacity gaps in humanitarian settings, the inter-agency GenCap and ProCap projects deploy senior expertise in support of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams for a period of up to three years. In 2020, Senior Gender Advisers under the GenCap project provided strategic and operational support to 15 different country-level contexts, of which 13 had inter-agency coordinated appeals.[56] **In addition to strengthening the system support offered by GenCap, further long term investments need to be made to ensure availability of gender expertise that can work across and deliver on the humanitarian-development-peace agenda.**

54. Resources, where mentioned by KIIs, were mainly emphasized in two ways. Firstly, there is an overall lack of funding on GEEWG in country-level responses, which hinders a focus on the nexus; and secondly, there is insufficient capacity and a heightened need for gender specialists at country level, as well as more effective gender mainstreaming. Strategic planning was mainly emphasized in relation to the development of collective outcomes at the country level (see Section 5.5).

55. However, given the extensive advocacy work carried out on GEEWG over the last 20 years, and the reflection of gender considerations throughout the WHS, the recent and ongoing improvement in the performance of the entire United Nations system on mainstreaming gender equality,[57] there are other factors that have led to a more significant absence of attention to gender mainstreaming in triple nexus processes, analysis of which supported the formulation of actions for consideration in Section 7. These include:

- **The need for a strengthened understanding of what the triple nexus means in practice, in particular at country level**.[58] As noted above, and in relation to question 1 of this Review, the implication for gender mainstreaming is that gender equality will need to be mainstreamed into a process on which there is not yet full consensus. The relative newness of the triple nexus concept and the addition of peace to the humanitarian-development continuum is a factor here. Historically, development actors have found it easier to mainstream gender equality than humanitarian actors, and despite the existence of the IASC

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[53] AfDB (2012); IAHE (2020); ECHO (2019).
[54] https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability
[55] E.g. IAHE (2020).
[56] In 2020, GenCap Senior Advisers supported humanitarian operations in the following countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, DRC, Haiti, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Whole of Syria operation [Turkey], Yemen, and Zimbabwe. In addition, GenCap supported the roll-out of the IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM).
[57] ECOSOC (2019, 2020),
[58] FAO (2020); UNICEF (2020).

Gender Policy, Handbook and the Gender and Age Marker, different understandings of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian action persist.[59]

- **The lack of a strategic vision and/or overarching strategic plan** as to what gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus means, and how it can be operationalized and accounted for.

- **The way in which the triple nexus/New Way of Working is conceptualized as a somewhat technical process.** Much triple nexus work appears to be conceptualized as a strategic planning and/or Results-Based Management process, such as around the development of collective outcomes. For example, the OCHA New Way of Working publication (which deals with the humanitarian-development nexus) does not include any discussion of gender equality (or human / women's rights) and defines the New Way of Working as: "working over multiple years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system, towards collective outcomes."[60] This is a somewhat typical strategic planning approach, and such approaches in the United Nations have tended to exclude gender mainstreaming, except where there are gender advocates with adequate strategic planning expertise actively involved.[61]

- **That coordinating bodies – including the JSC and IANWGE – have not, to date, paid adequate attention to mainstreaming gender considerations in the triple nexus.**

- **That existing gender accountability frameworks at headquarters and country level do not cover the triple nexus.**

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[59] IAHE (2020).
[60] OCHA (2017: 6), see also OCHA (2018), IASC(2020).
[61] UN Women (2020).

6. Conclusions

56. The first main conclusion is that there is very limited discussion of GEEWG in triple nexus documents and processes, and vice versa. This absence is substantially greater than in other United Nations processes, where there has been an improvement in gender mainstreaming over the last ten years. There was consensus among key informants that the United Nations system needs to improve in terms of mainstreaming gender considerations into the triple nexus, and that the goals of the triple nexus itself will not be achieved without adequate gender mainstreaming.

57. A second main conclusion is that there is no strategic vision and/or overarching framework for mainstreaming gender equality into the triple nexus process. Without this, initiatives are less likely to be effective, coherent and coordinated and add up to more than the sum of their parts.

58. A third main conclusion is that United Nations coordination structures at headquarters and country levels do not adequately promote gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process, and without this coordination, progress is likely to be limited.

