

**Best Practices Conference on Decentralisation in
Ghana**

**Discussant's Comments on "Institutionalising
Gender Mainstreaming in a Decentralised
Framework"**

Miklin Hotel, 9th May 2007

**Presented by Mrs. Mary Mpereh,
National Development Planning Commission**

Outline of Presentation

1. Introduction
2. Analysis of Best Practices
3. Summary of Conclusions
4. Objectives for institutionalizing gender mainstreaming within A decentralized framework
5. Restating the Argument: What is the Best Strategy for institutionalizing Gender mainstreaming within a decentralized Framework?
6. The Role of the GDO
7. Conclusions/Way Forward

Introduction

"Together with introducing multi-party systems and consolidating systems of democratic representation and election, the decentralization to sub-national levels of government functions, decision-making authority and resources have been seen as instruments to pave the way for closer involvement of decision-making, for improving checks and balances, and ultimately for improving the public services in line with the and priorities of local communities"
Draft Comprehensive Decentralization Policy Framework

Decentralization in Ghana is aimed at:

1. Strengthening and expanding local democracy
2. Promoting local and social and economic development, thereby reducing poverty and increasing the choices of the people.

Guiding Principles

1. Ensuring participation of the people

The intended reform initiatives will deepen political and administrative systems and procedures for local representation, participation and transparency so as to ensure that people, especially women and vulnerable groups, can fully participate in decision-making

2. Improving public sector accountability
3. Strengthening district assemblies
4. Increasing public sector effectiveness

Introduction

"Any development that leaves a half of the population is doomed to fail"
Kofi Annan

1. Why the quest for Gender Inequality?
 - inequality undermines development
2. What have been the dividends for those who have targeted bridging the gender divide?
 - Rwanda
 - South Africa
 - Scandinavian Countries?
3. Ghana boasts of immense political will, (and rightly so) since independence, and the creation of NCWD (1972), MOWAC (2001), ratification of international conventions and HR instruments aimed at bettering the lot of women and enhancing gender equality
 - domestic legislation (Children's act, Domestic Violence act, the amended criminal code act, etc.
 - policy measures (AA Policy, National Gender and Children's Policy, Early childhood care and development Policy)
4. Implementation/results have been disappointing
 - "despite policies put in place by Governments and NGOs to make gender mainstreaming a reality, implementation has been disappointing. In many respects, Ghanaian women have made important strides in the Public Service....But in other ways, the position of women has not changed much" APRM Country Review Report"
5. **Conclusion: why is it important to institutionalize gender mainstreaming in a decentralized framework?**
 - Decentralization offers immense opportunities and possibilities, but as usual if gender is not institutionalized within a decentralized framework, the cultural constraints, which are translated into institutional biases will continue to militate against women's possibilities and opportunities within the decentralization process to change their quality of life, including their status.

Analysis of Best Practices

Criteria For Evaluation

1. "Institutional ownership" of the gender equality agenda
 - understanding of gender equality as a critical development agenda/issue?
 - commitment (e.g. political will, resources, (human/technical logistical),
 - procedures and culture :Recognition/acceptance and effectiveness of GDO's role? (catalytic presence)- e.g. participation in the planning process? Influencing of policy process
2. Impact on participation
3. Impact on quality of life

Analysis of Best Practices - MOWAC

MOWAC's mandate: spear-heading and coordinating gender responsive development and ensure the improvement of of the status of women and children.

Approach to mainstreaming:

- Horizontal and vertical; sought to change and influence understanding and commitment, organizational structures, procedures and culture at MDA and MMDA levels; introduce catalytic presence with GDOs; provide analytical expertise in the form of training for Chief directors and GDOs
- Challenges:
 - Regional Officers but no official presence at the District
 - Proxy presence through GDOs
 - Limited capacity in terms of staff, expertise and resources
 - GPRS and gender mainstreaming: the way forward

Analysis of Best Practices - DISCAP

Objective

- Gender mainstreaming in 3NR
- Training of DAs in gender
- Results- best practice, challenges

Approach

Challenges

Questions:

