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UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Sixth African Regional Conference on Women
on Mid-Term Review of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action

22- 26 November 1999
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A. Attendance and organisation of work

1. The *Sixth African Regional Conference on Women* was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 22 to 26 November 1999 for the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action (PFA). His Excellency, Dr. Negasso Gedada, President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, formally opened the conference. Mme. Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, the Chairperson of the Fifth Regional Conference, presided over the opening ceremony. Statements were delivered by Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa; Ms. Angela King, United Nations Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; Ambassador Habib Dentum, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU); and Ambassador Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

2. The conference was attended by government and NGO representatives of the following member States of the Commission: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

3. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the African Development Bank (ADB) were represented.

4. Other participants came from the following United Nations bodies and specialised agencies: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organisation (WHO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (JON/HIV/AIDS), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS) and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

5. The following were the intergovernmental organisations represented at the conference: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East Africa Co-operation (EAC), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Pan African Institute for Development in Eastern and Southern Africa (PAID-ESA) and Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI).

6. Also present were observers from the following member States of the United Nations and bilateral agencies: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Japan, Greece Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Netherlands, Palestine, Spain, United Kingdom, United States of America, Canadian International Agency (CIDA), Italian Development Co-operation Office, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the British Council and German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

7. The international non-governmental organisations that had observer status at the conference included: Femmes Africa Solidarité, Public Services International, Conférence des organisations non-gouvernementales, Commission Africaine des Droits de l'homme et des peuples, Confédération internationale des syndicats libres, Commission on the Status of Women, Good Shepherd Sisters, Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women, Centre for Women's Global Leadership, International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAP), Gender and Development Training Centre, Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO), International Alert, International Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (IFWE), One World Action, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Soroptimist International, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), ENDA-SYNFEV, Centre for the Strategic Initiative of Women, Coalition contre le trafic des femmes - Afrique, Women Connect, Pacific Institute for Women's Health, Marche Mondiale des Femmes, International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Association for Progressive Communication of Women Affairs, and Partnership Africa/ Canada.

8. The following regional non-governmental organisations also sent representatives to the conference: Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), Pan-African Women Organisation (PAWO), African Information Society-Gender Working Group (AIS-GWG), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), Union Africaine des Femmes Parlementaires, African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE), Council for Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa (CEEWA) and Eastern African Subregional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI).

B. Opening statements (agenda item 1)

9. In her opening remarks, the Chairperson of the Fifth African Regional Conference on women, Her Excellency Mme. Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, welcomed participants to the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women and conveyed the best wishes of the President of Senegal. She noted that the primary objectives of the conference included undertaking a mid-decade review and assessment of the level of implementation of the Regional and Global Platforms for Action; contributing to the UN Special Session - Beijing + 5; and identifying a regional African common position for the next five years. In reference to the various implementation mechanisms at the global, regional and national levels, she underlined the need to identify new priorities to deal with the problem of increasing poverty. She observed that the context of the twentieth century poses many challenges among which are globalisation of the world economy, advances in the fields of science, technology and information, widespread conflicts and environmental degradation. Consequently, despite all the achievements of the last five years since Beijing, many challenges still remain.

10. Mme. Ndiaye thanked the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for the warm welcome extended to the delegates in Addis Ababa. She also thanked the following dignitaries for their support: Mme. Compaore, the First Lady of Burkina Faso and Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, the First Lady of Nigeria; Ms. Angela King, Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women; Mr. K.Y. Amoako, the Executive Secretary of ECA for his support and commitment to African women in particular and gender issues in general; Ms. Josephine Ouedraogo and her team; Mrs. G. Mongella for her continued interest in African women, and His Excellency the Secretary-General of the OAU for his interest in the development of African women as evidenced by the creation, in collaboration with the ECA, of the African Women's Committee for Peace and Development. Mme. Ndiaye concluded her address by announcing the recent appointment of Ms. Rose Odera of Kenya, as President of PREPCOM for the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations scheduled for the year 2000.

11. In opening the conference, His Excellency, Dr. Negasso Gedada, President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia welcomed participants to Addis Ababa and to the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women. He pointed out that promoting the advancement of women required commitment on the part of all governments. In this regard, he reiterated the commitment of his Government to promoting the full participation of women in development. The President stated that Ethiopia has appropriate structures and institutions to ensure gender mainstreaming in national policies and programmes. He underlined the vital role played by women in Africa's socio-economic development and called for governments to formulate policies aimed at meeting women's needs.

12. The President emphasised that the Ethiopian Constitution targets the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and that the country has a national policy on women that is aimed at institutionalising equal rights for both genders. Furthermore, there are appropriate structures in the country's sector ministries to ensure that gender issues are taken into account in all development programmes. Despite these achievements, he pointed out that Ethiopia, like many other African countries, lacked peace and stability because of inter- and intra-state conflicts that continue to sap the energies and resources of the people. African countries must therefore be united in their effort to combat the enemies of peace without which the achievement of gender equality would be in vain.

13. In concluding his address, the President specified that there are two areas in which women have major roles to play namely, in the containment of armed conflicts and in efforts aimed at confronting the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. Their role in these areas is crucial since it is women and children who are the most affected by armed conflicts and the spread of HIV/AIDS. He reiterated Ethiopia's commitment to work in partnership with other African States to make gender equity and equality a reality.

14. In his statement, Mr. K. Y. Amoako, the Executive Secretary of ECA, welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked those involved in the preparation of the conference, particularly the staff of ECA's African Centre for Women under the leadership of Ms. J. Ouedraogo. He thanked His Excellency, Dr. Negasso Gedada, President of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia for his insightful remarks, and the Government of Ethiopia for continuing support for the work of the Economic Commission for Africa. He also thanked the Governments of Canada and France for their financial support in organising the conference.

15. The Executive Secretary said that although the Beijing era was a special time for African women and for those men wishing to see African women move forward, major challenges still remained in attaining gender equality and in expanding choices for women. Key among these was the need to respond to the challenges of the HIV/AIDS scourge that has affected women in many ways. He also noted that women in Africa were still deprived of land and inheritance, and lacked equal access to education and training. This has led to significant disparities in enrolments, literacy and dropout rates due mainly to early marriages, teenage pregnancy, inappropriate school environments, inadequate infrastructure, negative attitudes to girls' education, and limited financial resources.

16. He called for greater efforts in moving women into leadership and decision-making positions, in establishing institutional arrangements to monitor implementation of the Platforms at the national level and in involving women in conflict prevention and resolution. He requested national governments to put in place mechanisms for collating gender-disaggregated data in national accounts.

17. In concluding, Mr. Amoako appealed for four types of interventions: first, in renewed efforts to formulate and implement policies that respond to the different needs of women and men; second, in efforts aimed at monitoring progress; third, in approaches that link performance to accountability; and fourth, in wider networking and co-ordination throughout Africa. He called for greater involvement of NGOs and the media in promoting gender equality, and for inclusion of academia, the business sector and the youth in future deliberations.

18. In her address, Ms. Angela King, the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, said it was an honour for her to be present at this important Regional Conference to review the regional implementation of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action. She paid tribute to his Excellency, the President of Ethiopia for the interest and support he had demonstrated for the conference. She also thanked the Executive Secretary, Mr. Amoako for his consistent commitment to the empowerment of women in the region, and Ms. Ouedraogo and her staff for the excellent arrangements made for the conference.

19. In reference to the work of conference, Ms. King noted that the meeting would look objectively at what had been achieved since the Beijing and Dakar Platforms were adopted and would reflect on what needed to be accomplished in the future. She observed that the momentum occasioned by the forthcoming Special Session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the progress made to implement the Platforms would help in stocktaking. In this connection, early indications from the review and appraisal carried out in 124 countries showed that women had made remarkable gains in health, education, and in recognition of their human rights. Despite this progress however, much remained to be done in the areas of poverty eradication, illiteracy, unemployment, inheritance rights, violence against women, reproductive health, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and in access to decision-making.

20. Ms. King highlighted the roles played by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), ECA, and Member States through the OAU and by NGOs in keeping gender equality at the top of the African development agenda. In collaboration with UNIFEM, DAW had been implementing some of the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in the twelve critical areas in the Beijing Platform for Action. In addition, the

Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the OAU First Ministerial Conference on Human Rights in Africa had specifically urged member States to eliminate discrimination against women and abolish cultural practices that were harmful to women and children. Likewise, the Ouagadougou Declaration had condemned female genital mutilation (FGM) and made specific recommendations in terms of legal, advocacy and community-level action to be taken for its elimination. The NGOs, she said, had been vital in energising debates on the twelve areas and had played a significant role in monitoring commitments by Governments and States to the CEDAW Convention.