59. In relation these main conclusions, there were two other conclusions:

- Reflection of gender equality in guidance documents is not adequate to give non-gender specialists a solid understanding of what mainstreaming gender perspectives in the triple nexus means in practice.

- The literature discussed in this Review, which includes a specific focus on GEEWG and the triple nexus, concentrates on four areas: localization and involvement of women led organizations, GBV, Women Peace and Security and joint needs assessments. In addition, the more general literature has identified areas, such as social protection and cash transfers, which have the potential to bridge the triple nexus, and which, to this end, have significant gender implications.

60. At the country level, consultations found that:

- Key planning documents inadequately reflect GEEWG in collective outcomes.

- There is a gap between sex-disaggregation of data and gender analysis, and a further gap between gender analysis and the formulation of collective outcomes.

- Language is often gender-blind (e.g., vulnerable groups).

- There is very limited focus on gender equality as an area that can support transformative change.

- There is consensus on the need for gender-responsive needs assessments.

61. In addition to the lack of a strategic vision and overarching strategic framework as to what gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus means, how it can be operationalized, and the need for stronger coordination mechanisms at headquarters level, the following other constraints were identified:

- There is a lack of capacity at both headquarters and country levels.

- The way in which the triple nexus is conceptualized as a somewhat technical process tends to exclude cross-cutting themes such as GEEWG.

- Existing gender accountability frameworks at headquarters and country level do not cover the triple nexus, meaning that it is unclear where accountability lies with respect to ensuring that gender considerations are mainstreamed into the nexus process.

7. Next steps

62. This Section responds to the Review questions 3 and 4: "What are some of the immediate and medium-term practical measures that IASC governance can undertake to address these constraints?" and "What initial steps could be taken to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in field implementation efforts across the nexus?" Given the findings of the Review and constraints identified, the practical measures suggested here as actions for consideration go beyond the IASC, to the United Nations system as a whole.

63. Based on extensively evaluated experience with the introduction of gender accountability frameworks across the United Nations – the UN-SWAP and the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard – both of which clarified for the United Nations system what accountability and gender mainstreaming mean in practice, this Review argues that a dedicated focus on gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process through headquarters level coordination and country level pilots would support an improved understanding of:

- What the nexus means in practice, e.g., through focusing on areas such as cash transfers, localization, GBV and social protection.
- What gender mainstreaming means in the triple nexus process.
- What transformational change means in the triple nexus context.

The Review arrived at two actions for consideration, one on coordination, and one on the country level pilots.

> **ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION 1: Coordination**
>
> **The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) should establish a resourced two-year Task Force to coordinate work on gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process at headquarters and country levels.**

64. UN Women has the coordination mandate for gender mainstreaming across the whole of the UN system, including humanitarian, development and peace pillars. IANWGE, chaired by UN Women, has membership from across the UN, and promotes gender mainstreaming according to decisions made by its membership. There is therefore already a coordinating structure in place to promote gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process.

65. Resourced in this case means one full-time P4 staff member dedicated to this role with an appropriate budget (e.g., for preparation of guidance and organization of meetings), to complement existing mainstreaming mechanisms. Without this resourcing, the Task Force is highly unlikely to function effectively.

Among the priorities for this Task Force are:

- Considering the development of a strategic vision and overarching strategic plan for gender mainstreaming in the triple nexus process;
- Ensuring consistent coordination and information flows across the various triple nexus stakeholders, including: the IASC Gender Reference Group; UNSDG Task Teams on Transition and Recovery and Gender Equality; regional and country level mechanisms for gender

equality, including Gender Theme Groups and issue-based coalitions and other coordination mechanisms at the regional level; and the OECD-DAC network;

- Strengthening and ensuring implementation of existing guidance in strategic planning documents. In particular, there should be guidance on joint gender analysis in Common Country Assessments so that these reflect humanitarian and peace dimensions; and

- Determining how accountability for gender mainstreaming should be strengthened, e.g. expanding existing accountability mechanisms, and including additional minimum standards in the UNCT-SWAP Scorecard and/or IASC Gender Accountability Framework. An example of a minimum standard is requiring that at least one collective outcome focuses specifically on GEEWG, and/or all other collective outcomes are gender mainstreamed, as appropriate and dependent on the country context.

The work of the Task Force should be reviewed at the end of two years to determine if it needs to be continued.

ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION 2: Pilots at the country level

Undertake resourced two-year pilots in two countries to determine:
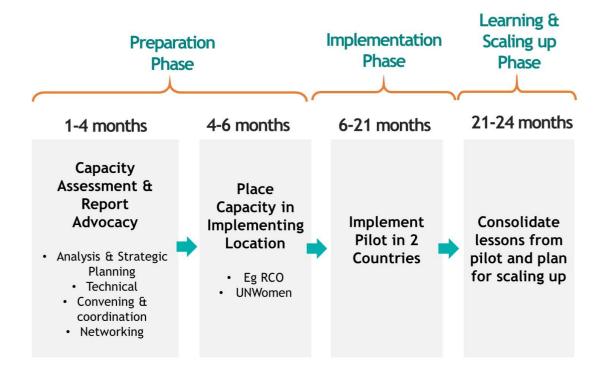
- What GEEWG mainstreaming in the triple nexus process actually means, dependent on the country context. This would focus on required levels of gender analysis, tying gender analysis more closely to sex-disaggregation of data, and to formulation and operationalization of collective outcomes;

- The level of capacity and resources required to achieve GEEWG mainstreaming;

- How to operationalize GEEWG mainstreaming in practice within and across humanitarian, development and peace action;

- How this can be scaled up across the system; and

- Ways in which representative women-led organizations and gender equality networks can be fully involved in the triple nexus process, including in a leadership role.

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66. The rationale for a two-year pilot is that putting in place appropriate capacity, analysing what gender mainstreaming in the triple process means, and learning lessons to promote scaling up, will require at least that amount of time. Two countries are recommended for pilots as this was what key informants thought would be feasible and would allow for comparison in different locations.

67. These pilots should be coordinated by the IANWGE Task Force in collaboration with relevant coordination and accountability mechanisms; be fully resourced including relevant staffing; and build on gender expertise and on-going work at the country level, including that of the Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap), and the IASC Results Group 4 engagement with 40+ countries undertaking a CCA and/or UNSDCF in 2021 to ensure that they take a nexus approach.

68. A graphic outlining the pilot steps is set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Outline for 2-year gender/nexus pilot

2 Year Gender Nexus Pilot

Preparation Phase | **Implementation Phase** | **Learning & Scaling up Phase**

1-4 months	4-6 months	6-21 months	21-24 months
Capacity Assessment & Report Advocacy • Analysis & Strategic Planning • Technical • Convening & coordination • Networking	**Place Capacity in Implementing Location** • Eg RCO • UNWomen	**Implement Pilot in 2 Countries**	**Consolidate lessons from pilot and plan for scaling up**

69. The pilots should be based on iterative planning and the country context – hence the 6-month preparation phase – in order to determine what capacity exists at country level, building on work by the GenCap. This is because country contexts and capacities vary considerably and it is difficult to have a one-size-fits-all solution.

70. As noted in the first column in Figure 1, the baseline capacity assessment should focus on at least the following areas:

- Advocacy with senior managers in the Government, United Nations, World Bank, civil society, that is those with the capacity to negotiate with senior managers about the rationale for including GEEWG in key planning processes and documents, and through programming cycles.

- Analytical and strategic planning as contained in HNOs, HRPs, UNDAFs, UNSDCFs (Cooperation Frameworks), ISFs and collective outcomes, that is the capacity to ensure that gender analysis is reflected in collective outcomes, that collective outcomes are gender-responsive, and that key strategic planning documents adequately reflect GEEWG.

- Technical level expertise to ensure that analysis translates into programming through relevant mechanisms, such as the clusters and UNCT implementation groups or equivalent, and that gender is mainstreamed throughout implementation, including tracking and reporting on results.

- Convening and coordination by both Gender Theme Groups or their equivalent and other national level stakeholders, including gender networks and experts in gender equality and humanitarian action, as well as Resident Coordinator Offices. This is a key function of the UN and it is important that there is in-country capacity to convene relevant stakeholders, for example when developing collective outcomes, who can influence strategic planning and plan implementation.

- Networking, which consists of bringing into the process relevant HDP stakeholders on an ongoing basis. This goes beyond convening and coordination to ensure that HDP stakeholders who focus on GEEWG can communicate and exchange information regularly.

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