1. How has the presence of GDOs influenced the Planning process?
2. What are the gains as far as men and women are concerned

Analysis of Best Practices

- Girl Child Education - Dr. Gariba

Summary of Conclusions

- Summary of Analysis

Objectives For Institutionalizing Gender Mainstreaming Within A Decentralized Framework

Decision-making for ultimate improvement in quality of life is the core objective for Institutionalising Gender Mainstreaming in a Decentralised Framework

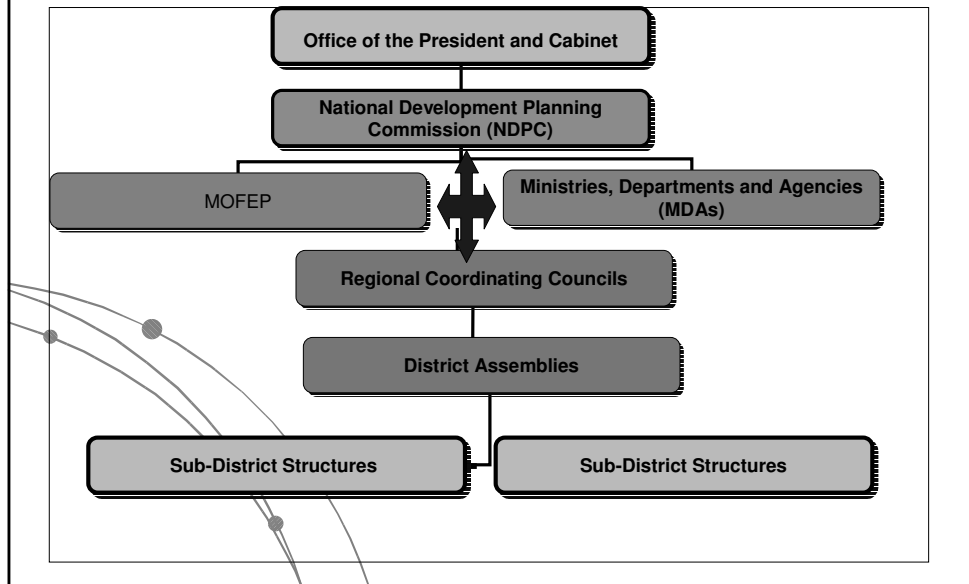
- Where are these decision-making points and what are the processes used?
Decentralized Planning System as the Decision-making process

Planning as a dialogue

Planning as a dialogue among stakeholders where policy choices are made as a basis for resource allocation, implemented and monitored for desired outcomes.

- To the extent that women and/or their representatives do not have a voice in the planning process to influence policy choices, resource allocation and engage local government structures for accountability, on a consistent basis, which translates into improvements in their position and conditions, gender mainstreaming cannot be said to have been institutionalized.
- How can we achieve this?
 - Policy and legal environment
 - Institutional structures and processes
 - Stakeholders

The Decentralized Development Planning System in Ghana



The Decentralized Development Planning System in Ghana

- **National Level Planning**

At the national level the body in charge of planning is the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) which is basically in charge of policy formulation, preparation of national development plans and budget, coordination of sectoral ministries/ agencies and the preparation of guidelines for district level planning.

- At the national level in addition, line sectoral ministries, departments and agencies also prepare sector plans following guidelines provided by NDPC. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) has a special relationship with NDPC with regard to the preparation of Medium Term Framework (Medium Term Expenditure Framework), fiscal and financial strategies with guidelines provided by NDPC Regional Level Planning

The body in charge of planning is called the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC). Each of the ten regions has a Regional Coordinating Council which is coordinating rather than political and policy making body. The RCCs have the task of co-ordinating the development plans and programmes of the district planning authorities and harmonizing these with national development policies and priorities for approval by NDPC.

They are also expected to provide the district planning authorities with such information and data as are necessary to assist them in the preparation of the district development plans. It monitors, coordinates and evaluates the performance of the District Assemblies in the region.