21. Regarding the future, Ms. King noted that as the meeting reviewed the track record on achievements towards gender equality, it needed to be fully aware of the new challenges arising from the current global realities. These were marked by a shift in macroeconomic policy towards privatisation, liberalisation, deregulation and lower public spending. She underlined the challenge of ensuring that "social programmes" are translated into tangible investments to develop the economic and productive capacities of women. Since peace and human security were vital in achieving the twin goals of economic growth and expansion of human capabilities, she stated that women should be central actors with men in any peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts in the region.

22. In conclusion, Ms King reminded participants of their unique role in framing the challenges, opportunities and solutions for building an inclusive society based on social justice and equality for women, men and youth of the region. She pledged the support of the Inter-agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and of DAW to their efforts and looked forward to their advice and guidance and to the African Plan of Action that the conference would adopt.

23. In his statement, the Assistant Secretary-General of the OAU, Ambassador Habib Dentum, welcomed all delegates on behalf of the Secretary-General of OAU, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim. He said it was a pleasure for him to be at the conference since it would be discussing the future of Africa's women in the political and social affairs of Africa in the twenty-first century. He thanked the ECA team and the African Centre for Women for their role in organising the conference. Ambassador Dentum pointed out that the conference was a part of the Beijing + 5 preparatory activities and it offered a unique opportunity to look critically at the past so as to better envision the future. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to establish a framework for a realistic and concrete programme of action to ensure that women would participate more effectively in the political, social and economic advancement of the continent.

24. He then highlighted the contribution made by OAU in fulfilling its role in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms. In this regard, Ambassador Dentum affirmed that the total participation of women in the development process had been recognised since the founding of OAU. Key OAU initiatives included the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. He said that these initiatives would have yielded concrete results had much of the continent not been embroiled in almost three decades of armed conflict, which had greatly affected women and children. The Ambassador said that ECA and OAU recognised the important role women could play in conflict prevention and had therefore established the African Women Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD). It was established to give women the opportunity to contribute to conflict prevention, management and resolution. He indicated that without peace, security and stability, there could be no

sustainable social and economic development in Africa. This underscored the need for AWCPCD and all organisations to play an active role in building a continent free of conflicts.

25. In his concluding remarks, he reminded participants that building a strong African continent able to respond effectively to the challenges on the threshold of the twenty-first century, and in the context of globalisation, would require the efforts of both men and women.

26. The Secretary-General of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, and President of Advocacy for Women in Africa (AWA), Ms. Gertrude Mongella, stated that the conference provided a unique opportunity to examine the progress made since Beijing on the 12 critical areas of concern for achievement of gender equality. She observed that the partnership between governments, international and regional organisations and civil society had grown stronger since Beijing. She urged women to work also in partnership with men towards the goal of gender equality based on the understanding that the changing dynamics of gender roles and relationships have a significant impact on development outcomes. She emphasised the importance of women's role in peacemaking and conflict resolution and noted that critical landmarks had been achieved in a number of areas. These included the contribution of women in business and politics who, by networking and lobbying, had kept the agenda on women alive. They also included the formation of mechanisms for follow-up actions on women's human rights; the presence of subregional initiatives such as the SADC Declaration on Women and Development signed by Heads of State and Government; and the growth in the capacity and coverage of African NGOs.

C. Election of the Conference Bureau (agenda item 2)

27. Following the consultations of the accredited African ambassadors in Addis Ababa on the composition of members of the new bureau, the conference agreed that official positions in the bureau would be as follows:

Chairperson	Congo
First Vice-Chairperson	Algeria
Second Vice-Chairperson	Malawi
Third Vice-Chairperson	Uganda
Rapporteur	Guinea

D. Adoption of the Conference Agenda

28. The conference adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the conference
2. Election of the conference bureau
3. Progress reports of Dakar +5
4. Presentation of the process of evaluation
5. Evaluation workshops, one for each of the twelve thematic areas of the Dakar/Beijing Platforms for Action
6. Special Forum on Peace
7. Presentation of the outcomes of the twelve workshops
8. Adoption of the Regional Plan of Action for the next five years

9. Adoption of the modalities for Africa's participation at the Global Mid-Term Review (Beijing +5)
10. Adoption of the Conference Declaration
11. Any other business
12. Closing of the conference

E. Account of proceedings

Progress reports on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action (agenda item 3)

Report by African Governments

29. ECA, through the African Centre for Women (ACW) was mandated to follow up and support implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and report to the United Nations Secretariat. The Report by African Governments that was prepared by ACW as one of the working document of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women was a synthesis of the National Reports evaluating implementation that were received from member States.
30. The summary of the Synthesis was presented by Her Excellency, Ms. Neziha Zarrouk, Minister in Charge of Women and Family Affairs. Thirty-four of the 43 National Reports that ACW received before October 31 1999 were based on National Plans of Action. The thirty reports showed, furthermore, that 20 countries had entrusted the responsibility of implementing relevant policies and the Plan of Action to a Ministry in charge of Women Affairs. Five other countries had given this responsibility to a Ministry in charge of Social Affairs and Women Affairs, or Health, etc. or to a technical "Division", while 3 countries had delegated the task to a Bureau in charge of Women Affairs. Four countries had a structure called a "Committee", "Commission" or "Council". The remaining country reports were based on national programmes derived from the document, *National Policy Guidelines for the Advancement of Women*. These national programmes were implementing national policies for the advancement of women.
31. The percentage of national budgets allocated to financing the advancement of women remained very low and external funding comprised the most important component of the resources available for this task. This partly explained the choices governing the priority areas of individual States. In this regard, 33 countries selected the fight against poverty and promotion of health as priority areas, while 32 opted for education; 27 chose promotion of the fundamental rights of women as the priority area, while 16 focused on the economic empowerment of women as the critical area of concern. It was clear, nevertheless, that the four major priority areas were poverty, health, education and the promotion of women's human rights.
32. Several countries had adopted poverty-reduction policies, programmes and plans with specific initiatives aimed at alleviating the poverty of women through capacity building and the revision of laws and administrative practices that discriminate against women. The most noteworthy activities are related to promotion of women's access to credit. In the area of health, actions undertaken were intended to achieve the following: reduce maternal and infant

mortality rates; reduce cases of FGM and other practices that were harmful to the health of women and girls; address the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic; increase access to primary health care; provide sexual and reproductive health services; support family planning efforts; and cater for the training of health workers. In the education sector, there had been significant advances, especially with regard to the education of girls and women and establishment of women-focused literacy programmes. In the area of human rights, governments had begun to revise legal texts and to carry out constitutional and legislative reforms.

33. Five years is a relatively short period in which to achieve sustainable changes. Thus, the achievements indicated in the National Reports constituted important steps in achieving gender equality. In a number of countries, there had been specific constraints that had impeded these efforts. They included inadequate allocation of human, technical and financial resources to the national mechanisms in charge of women affairs; the low status accorded to mechanisms in charge of women's advancement; negative beliefs and practices towards women; societal resistance to the very concept of equality between men and women; lack of personnel trained in gender analysis; under-involvement of certain national actors; conflicts and social unrest; difficulty in co-ordinating the activities of various sectors; existence of a multitude of sectoral plans of action and lack of harmonisation of these plans with the National Plan of Action; lack of data disaggregated by sex; the devastating impact of structural adjustment policies on the most vulnerable social groups, especially women; lack of enforcement of legislation and regulations; the non-existence or weakness of mechanisms responsible for follow up and evaluation; and strong dependence on external finance for implementing the National Plans of Action.

34. Popular culture remained stereotyped although there had been some progress in sensitising the public through the media on this drawback. NGOs had also been active in sensitisation and advocacy activities aimed at eradicating cultural practices that hinder the advancement of women and girl children. To ensure improved implementation of National Plans of Action, it was necessary to define precisely the mandate and the framework of the structural mechanisms for promoting women's concerns. It was also vital to provide adequate human and financial resources and create a sustainable project and programme financing system. In addition, the gender perspective should be integrated into national planning at the levels of policy, projects and programmes and in budgetary allocations. Governments should also enforce laws and follow up and evaluate the projects and programmes that are under National Plans of Action. Furthermore, governments should recognise the need for improved communication among different partners and harmonise their activities. Lastly, all African countries should ratify the international legal instruments concerning women and incorporate these in national legislation. Particularly, they should apply the quota system as recommended by the United Nations to achieve more female representation in decision-making positions.

