



## Handout: Gender –related Terms and Definitions



**Sex** refers to the biological differences between males and females. Sex differences are concerned with males' and females' physiology.

**Gender** refers to the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being women and men. The social definitions of what it means to be a woman or a man vary among cultures and change over time. Gender is a sociocultural expression of particular characteristics and roles that are associated with certain groups of people with reference to their sex and sexuality.

**Gender Equity** is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must be taken to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field.

**Gender Equality** is the state or condition that affords women and men equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, and resources.

**Gender Integration** refers to strategies applied in program assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation to take gender norms into account and to compensate for gender-based inequalities.

**Gender Mainstreaming** is the process of incorporating a gender perspective into policies, strategies, programs, project activities, and administrative functions, *as well as into the institutional culture of an organization.*

**Women's Empowerment** means improving the status of women to enhance their decisionmaking capacity at all levels, especially as it relates to their sexuality and reproductive health.

**Constructive Men's Engagement** involves men in actively promoting gender equity with regard to reproductive health; increases men's support for women's reproductive health and children's well being; and advances the reproductive health of both men and women.

**Homophobia** is the fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuals or homosexual behavior or cultures. Homophobia also refers to self-loathing by homosexuals, as well as the fear of men or women who do not live up to society's standards of what it is to be a "true man" or "true woman."

**Heterosexism** is the presumption that everyone is heterosexual and/or the belief that heterosexual people are naturally superior to homosexual and bisexual people.