- **District Level Planning**

A Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly is created as administrative and development decision-making body in the district and basic units of government assigned with deliberative, legislative as well as executive functions and constituted as the Planning Authority for the district. Within the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly, two bodies are in charge of planning. These are the Town &

- **Planning Units at Regional, District and Sectoral Levels**

The National Development Planning System Act, 1994, Act 480, which established the decentralized planning system, also provided for the creation of regional Planning Co-ordinating Units for RCCs, District Planning Co-ordinating Units (DPCUs) for DAs, and Policy Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (PPMED) for sector ministries. These planning units for the RCCs and DAs, and the PPMED for the sector ministries perform all the planning functions of the respective planning authorities at the regional, district and sectoral levels (MLGRD, 1996).

The Decentralized Development Planning System in Ghana

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Legal Framework for Decentralized Planning In Ghana

- **The Civil Service Law, 1993;**

The aim of this law is to restructure the public administration system by creating new institutions, redefining roles and procedures in order to make the service more responsive to the development needs of Ghana. Part V of the Civil Service Law, for instance, is devoted entirely to decentralization and local government issues.

- **The Local Government Act, 1993;**

The law establishes 110 districts (currently 138), municipal and metropolitan assemblies together with urban, zonal, town councils and unit committees. It also created the regional co-ordinating councils as planning authorities.

- **The National Development Planning Commission Act, 1994; and**

This Act establishes and specifies the composition, roles, functions and authority of the National Development Planning Commission, as the highest co-ordinating body of development planning functions in Ghana.

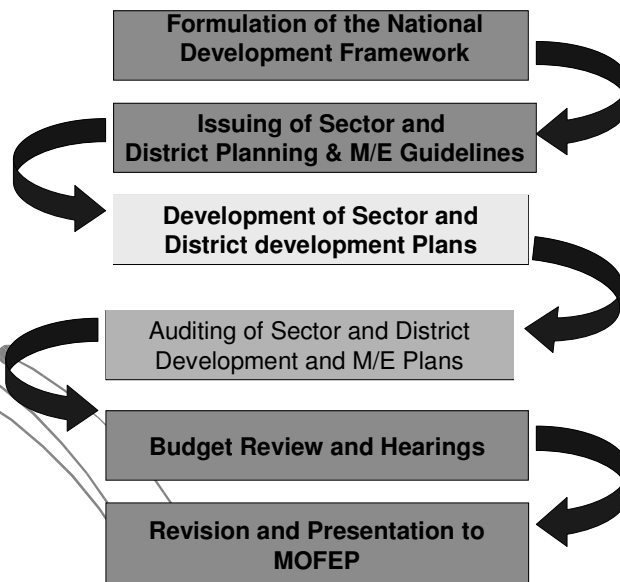
- **The National Development Planning (Systems) Act, 1994.**

This Act specifies institutions and agencies which are planning authorities, their roles and functions, as well as procedures by which planning authorities can carry out their development planning functions