Report of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

35. The report presented by the NGO representative Ms. Gladys M. Mutukwa, Chairperson of WILDAF, was the result of consultations by a Taskforce comprising eight regional NGOs from 40 African countries. She regretted that many NGOs had not been able to participate due to financial constraints. However, since NGOs were participating as equal partners at the conference for the first time, she called on all the representatives to participate actively in all fora. The NGO report highlighted the trends over the five-year period since Dakar and Beijing, the obstacles faced and the major recommendations for the way forward. It examined these

issues in relation to each of the 12 critical areas of concern. The report noted that the global trade and economic reforms were not people-centred and that this was leading to increased impoverishment and disempowerment of women. It expressed concern about the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the rate at which it continued to affect women. It also pointed out that environmental impact assessments of rapid industrialisation were overlooking specific effects on the biological, social and cultural wellbeing of women. In addition, misappropriation and mismanagement of funds were reinforcing the marginalization of Africa in general and its women in particular.

36. Despite these shortcomings, NGOs observed that the progress made constitutes an era of hope for the advancement of women. Although the images of women in popular culture remain stereotyped, there has been some progress in correcting this drawback through the media. The NGOs expressed the urgent need to strengthen national capacities to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms through adequate constitutional, legislative and financial provisions.

Report of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)

37. Given that the Platforms for Action aspired to the total eradication of all forms of discrimination against women in all spheres of life, OAU reaffirmed its awareness of the important role and contribution of women to the stability, progress and development of Africa. Further, OAU noted that women's full and effective participation on the basis of equality was a precondition for durable peace and stability. Its assessment of achievements in contributing to the improved status of women was pegged to specific areas of the Platforms for Action. In the economic arena, the organisation's efforts had led to the signing of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Article 75 of the Treaty called for a more active role for women in continental processes. The organisation's declarations, such as the Declaration on the AIDS Epidemic in Africa, reflected concerns in the area of health. In the sphere of education, it had hosted the Conference on the Empowerment of Women through Functional Literacy. OAU's strategy for the way forward included seeking better co-ordination among the various actors and stakeholders through consultative dialogue. In this way, their respective roles could be mapped out clearly.

Report of the African Development Bank (ADB)

38. The African Development Bank's activities in supporting the implementation of the Beijing PFA focus on the following areas: increasing the resources allocated for the elimination of absolute poverty; supporting other financial institutions that serve low income, small scale, and micro-scale women entrepreneurs and producers; increasing the funding for the education and training needs of girls and women; revising policies, procedures and staffing to ensure that investments and programmes will benefit women.

39. The African Development Fund's Lending Policy and guidelines required the Bank to have a gender perspective in all its policies and programmes in order to facilitate a central role for women in economic activities. Furthermore, the Bank had adopted the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment procedure (CPIA), through which women's empowerment constitutes an element in assessing which regional member countries should qualify for

specific financial resources. Thus far, the ADB had funded several projects in the areas of poverty, education, and training, which had directly benefited women. In this regard, it was noted that the objective of the *African Development Fund Micro-Finance Initiative for Africa* (also known as the AMINA Programme) was to deliver an appropriate range of financial services to micro-entrepreneurs. AMINA had provided support to over 36 NGOs that deliver savings and credit services. Most of these NGOs had between 40 and 100 per cent of their loan portfolio entirely devoted to women in rural and urban areas, with the clear objective of improving their quality of life and promoting their economic empowerment.

40. At the institutional level, it was reported that the Bank had a gender-responsive Human Resource Development Policy, the objective of which was to enhance the participation of women staff members in the senior positions of the Bank. To achieve this objective, the Bank had institutionalised transparent criteria for staff recruitment, appointment and promotion of women to strategic decision-making positions.

Report of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

41. In adopting the Dakar PFA, African member States also adopted the recommendation to formulate a systematic implementation plan that would have a time frame, a set of responsibilities and an appropriate budget. Given these demands, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) undertook the necessary follow-up work on the implementation process by organising subregional meetings. These meetings gave an opportunity to provide technical assistance to a broad spectrum of participants who included government ministers and representatives of national co-ordinating NGOs, as well as Members of Parliament and representatives of UN agencies. One of the important tools that was used in the meetings was ECA's *Suggested Outline for a National Action Plan*.

42. To commemorate its fortieth anniversary, ECA organised an International Conference on "*African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future*" in April 1998. Several commitments were made at the meeting. These included the establishment of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development and the Fund for African Women's Development. In addition, representatives of specific institutions and organisations that attended the conference agreed to extend their partnerships with government as a basis for achieving gender-sensitive review of public expenditure, national accounting systems that value the work of women, and telecentres for rural women.

43. In ECA's vision, Africa's development prospects and the advancement of women were inseparable. Thus, within the organisation, achieving gender equality started with the promotion of gender parity at the decision-making level, when 40 per cent of the managerial positions were filled by women, between 1997 and 1998. At the level of programmes, gender was viewed as a crosscutting issue that should be integrated in all the substantive work of the Commission.

Reports by UN Agencies

44. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women chaired the session on the reports from UN agencies. Representatives from the following organisations gave an account of the highlights of their agency's respective areas of focus, and their collaborative efforts towards the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action: UNDP, UNIFEM, UNFPA, UNHCR and WFP; ILO, UNICEF and FAO; IOM, WHO, World Bank and UNCHS (Habitat). Their areas of focus in implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action were wide ranging. However, the agencies were able to outline their achievements to date, point out the constraints and challenges they had been facing, and indicate their strategic directions for the future.

45. UNDP's focus included promoting gender balance and providing guidelines on gender mainstreaming while UNIFEM's concerns targeted increased economic security for women, and engendered governance, peace building and conflict resolution. UNFPA's policies had been revised to take gender dimensions into account in the organisation's country programmes. This approach had made it possible for UNFPA to concentrate on the following areas: providing assistance on the collection of gender-disaggregated data; working with NGOs to address harmful traditional practices that affect women and girls; and assisting governments to include gender analysis in formulating population policies. The mandate of UNHCR covered protection and promotion of the rights of refugees as well as the promotion of gender equality and equity. Eighty per cent of WFP's food relief is channelled to women as part of its main mandate of using food aid to promote development.

46. ILO recognised that economic globalisation and structural adjustment programmes had affected women's participation in the labour force. In response to this, the organisation's key concerns included preparing women for employment in the formal sector; initiating programmes to address the impact of economic globalisation and economic reform on women workers; and developing a multifaceted approach that involves education and human/institutional capacity building. The strategies used by UNICEF were directed at the education of girls; health in relation to girls and women; and capacity building. FAO's mandate was to support sustainable development in the agricultural sector. It offered a special programme on food security that gave security to rural women. In the area of education and training, the organisation's goals included improving agricultural extension services by increasing the number of women recipients and of agricultural extension workers.

47. IOM's mandate and range of programmes were intended to support immigrants, displaced persons and disaster victims and promote recognition of their human rights. The organisation also had a programme for repatriating skilled African men and women to their home countries. For the WHO, the priority areas included maternal and mental health, harmful traditional practices and HIV/AIDS. The economic empowerment of women was a central issue for the World Bank. This accounted for the Bank's emphasis on the strategy of investing in women's economic activities. The primary focus area of UNCHS was to provide assistance in urban development and management to ensure that the benefits of economic growth would spread equitably in relation to policy support to national governments and local authorities, housing, and services.

48. The main achievements of the agencies' efforts included supporting activities related to gender mainstreaming and capacity strengthening of gender machineries; economic

empowerment of women at the grassroots level; production of national human development reports (UNDP); functional literacy and numeracy skills; mechanisms to protect women and children from violence (UNHCR); dissemination of the PFA documents; provision of technical advice to governments; establishment of regional networks such as WAMNET; formation of alliances and coalitions among women leaders and parliamentarians (UNIFEM); access to reproductive health information and family planning services (UNFPA); advocacy strategies (UNICEF).

49. Given the challenges that faced implementation of the Platforms, participants recommended the following strategies. First, co-operation between governments, NGOs, civil society and UN agencies should be strengthened; second, UNDP should continue its programme on poverty alleviation while the World Bank should assist women in the areas of micro-credit; and third, funds derived from debt cancellation should be channelled to UNIFEM to finance gender-mainstreaming programmes.

