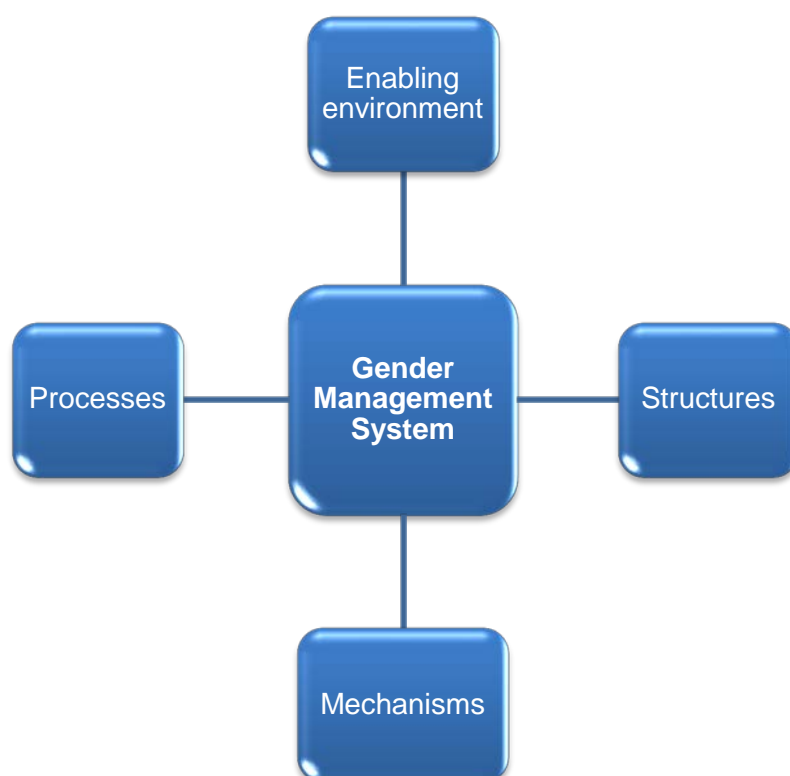# Gender management system

To achieve gender equality and effective gender mainstreaming, a Gender Management System (GMS) is required. A GMS is an integrated network of structures, mechanisms and processes designed to enable greater gender-awareness; increase the number of women in decision-making roles; facilitate the formulation of gender-sensitive policies, plans, programmes / projects, and promote the advancement of gender equality in civil society.

A GMS aims to advance gender equality and equity by promoting political will – forming stakeholder partnerships, building capacity and sharing good practice. It adopts a stakeholder approach to gender mainstreaming. A GMS is based on three broad principles:

- *Empowerment;* having control over the decisions and issues that affect one's life, in particular, having representation in decision-making bodies and control over the distribution of resources;
- *Integration;* a systemic, holistic approach to mainstreaming, the transformation of the structures within societies that create and perpetuate gender and other inequalities; and
- *Accountability;* taking responsibility to ensure that relevant action is taken and commitments are met to effect change.

These principles are applied to four pillars of gender mainstreaming:

Enabling environment refers to aspects such as political will, a legislative and administrative framework, the active involvement of civil society, adequate human and financial resources, and women in decision-making positions at all levels.

Structures refer to the lead agency (which initiates and strengthens the GMS institutional arrangements, provides overall co-ordination and monitoring, and carries out advocacy, communications, manages media relations, and reporting. It also refers to the management structures necessary to drive the implementation of gender mainstreaming such as providing leadership for the implementation of the GMS; defining broad operational

policies, indicators of effectiveness, and timeframes for implementation; and monitoring its performance.

Mechanisms mean that which can be used to operationalise gender mainstreaming, such as gender analysis (including the Gender Mainstreaming Manual and specific mainstreaming tools), gender training and education, a management information system, and performance appraisal system.

Processes refer to setting up the GMS structure and mechanisms as well as developing and implementing gender action plans.

Additional reading:

∗ Commonwealth Secretariat, *Gender Management System Handbook* online at http://eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0803/ID30031.pdf