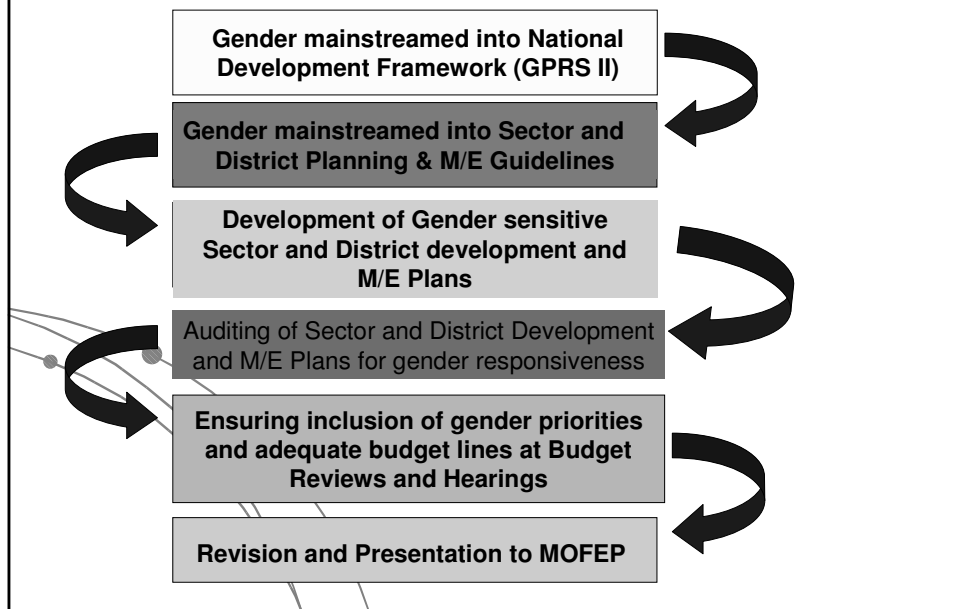
Functions of NDPC

- **The Legal framework relating to NDPC is:**
- The National Development Planning Commission Act, 1994 (Act 479), which formally establishes the NDPC under the Office of the President, and
- The National Development Planning (Systems) Act, 1994 (Act 480), which makes the NDPC, the national co-ordinating body of the newly-established Decentralized Development Planning System in Ghana.
- **Functions of NDPC**
- NDPC has been established to:
- Advise the President of the Republic of Ghana (and Parliament upon request) on development policy and strategy;
- To prepare and ensure the effective implementation of approved national development plans and strategies and
- Coordinate economic and social activities country wide in a manner that will ensure accelerated and sustainable development of the country and improvement in the standard of living for all Ghanaians.
- Monitoring and evaluation