F. Presentation of the process of evaluation (agenda item 4)

50. The Sixth Regional Conference on Women was a statutory inter-governmental meeting whose principal purpose was to assess the progress made in implementing the Platforms for Action for the Advancement of Women adopted in Dakar, 1994 and Beijing 1995. Due to time constraints, presentation of the process of evaluation was not made in Plenary. However, the process of evaluation continued throughout the assessment exercises during the four days of the conference

G. Thematic assessments of the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action (agenda item 5)

51. Representatives from ECA, national machineries, national and international NGOs, universities, and from UN specialised agencies participated in the thematic assessments. The summaries of the preliminary assessment reports were used to facilitate discussions in the twelve parallel full-day workshops. These workshops addressed the critical areas of concern in the African Platform for Action.

52. There was consensus that functional institutional mechanisms, contextually relevant programmes, realistic resource allocation, clear policy frameworks, and the development of tools for audits and monitoring were critical to the implementation of strategic actions. Participants expressed concern about the negative impacts of the HIV/ AIDS pandemic, the civil conflicts and the globalisation process that limited the capacity of countries to translate intentions and declarations of the African and Beijing Platforms to practical applications. They underlined the importance of effective gender mainstreaming as an institutional strategy with a twin-track approach. The first approach was to focus on specific and targeted interventions that aimed to empower women along particular thematic areas. The second approach would ensure systematic institutional policy analysis from a gender perspective.

53. Approximately 44 per cent of Africa's population, whose great majority are women, were living below the poverty line of \$US39 (per capita) per month. The disproportionate burden of poverty shared by women on the continent had continued to increase since 1995 in

both absolute and relative terms. Macro and micro-economic policies and programmes and development strategies had rarely been designed to take account of their impact on women and girl-children, especially those living in poverty. Even in countries where national indicators had shown improvement, many urban women, and the majority of rural women continued to live in conditions of economic underdevelopment and social marginalization. There was consensus at the workshop on *Women, Poverty and Economic Empowerment* that women had a key role to play in the economy and in the fight against poverty. Participants stressed the need to accelerate the implementation of actions aimed at poverty reduction by developing macro and micro economic policies and programmes that support women. Furthermore, laws and administrative practices for the equal enjoyment of rights and access to resources should be enacted and enforced. The workshop underlined the need to strengthen institutional capacities to enable effective application of gender-based methodologies for poverty reduction.

54. Africa had the lowest literacy rate in the world, at 50 per cent, with a persisting higher rate for women. Women and girls' participation and visibility in science and technology was also reported to be marginal. Participants at the workshop on *Women, Education, Training and Access to Science and Technology* noted that national constitutions recognised education as a human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of equality, development and peace. Countries were, increasingly emphasising policies and programmes that accentuate the teaching of science and technology in schools, especially for girls. However, discrimination in girls' access to education persisted. This is due to negative customary attitudes, gender-biased teaching and educational materials, and inadequate human, financial and physical skills and resources. Participants stressed the need to promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes. An analysis must be made of the differential impact on women and men of the following areas: skills acquisition, curricula, access and retention, the mass media and resource allocation.

55. The socio-economic and cultural context within which African governments, national, subregional, regional and international organisations strategized to implement the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action presented a number of challenges. The participants at the workshop on *Women, the Family and Socialisation* underlined the central role of the family in promoting achievement of gender equality and equity objectives. As the basic unit of society, the family remained a critical agent of socialisation and of the creation of power relations between women and men. The workshop stressed the need to enhance the stability of the family as an institution. Participants also emphasised the need to raise awareness of the internalised values of male dominance, which reinforce the subordination of women, both in the private and public spheres. Programmes that demonstrated equal respect for women and men should be given priority. These included the provision of legal frameworks and family codes, media coverage and participatory research.

56. African governments had already ratified human rights instruments including CEDAW and CRC and adopted the relevant protocols. Participants in the workshop on *Women's Legal and Human Rights* identified enactment of progressive constitutions and laws and establishment of improved policy frameworks in a number of countries as significant achievements. Subregional initiatives also demonstrated effective and efficient legislative and policy frameworks for implementation of the PFA. However, *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women continued to exist. This was due to a combination of factors, including dual and triple legal systems and insufficient political will to implement the Dakar

and Beijing Platforms. It was noted that a number of countries had not submitted reports to the monitoring bodies. Effective and sustainable protection of women's human rights called for adequate resources and synergistic support. Participants called for enhanced implementation of gender-responsive legislation and policy frameworks. They also called for the removal of reservations on human rights instruments.

57. Generation and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation were critical to the effective implementation of gender-responsive policies and programmes. Participants at the workshop on *Gender-Disaggregated Data* noted that gender statistics go beyond merely drawing a category between women and men. The focus should be on issues of particular relevance to women and men, girls and boys and their different roles and positions in society. There was consensus that statistics related to individuals should be collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex and age and should reflect problems, issues and questions related to women and men in society. These included a systematic progression from the baseline to the national accounts. It was also necessary to provide legislative and policy frameworks that could draw on the capacities of the national statistics bodies, centres for women's studies, research organisations and international organisations. Interventions should address the development and testing of appropriate indicators and research methodologies for the purpose of strengthening gender analysis and monitoring and evaluating implementation of the goals of the PFA. The provision of adequate human and financial resources was also a key requirement.

58. Women's equal participation in political life and decision-making played an important role in the general process of the advancement of women. There was consensus in the workshop on the *Political Empowerment of Women* that equality in political decision-making performed a leverage function without which it was highly unlikely that government policy-making would undertake a real integration of the equality dimension. Participants noted that power relations that prevented women from leading fulfilling lives in politics operated at many levels of society, from the personal to the public. It was stressed that strategies for increasing women's participation in politics such as quota systems, affirmative action and constitutional and legal reforms worked best when they were accompanied by capacity building and enforceable measures applicable to government and all political parties. Critical issues to address in this regard included the effective management of programmes to ensure access, participation and the transformation of operational and legal frameworks.

59. Five years after Beijing, Africa as a continent had a peculiar need for women-specific health strategies. Participants at the workshop on *Women, Health, Reproduction, Family Planning and Population* noted a number of gaps that existed in health policies, programmes, resources and institutional arrangements at the national level. There was consensus that the accelerating rate of maternal mortality and the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic continued to deny African women enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health. In this regard, participants underlined the need for non-discriminatory policies and practices, as well as multi-sectoral programmes to secure women's right to optimal health throughout their life cycle, on an equal basis with men.

60. The years of protracted intra-state conflicts in Africa had brought devastating effects on the continent's population and socio-economic infrastructure. The cycle of civil violence had left behind a legacy of deep social, political and psychological wounds. Women and children had borne the major brunt of the increased conflict, the ethnic and religious prejudices and the

increasing sense of insecurity at household and community levels. Of the 20 million estimated refugees in the world, 35 per cent were found in Africa, with women and children constituting at least 80 per cent of the refugee population. The workshop on *Women and Peace* observed that this trend was reversing decades of economic progress, increasing the rate of poverty, particularly among women, and impeding sustainable development. However, African women had begun to play an important role in peace initiatives and structures. The African Women Peace Committee, through its representatives, all of whom are women, was a case in point. There was consensus that if African women are to play an equal role with men in securing and maintaining peace, they must be empowered politically and economically. They must also be adequately represented at all levels of decision-making.

61. African women have an essential role to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound production patterns in natural resource management. This was underlined in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and follow-up conferences. The *Women and the Environment* workshop noted that African women depend almost totally on the environment and natural resources for their livelihood. As environmental degradation continues to become a major problem in Africa, women also continue to suffer, particularly in relation to agricultural production and home management. There was consensus that it is necessary to ensure that the experience and skills women possess in the management and use of natural resources are exploited in formulating policies for the protection and rehabilitation programmes. Women must also be involved in decision-making at all levels.

62. The Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action placed heavy responsibilities on governments in activities relating to implementation, co-ordination and follow-up. The workshop on *Institutional Mechanisms* defined the national machinery as a single structure or combination of structures established by a country to advance gender equality. Participants noted that most national machineries formalised in the post-Beijing era had varying degrees of impact. It was agreed that the efficiency and effectiveness of national machineries had been constrained by a number of factors. These included their location and status, the shift in government priorities due to economic crisis, and inadequate financial, human and skills resources. The absence of monitoring mechanisms with time-bound targets to ensure implementation was also seen as an impediment. In this regard, national machineries needed to address all policy and programme requirements essential to the successful adoption of mainstreaming as an institutional strategy.

63. *The communication, information and arts* sectors in Africa provided potential networks that could be used to contribute to the advancement of women. There was consensus at the workshop that these networks should be used to influence public policy and private attitudes and behaviour, especially among young adults and children. Participants identified major constraints as the shortage of resources, high illiteracy rates, and little ownership of media and communication channels by women. They expressed concern at the continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communication, although some progress had been recorded in this regard. Participants called on the key partners to strengthen both public and private organisations. This should be done in an inclusive manner through mobilisation of resources, formulation of adequate legislative and policy frameworks and promotion of gender-responsive programmes and activities. Training and capacity building, involvement of the private sector and development of networking were important strategies for empowering women through information and communication systems.

64. The interventions that have been put in place in a number of countries since 1995 demonstrated a greater understanding of the special needs of the girl-child in Africa. However, the workshop on *The Girl-Child* articulated concern that the available indicators continue to show discrimination against the girl - child from infancy to adulthood. There was consensus that harmful attitudes and practices that put the girl-child at risk and which must be urgently addressed include sexual harassment and exploitation, and threats to her health and wellbeing, in particular, HIV/AIDS. Participants stressed the need to ensure that policy and legislative frameworks adequately address the concerns of the girl-child in different circumstances. Appropriate programmes and activities should be developed and effectively implemented through partnership. It was agreed that the needs of the girl-child with disabilities should receive special attention because of her double disadvantage.

H. Special Forum on Peace and Development (agenda item 6)

65. The Special Forum on Peace and Development was organised under the auspices of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development, one of the lead organisations in promoting the peace process in the region. The rationale behind the Forum was to give the women of Africa a platform to voice their concerns over war and peace.

66. Her Excellency, Dr Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda and Chairperson of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development presided over the Forum. She requested participants to observe *one* minute of silence for the victims of war. She then invited Mr. K. Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the ECA to deliver his welcoming remarks.

67. In his opening statement, Mr. K. Y. Amoako observed that the Forum was a special occasion for both painful remembrance and joyful celebration. Remembrance, because many in the room had experienced the scourge of war and violence or had been moved by the experiences of sisters and brothers from countries troubled by conflict; and celebration, because the Forum paid tribute to the strength, courage and vision of African women who continue to wage a struggle for peace. He observed that in recent years, women had begun to translate their experiences into a new activism and advocacy for peace and that their energy and zeal could not fail to move us forward in the new millennium. AWCPD had been launched only a year earlier, but he was pleased to see that it had taken up its work with determination and commitment. Already, African women saw it as a channel to influence high-level decisions and as a needed entity to increase the coherence of women's activism for peace. He also commended the Federation of African Women's Peace Networks for its collective action. He concluded by thanking the participants for the seriousness with which they had undertaken review for the Beijing +5 process.

68. Her Excellency, the Vice-President, then made her introductory statement. She thanked the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for the warm welcome extended to the delegates arriving in Addis Ababa. She also expressed her joy to see Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, First Lady of Nigeria, and thanked Ms. Angela King, Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women for her presence, which testified to the importance the United Nations gave to the issues of peace. For their unreserved support towards the AWCPD

and all other programmes aimed at enhancing the women's cause, she paid tribute to the Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. K.Y Amoako, for his support and commitment to African women, to Mr. Salim A. Salim, the Secretary-General of OAU for his interest in the development of African Women, as witnessed by the establishment, in collaboration with ECA, of the African Women's Committee for Peace and Development, to Ms. Josephine Ouedraogo, Director of the African Women's Centre and to Mr. Sam Ibok, Head of OAU's Political Department and Chief of the Conflict Management Centre.

69. She affirmed that AWCPD was proud to provide a forum to voice women's concerns and to strengthen their role and mandate and further their empowerment in the promotion of peace and development in Africa. She exhorted that the twenty-first century must be a century with a difference for Africa, our century just as Europe was the continent of the nineteenth century and America the continent of the twentieth century. This would entail serious planning in the course of our social, economic and political emancipation; the kind of planning that should not simply see us blindly imitating others, but the kind of planning that is preceded by careful analysis of our past, a clear formulation of our vision for the future, and strategies adapted to address Africa's unique situation. She underlined her happiness to note that the voice of the "wretched of the earth", was being echoed in most corners of the continent and that the men were also beginning to stir in positive response and support of the women's cause. The challenge was to ensure that we adopted strategies that would reverse the current situation. She then called upon governments of Africa to stand together in support of the candidacy of Dr. Miriam K. Were for the post of Executive Director of UNFPA saying that women needed critical numbers at the decision-making level to be able to make an impact. She concluded with a word of appreciation on behalf of the President of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the people of Uganda and on her own behalf, thanking all for having contributed to the success of the conference and the Peace Forum.

70. Three women from Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Somalia respectively took the floor to convey their personal experience of war. Their testimony depicted graphically how war affected women and men differently.

71. Then a representative of FERFAP, Dr. Mariam Maiga, read resolutions passed by the women from the peace tent.

72. At this point, the Representative of UNIFEM handed over the Peace Torch to H. E. Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, who in turn passed it on to H.E. Mrs. Stella Obasanjo, First Lady of Nigeria, who then proceeded to deliver her statement.

73. In her statement, H.E. Mrs. Stella Obasanjo expressed her personal gratitude and appreciation to Her Excellency, Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, and the African Women Committee on Peace and Development for organising the forum and acknowledged the efforts of the Economic Commission for Africa in search for peace on our continent. She stated that the absence of conflict is an irreducible minimum condition for the promotion of development anywhere and that the need for peace as a requirement for development was heightened by the stiff competition for foreign venture capital between Africa and other emerging markets. She went on to say that most conflicts were sparked off by disputes among political leaders, nearly all of whom were men, that the majority of those who bear arms were men. She further observed that it was now an established fact that women and children were at the receiving end of some of the worst atrocities in war, and that those who did not lose their lives, lost their

dignity and remained emotionally and physically scarred for life. Parties to conflicts often rape women and girl children with bestial impunity; furthermore, every protracted conflict had yielded its horrifying tales of women who were forced into sexual slavery or used, derisively, as "comfort women".

74. She saluted the many men and women who strive by day and night, at great risk to life and limb, to ensure that women are no longer violated in the event of war but said that more needed to be done. Governments, NGOs, local communities, international organisations and the world community should do more to end the scourge of war. She then called on African women to play a more active role in saving the continent from the curse of perpetual conflicts and appealed, in particular, to women whose spouses occupy important and influential political positions to think more about how to avoid the senseless wars that bring so much misery to so many women. She further said it was her fervent hope that the women of Africa would discharge this very important moral duty of always encouraging our men to choose democracy over dictatorship, to prefer dialogue to confrontation and violence, and to choose right over wrong.

75. The representative of the OAU, Mr. Djinnit Said, spoke on behalf of Dr. Salim A. Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU. He conveyed the greetings and support of the Secretary-General, explaining that he was unable to attend the Forum due to reasons beyond his control. He stated that conflict prevention, management and resolution had emerged as the top priority on OAU's agenda and were at the core of all the efforts of Africa's leaders and people, including women. This had been clearly demonstrated during the conference and Forum. He underlined that in spite of the trauma of wars and displacement, women had been the stabilising factor in their families and communities. They were contributing immensely to preserving human dignity and social order in the midst of chaos and civil strife. The experience of African women presented earlier were eloquent testimony to the agonies endured by African women in conflict areas. This should strengthen our determination and resolve to address the scourge of conflict in a decisive manner.

76. Expressing OAU support for African women endeavours towards peace and development, and recalled that prior to adoption of both the African and the Beijing Platforms for Action, OAU, ECA and the Government of Uganda had organised a Regional Conference on Women, Peace and Development in Kampala, Uganda in November 1993. He reminded participants that the mechanism recommended by the conference was further discussed at subsequent encounters and endorsed by the 66th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers and 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Harare, Zimbabwe in 1997. That mechanism was the African Women Committee on Peace and Development, which was established in April 1998 and officially inaugurated in November 1998. He underlined OAU's support to the Committee's objectives and activities and its commitment to enter into a real partnership with women and other concerned organisations through practical programmes and projects.

77. He concluded by paying tribute to the women of Africa for their historic role as a driving force for the emancipation of our people and for the fact that, as a famous French poet said, "Woman is the future of man".