The Planning and Budgeting Processes

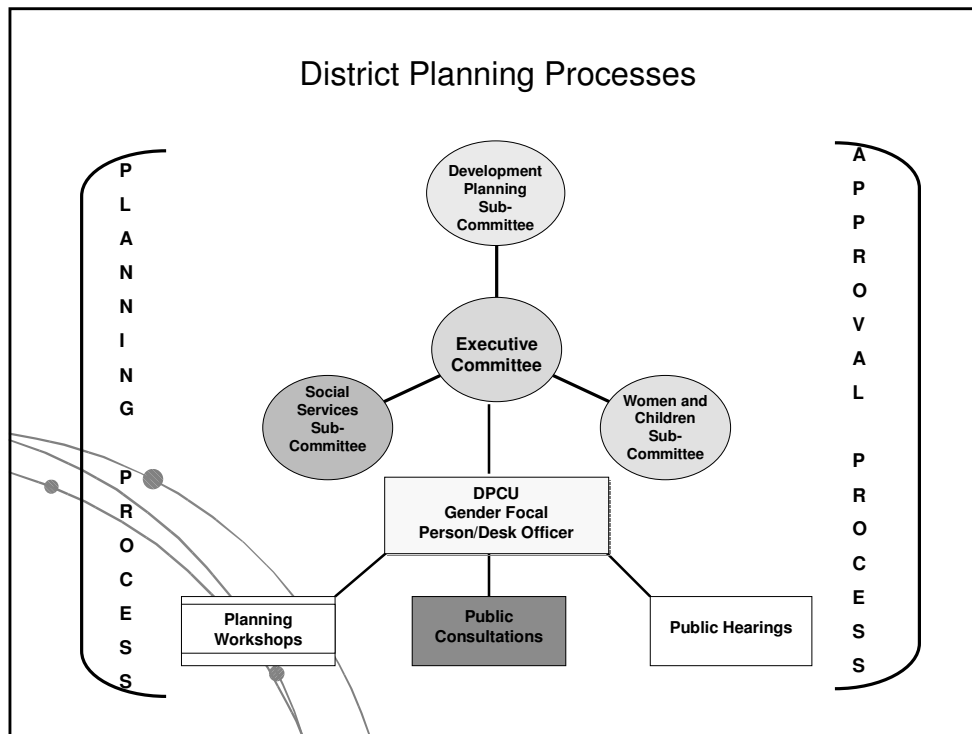


Engendering National Development Planning



Spaces for Engagement in the Planning Process for Ensuring Gender Mainstreaming

- **Formulation of a National Development Framework**
 - Cross-Sectoral Planning Groups
 - Public Consultations
- **Sector (Policy) Formulation/Planning**
 - Consultations
- **District Level Planning**
 - Consultations//Planning Workshops/ Public Hearing/
- **(Programming Phase) National and District Budgeting Processes**
- **Monitoring and Evaluation - CSO representation on:**
 - National monitoring evaluation groups
 - Regional monitoring and evaluation groups
 - District monitoring and evaluation groups
- **Development Communications System**
 - Dissemination of development information
 - Promotion of continual dialogue between citizens and reporting of feedback to planning units



- ### Restating the Argument
- What is the Best Strategy for institutionalizing Gender mainstreaming within a decentralized Framework?**
1. Overall policy and legislative framework; HRD; Fiscal
 2. Answering to the decision-making impetus- the centrality of participation in the National Planning Process and agenda
 3. Capacity building – not training – nor any kind of training
 4. No project specific interventions, but national agenda- especially for the MDBS
 5. Financing gender mainstreaming - Emphasis on MDDBS- good, but other funding streams as well
 6. MDA monopoly on implementation must break
 7. Being Strategic
 - Institutional collaboration
 - GDOs/proxies – a must or not? – role of allies

Coordinating Role of the GDO

- Bridging the deficit, strategically promoting equality to prevent slippage in the future
- Gender mainstreaming accountability with Planning units, with MOWAC (GDOs) providing technical backstopping
- Planning Phase – Membership/Participation in work of District Planning teams
- Mobilization of critical stakeholders to fill up the policy spaces provided at each level of planning
- Facilitation of proper targeting at Programming phase
- Providing (proactively) technical support for the inclusion of women in emerging opportunities (this may necessitate some prior investments)
- Coordination/monitoring of implementation of district gender programming and implementation
- Capacity Building for implementing actors
- Reporting to NDPC and MLGRD as the case may be for ensuring corrective actions

Recommendations

- Systematic agenda- if MDDBS can ensure that, so be it
- Government of Ghana and other stakeholders to specify the benchmarks of progress in achieving gender equality and mainstreaming
- Study institutional mandates, work with, and avoid unnecessary turf battles
- DP's help promote that and support a coherent national agenda as opposed to specific project support



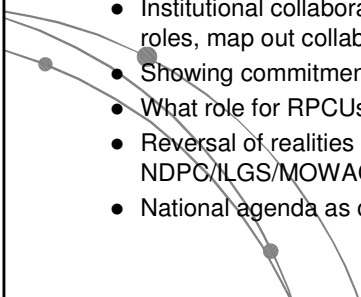
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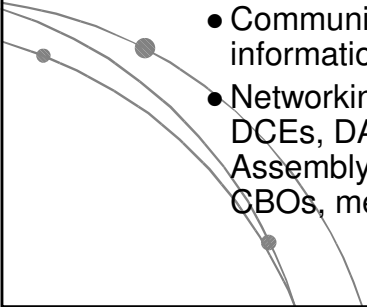
Analysis of Best Practices - MOWAC

- Are current institutional arrangements at the district level sufficient to achieve the GPRS directive of gender mainstreaming?
- What do we have (to do?) at the district level? GDOs

Evaluation

Being Strategic

- Tensions – creating gender inequality? Who takes care of the men?
 - Institutional collaboration vrs. Doing it alone? Study all LIs, understand roles, map out collaborative strategies
 - Showing commitment in terms of all funding streams
 - What role for RPCUs? And by extension Regional Directors?
 - Reversal of realities - Institutional capacity building and training – e.g. NDPC/ILGS/MOWAC
 - National agenda as opposed to Project specific interventions
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- Engagement with the institutions, powers that be
 - Spaces and voice – TACs;
 - Policy priorities
 - Resource allocation
 - Mobilization of grassroots in establishing priorities
 - Communications/engagement - Role of information, skills
 - Networking /collective action of stakeholders – DCEs, DAs, DPCU, RPCU, Assemblymen/women; gender networks, CBOs, men, women