The major outcomes:

I. Workshop Outcomes (agenda item 7)

78. The 12 workshops on the critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform of Action took place successfully and were well supported. The outcomes are summarised in Annex III.

J. The African Plan of Action (Period: 2000-2004) (agenda item 8)

79. A Drafting Group of representatives from national delegations and the United Nations agencies reviewed the Draft African Plan of Action, which had been sent to them prior to the conference by the Secretariat. The review process was under the chairmanship of Her Excellency Mrs. Rabea Mechernene, Algerian Minister for National Solidarity and the Family and the First Vice-Chairperson of the Sixth Regional Conference on Women. The total review time was one-and-a-half days during the conference. Hard and detailed work went into discussing, adjusting and improving the draft document which was eventually adopted by the conference.

80. The African Plan of Action was intended to serve as a framework for the accelerated implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms. At a general level, it contains guidelines to be used by co-ordinating machineries in monitoring and evaluation activities. It also suggests ways of mobilising the necessary resources and emphasises the imperative of dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Plan also highlights the need for women to play an equal role with men in securing and maintaining peace. Additionally, it suggests strategies for reducing the tedious chores of women who can then be engaged in more economically productive enterprises.

81. At a more specific level, the Plan of Action emphasises the need for national consultative and co-ordinating mechanisms to promote gender equality. In the national context, these have to be at the highest executive level of State and should include other stakeholders such as the civil society. The Plan states that the indicators of success in evaluating the effectiveness of co-ordinating machineries will need to be presented in measurable numerical terms.

82. In the area of monitoring and evaluation, the Plan recognises the need to strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the purpose of accurate measurement of progress. Due to this, the Plan of Action stresses the need for technical teams to be established to undertake monitoring and evaluation activities in the twelve critical areas of concern. This task will require some training in policy analysis and gender audit.

83. Comprehensive development can be achieved only when women have a better social, economic and political status in society. This requires an enabling environment that allows women to participate in decision-making. Given this reality, the Plan recommends the use of affirmative action to reduce gender disparities in decision-making bodies. As an example in this regard, steps should be taken to ensure that professional women from relevant fields constitute at least 33% of the membership of national delegations. By the same token, 33% of

the composition of delegations to meetings on gender and women issues should consist of men.

84. The lack of adequate resources for implementing the Platform lies behind the low implementation rate. It has two components that need to be addressed. First, there is the absolute shortage of human, financial and technical resources that countries need for implementation. Secondly, there is the issue of access to existing resources, which is reflected in the competition for limited resources. The Plan of Action recommends the allocation of a minimum of one per cent of budgets to gender-related activities. Additionally, the Plan proposes that debt relief finance should be diverted to activities in the field of gender mainstreaming.

85. Since the objective of gender equality cannot be achieved without recognising that the gender approach has to be integrated in policies, planning and project evaluation, practical steps should be taken towards realising this goal. The avenues available for this include sensitisation and training. The collection and use of gender-disaggregated data are also important tools for achieving accelerated integration of the gender approach into policy formulation, planning and programming.

86. The Plan further states that in the fight against HIV/AIDS, more emphasis should be placed on prevention. In this respect, prevention strategies must address the structures that put women in a disadvantaged position in society through lack of empowerment. The African Plan of Action has the vision of reducing the rate of HIV/AIDS infections by 50% by the year 2000. This target will require massive efforts to demystify the phenomenon. Consequently, there is need to mount information and education campaigns at all levels. Although community-based approaches have so far played a major role in ensuring a caring environment for the affected, the onus is on governments to establish institutional mechanisms to deal with the pandemic. In this regard, the Plan calls for a cross-sectoral and inter-institutional approach through partnerships to deal with the problem.

87. The Plan of Action recognises the multi-dimensional problem of poverty and stresses the need to create national, subregional and regional markets for the region's products. Since women are among the most affected groups, the Plan has the objective of helping women to be more active in small- and medium-scale enterprises. The channels for achieving this objective lie in capacity building and in policies and laws that open up opportunities to women. The full text of the African Plan of Action as adopted by the conference is presented in annex IIb.

**K. Modalities for Africa's Participation at the Global Mid-Term Review
of the Implementations of the Platforms for Action (Beijing +5)
(agenda item 9)**

88. A Drafting Group that included representatives from national delegations, subregional and regional NGOs and the United Nations agencies reviewed a draft document prepared by the ECA Secretariat. The Group was chaired by Her Excellency, Mrs. Janat Mukwaya, Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development from Uganda and facilitated by Ms Angela King and Ms Rosaline Odera, Chairperson of the preparatory process of the Special

Session of Beijing + 5. The terms of reference of the Drafting Group were to examine modalities for Africa's participation in the Special Session on Beijing + 5.

89. The modalities target the roles of member States, NGOs, the Committee on Women and Development and ECA. In this regard, member States should strive to include Ministers of Finance and Planning in their delegations, as well as representatives of the youth and people with disabilities. The NGOs that hold a consultative status with ECOSOC will be expected to select one representative to be their spokesperson in the plenary session. The selection of this person should be based on relevant criteria. In the event that the Global Meeting will recommend fewer than five NGOs to speak, there will be concerted effort to ensure that Africa is represented.

90. The role of the Committee on Women and Development will entail the following responsibilities: co-ordinating and harmonising the position of African States; and ensuring that there is a wide and active participation of African States at the Session of the Preparatory Committee in March and at the Special Session in June 2000. The role of ECA will be to ensure the timely delivery to New York and to relevant actors of key documents such as the *African Plan of Action* and the *Draft Declaration*. It will also be responsible for facilitating African participation at the Special Session of the General Assembly in June 2000. (See annex V for the full text on Modalities for Africa's Participation at the Beijing + 5 Special Session).

L. The Conference Declaration (agenda item 10)

91. A Drafting Group that included representatives from national delegations, subregional and regional NGOs and United Nations agencies reviewed a draft document prepared by the Secretariat on the conference declaration. The Group was chaired by Ms Mary Shawa, Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Women, Youth and Community Services in Malawi.

92. In the Declaration that was finally adopted, participants reaffirmed their commitment to the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and to the inherent dignity and equal rights of men and women. They acknowledged the advances made in implementing the Platforms through, *inter alia*, the fact that forty-seven African countries have so far ratified CEDAW; the increase in the participation of women in politics and in decision-making; the acceleration in land tenure reform processes through legislative procedures that now make it possible to use, own and inherit land; the presence of a vibrant and growing women's activism and advocacy for peace that places women in mainstream peace processes; the global awareness that women's rights are human rights and that violence against women is the most widespread violation of human rights.

93. The participants expressed concern, however, at shortcomings that continue to interfere with the implementation processes. These include among others: the high incidence of wars and violent conflict; systematic under-representation of women in decision-making and leadership positions; inadequacy of quality reproductive health services; persisting gender-based inequalities in the fields of education, science and technology; and lack of attention and resources channelled towards the special needs of women and the disabled.

94. Given these shortcomings, the participants urged all stakeholders to expedite the transition from pledges to concrete action and put in place appropriate and effective human,

material and financial resources that would allow women to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms (see annex IIa for the full text of the *Declaration*).

M. Any Other Business (agenda item 11)

95. A number of issues were raised under this item. The African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE) contended that even though the debt burden and globalisation are key factors in the impoverishment of Africa, there are no specific references in the Platforms for Action that deal with debt, poverty reduction, or the modalities through which African women could benefit from globalisation. Reservations were also expressed about the UNDP restructuring that has affected the functions of their regional offices. There was concern that this exercise could have a negative impact on gender mainstreaming. Women from Portuguese-speaking African countries also submitted an open letter to the conference in which they called for an end to the linguistic discrimination against them since the Portuguese language is not used in major conferences.

96. The issue of peace was raised and the conference concluded its deliberations by reiterating its commitment to the *Zanzibar Declaration and Agenda for Peace* and by endorsing the *Algiers Pan-African Women's Organisation's Appeal* and the *Declarations of the Peace Tent* issued during the Sixth Regional Conference on Women. These declarations deplored the persistence of violent conflicts and political instability as well as the lack of democratisation. The declarations pointed out that these ills coalesce to marginalize Africans from participating in peace negotiations. The declarations called for, among other things: debt cancellation; promotion of human rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women; demilitarisation and disarmament; and involvement of women in the political, economic and decision-making processes. (See annex VII for the full text of the *Declarations*).

97. The African NGOs called on African governments to institute participatory legal and constitutional structures to outlaw and eliminate all forms of patriarchal oppression and discrimination against women. The NGO Declaration wanted debt relief to be treated as a poverty alleviation instrument to bring about social justice and gender equity. In addition, the Declaration asked for the implementation of the *Zanzibar Declaration for a Culture of Peace*.

98. The African Women Parliamentarians called for the formation of a Forum that would have the following objectives: strengthening the voice of African women parliamentarians; consolidating the efforts and resources of the parliamentarians; formulating, amending and legislating relevant bills for the benefit and welfare of women.

99. A Declaration on *Women with Disabilities* drew attention to the marginalization of persons with disability in general and of women in particular. It called for the ratification by all African countries of the United Nations rules for the *Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities*.

100. A Declaration on Youth also called for the active participation of the youth in all fora. Through the Declaration, the youth representatives requested that the theme "*the position, role and contribution of youths in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for*

Action” be included in the agenda of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women and the Committee preparing for the Beijing +5 review process.

101. The Indian Ocean Countries at the conference underlined the poor results achieved in the implementation of the Platforms for Action and recognised the urgent need to accelerate the implementation process as well as implementation of the recommendations of the Sixth African Regional Conference in all the different regions of Africa. In this connection, the following countries of the Indian Ocean Islands - Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles- requested that they be regrouped as a subregion of their own, called “The Islands of the Indian Ocean”. Alternatively, they suggested that the Comoros and Seychelles should be included in the East Africa subregion while Mauritius and Madagascar should be included in the Southern Africa subregion.

102. The conference was also informed about the millennium “World March”, an opportunity for African women to affirm their solidarity with other women worldwide by participating. Such an action will provide an opportunity for powerful lobbying in two particularly sensitive areas of concern, namely violence against women and the feminisation of poverty. Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs were therefore urged to support women in their respective countries in organising a National Walk, while the African Centre for Women was requested to support the Commission in organising one at the regional level.

N. The Closing Ceremony (agenda item 12)

103. The closing ceremony of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women took place at 16:00 hrs on 26 November 1999. Her Excellency, Ms. Agnes Alafi, Minister in charge of the Family and Social Affairs, Republic of Chad, gave the vote of thanks to the Ethiopian Government, conference organisers and participants. Mme. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary of the ECA acknowledged the importance of the Sixth Regional Conference in evaluating achievements, assessing obstacles and accelerating implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. Mme. Ben Barka expressed her sincere hope that the third millennium would be a time of equality between women and men in realising development opportunities.

104. The Deputy Executive Secretary pointed out the areas that need further consolidation. These include: recommitment to implementing policies that adequately address the strategic interests of women; collective ownership of relevant mechanisms and policies; pressure on governments and institutions to establish appropriate linkages between objectives and their accomplishment and accountability to people; and establishment and consolidation of alliances, partnerships and networks to increase the involvement of civil society, the business sector, the media, the youth, women’s groups and universities.

105. She affirmed that the Sixth Regional Conference had strengthened institutional mechanisms and inspired collective reflection on each area of concern in the Platforms, thus enabling the updating and refocusing of priorities. She said that important linkages had been articulated more clearly, including the possibility of debt relief and cancellation to provide savings for gender-based programmes.

106. The Deputy Executive Secretary said that the conference had underscored the challenges associated with improvement in the quality of the life of women, especially in the

areas of capacity-building and training, protection of rights and involvement in decision-making mechanisms, especially in peace research and negotiations. She also added her support to the need for special assistance for the girl-child and her protection.

107. She singled out the need for urgent action to reduce the appallingly high rates of maternal, infant and child mortality and the high rates of illiteracy among women and girls, and pointed to their lack of access to clean piped water. She also stressed the significance of partnerships with civil society to improve the quality of women's lives. She called on researchers and research institutions to produce and use gender-disaggregated data.

108. Referring to the need to speed up implementation, she called for more State involvement and commitment, and pointed to United Nations support for use of gender analysis and for affirmative action measures for women and girl - children, to enable society to achieve gender balance and gender equality.

109. She thanked all the UN specialised agencies for their collaboration and contributions, as well as the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and OAU. Special thanks were extended to the Governments of Canada, France, and Sweden who helped to fund the conference and to the Committee on Women and Development (formerly ARCC) whose members worked hard to organise the conference.

110. In conclusion, she appealed to African Heads of State, OAU and ECA to renew their efforts to implement the Platforms for Action and thanked the Government of Ethiopia for hosting the conference so graciously, especially Her Excellency, Tadelech Haile Michael, Minister of Women's Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister. She congratulated the staff and consultants of the African Centre for Women and its Director, Mme. Josephine Ouedraogo for a job well done and praised participants for their dynamism and determination.

111. Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU commended the "seriousness" of participants, the objectives and timing of the conference, and the spirit of partnership and solidarity he had noted. He reaffirmed OAU's commitment to the political and economic empowerment of women, and to a strong role for women in peace management, including the OAU's programmes for post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation and integration. He also noted OAU's continuing support for the work of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development.

112. Referring to current and future possibilities for structuring action, he advised African women to examine and use the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. The treaty recognised the need for women's economic empowerment and inclusion in the integration process. He reminded the conference of the recent OAU Summit that had agreed to accelerate the process of forming an African Union. Emergent gender strategies at the regional level were therefore vital for facing the new millennium.

113. He noted that although there had been progress with advancing the women's agenda and the level of gender sensitisation in Africa, many formidable obstacles remained that had to be overcome if African women were to be fully emancipated so that they could play their rightful role in society. He said that no society could live half-free and half-enslaved, and that the reality was that liberation of women also meant liberation of men. The courage of conviction was now needed "to move from strategy to action".

114. The Secretary-General warmly welcomed the five-year African Plan of Action and acknowledged that it was not only useful in preparing for the Global Mid-Term Review in June 2000, but had also strengthened the common endeavour to follow up on the work of the conference in the upcoming third millennium.

115. The Chairperson of the conference, Her Excellency Mme. Jeanne Dambendzet, Minister of Public Affairs, the Family and Promotion of Women, Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), in her closing remarks, expressed great appreciation for the contribution of the conference and expressed the hope that the work had not ended but would start when participants returned home to sensitise government, civil society and the public. She praised the maturity of African women and their increasing capability and capacity to contribute to development activities and processes.

116. In her view, the conference went beyond evaluation and had focused collective reflection on future policies, actions, stakeholders, and institutions, besides having acknowledged the need to involve men far more, from a true gender perspective. Individual and collective action had been inspired which should now be reflected at the national level of action. Special action was needed for sensitising communities and leaders, to break down resistance to the recognition of women's rights and contributions. The conference had helped to lay out a path into the future with a pivotal role for women as an innovative force for sustainable development.

117. She urged that action for debt cancellation should be intensified and savings used in special programmes that target women and girls as the special beneficiaries. She added that mobilisation of African women was crucial for democratisation. Thus, collective efforts were needed to help Africa face the changes being wrought by globalisation.

118. Before declaring the conference closed, the Chairperson thanked the Government of Ethiopia and all those who contributed to the successful organisation of the conference. She expressed her great appreciation to the participants for their important contributions and wished them a safe journey back home, where she hoped they would spread the messages and outcomes of the conference and undertake regvanized implementation of their National Plans of Action.

Annex I

Recommendations of the Sixth African Regional Conference

The participants at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women formulated many recommendations during their deliberations, including:

- Strengthen partnerships between governments, NGOs, civil society, and United Nations agencies;
- Build NGO capacity;
- UNFPA should ensure that the issues raised by the Conferences at Beijing and at Cairo are integrated in the national census;
- Ministers responsible for Women Affairs should participate in the ECA Conference of Ministers of Planning, in order to advocate for integration of the gender perspective in national planning;
- Promote traditional methods of resolving conflicts and involve women in them;
- Promote the participation of men in the different statutory meetings on women;
- Promote participation of women in conflict-resolution mechanisms;
- Balance the participation of women and men in the different national and international statutory meetings;
- Promote the gender perspective in the various ministerial departments of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF);
- Establish specific indicators for enhancing measurement of the progress achieved by governments;
- Strengthen institutional mechanisms responsible for promoting women and girls with human, material and financial resources, and upgrade their status;
- Appeal to countries of the North to make anti-retro-virus products for treating HIV/AIDS more affordable and accessible to the African population;
- Appeal to women of the North to lobby against the manufacture and selling of arms;
- Member States should integrate gender-desegregated data in national accounts;
- Utilise the gender perspective in the national budgetary process;
- Establish databanks and institutions for producing gender-desegregated data;
- Carry out advocacy with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to grant a delay of 15 years to African States to allow them to fulfil the conditions set by this Organisation. It is also necessary to include women in the national delegations that participate in negotiations and debates at the WTO, in order to ensure that the gender perspective is taken into account;
- The African Development Bank (ADB) should establish a Development Bank for Women;
- Revitalise conflict-prevention mechanisms in Africa;
- African countries should ban small arms;
- Increase financing of gender activities;
- Debt conversions by African States to allow more expenditure on social sectors, especially

poverty reduction;

- Appeal to all African governments to support peace;
- Take measures against the trafficking of women and children, and their exploitation;
- Organise a continent-wide march against poverty;
- Apply the 20/20 initiative;
- Reduce government military spending;
- Promote a culture of peace;
- Promote respect for the United Nations Charter on Territorial Sovereignty;
- Form a solidarity movement of high-level women to carry out sensitisation in countries at war and in countries producing arms;
- Train health workers and equip health centres with the necessary equipment for handling obstetrical emergencies, to reduce maternal and infant mortality;
- Strengthen UNIFEM with human, material and financial resources;
- Strengthen ACW with human, material and financial resources, given the quality and the quantity of the work it performs;
- Carry out capacity building for women's economic empowerment;
- Implement a quota system of 50 per cent to enhance representation of women in decision-making positions;
- Mobilise the support of ECA, OAU and UNICEF in the fight against drugs in all forms and derivatives, that put our boys and girls at risk;
- ACW should support countries in their effort to establish mechanisms for collecting reliable gender-desegregated data;
- Encourage private, independent radio stations to foster production of special programmes, particularly for women;
- Strengthen coordination mechanisms among United Nations Agencies, at all levels within countries;
- Establish institutional mechanisms for follow-up of national implementation of the Platforms for Action.

Two countries, namely, Mauritania and Niger, have recently ratified the Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Annex II-a

Declaration

**Of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women
Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action
22-26 November, 1999, Addis Ababa**

We, the participants of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, representing governments and civil society; meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 22-26 November, 1999,

Reaffirming the commitments made in Dakar and Beijing to the empowerment and advancement of women, their full participation in decision-making processes and access to resources;

Reaffirming also the explicit recognition of the inherent dignity and equal rights of women and men;

Recognising that efforts have been made to implement the Platforms for Action over the last five years, particularly in the following areas:

- To-date, forty-seven African countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- There is an increase in the participation of women in politics and decision-making – one country has passed the 30% target in parliament and several others are on the path to reach this objective.
- In several countries, land tenure reform processes have led to legislation, which provides for women to own, use and inherit land. Also, there is a rise in women-specific mechanisms created by mainstream finance and banking organisations, to facilitate easier access to loans and credit schemes. There is also a greater understanding of women's life-cycle needs and efforts to provide basic services to address those needs.
- There is now a vibrant and growing women's activism and advocacy for peace, which has helped to mount pressure for the inclusion of women in mainstream peace-processes hence the formation of the OAU Women's Committee on Peace and Development. Using their community
- management skills and participatory approach to power, women are bringing a qualitatively different perspective to peace negotiations and peace building.
- A global consensus has been reached that women's rights are human rights and that violence against women is one of the most widespread violations of human rights.

- Positive steps have been taken, in countries' efforts to promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and to provide education, health and a better quality of life.
- The strong advocacy around female genital mutilation has led to the decrease of the practice, or its replacement with new positive rites of passage, within some rural communities across the continent.
- As a result of constitutional reviews and reforms new progressive legislation, which addresses specific concerns of women, have been enacted.
- Efforts to improve the effectiveness of national machineries for the advancement of women have increased, in order to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all government institutions, sectors, policies and programmes.
- An enhanced recognition by some regional inter-governmental organisations of the importance of including a gender dimension in all their programmes and policies has been translated into concrete gender mechanisms.

Recognising with grave concern that, although these achievements give us hope, gaps and shortcomings persist, such as:

- The high incidence of wars and violent conflicts, marked by the increased targeting of civilian populations through various tactics, including the indiscriminate use of antipersonnel weapons, continues to drain the continent of its resources, contributes to the negative perception that protracted exile or displacement is an acceptable way of life for many Africans and legitimises the most abysmal forms of violence against women and children.
- Continuous violation of the basic human rights of women, children and men, including the right to life as wars and military engagements take priority over the promotion of sustainable development. In addition, embargoes and blockades are causing a lot of sufferings and agony to ordinary women and men and children.
- The systematic under-representation of women in decision-making and leadership positions persists, despite the gains made,
- Deepening poverty, namely feminised poverty, affects increasing numbers of women, particularly rural women,
- The lack of women and girls' control over their lives and their limited choices expose them particularly to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and further erodes their economic and social status; this is a severe constraint to women's advancement and Africa's development,
- Lack of quality health services, especially reproductive health services, has contributed to high maternal mortality and morbidity rates,
- Lack of attention and resources committed to the special needs of disabled and elderly women exacerbates their marginalization,

- Inadequate access by women and girls to education and information, leaves them continuously deprived of any meaningful personal development, lagging far behind the scientific and technological advances that characterise the end of the twentieth century. As a result, scores of African women will enter the third millennium in a state of almost total deprivation and marginalization,
- Lack of adequate resources and inappropriate status for national machineries is a major constraint to the promotion of women's empowerment and gender equality.
- Lack of gender disaggregated data at the institutional level which can be used to influence policy-making and gender-responsive action.
- Lack of meaningful societal transformation in attitudes and policy-making structures towards women's power and participation.

Convinced that:

- The new millennium is a critical opportunity for transformative change in women's advancement towards equality – African leaders must see this transition as a test of their leadership;
- Women are key partners for development and their capabilities and leadership skills must be used if there is to be qualitative change and the achievement of an African Renaissance;
- The full participation of women in decision making will bring about an equitable sharing of resources and sustainable human development to the African Renaissance.
- African women must become partners in environmental management and protection and their wisdom and indigenous knowledge must be incorporated in this regard,
- The operationalization by all governments in Africa of their commitments towards the empowerment of women and gender equality is a pre-condition to reverse the trend of underdevelopment,

We therefore urge all stakeholders in development on the African continent, including international organisations to:

- Expedite the transition from pledges to concrete action as we enter the twenty-first century;
- Strengthen their resolve, and re-affirm prior commitments to address all the root causes of discrimination against women, girls and gender inequality.
- Put in place, without further delay, appropriate resources and effective mechanisms to allow women to enjoy fully all their human rights and fundamental freedoms, empowerment and gender equality.

- Redouble efforts to achieve peace and human security in Africa and, recognising the catalytic role of women in local peace initiatives, to ensure their equal participation and influence in peace processes at higher national and regional levels,
- Ratify CEDAW if they have not already done so, remove reservations by June 2000 and accelerate its implementation
- Make the provisions of CEDAW part and parcel of the domestic law in each country so that women can claim and enforce their rights within their national courts.
- Ensure full and speedier implementation of both the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.

Annex II-b The African Plan of Action

Introduction

The African Plan of Action was formulated within the framework of the mid-decade review of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action (PFA). That review was conducted through the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, held from 22 to 26 November 1999 at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The review was conducted in the form of national progress reports that were prepared by the Governments of most African countries, with inputs from all the actors involved in implementing the action plans. Evaluation reports were also prepared by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Africa Development Bank (ADB), non-governmental organisations (NGO), ECA and the United Nations specialised agencies. The reports demonstrated great commitment to implementing the action plans that came out of the Dakar and Beijing conferences.

Most countries have allocated both financial and human resources to implementing national plans of action. They have registered success in the past four to five years in such areas as increased school enrolment of girls, wider areas of coverage of health services, creation of women's groups for solidarity and collaboration, wider coverage of awareness-raising campaigns and programmes with regard to women's human rights, establishment of micro-credit schemes, and expansion of adult literacy programmes. At least 15 of the reporting countries had formulated comprehensive national gender policies to guide other sectors in incorporating gender concerns in their policies, plans, and programmes. For the most part, the national plans of action included activities beyond the mid-decade review.

The evaluation reports were also explicit about the problems encountered in the implementation process. In some cases, they suggested ways of confronting these problems during the next phase. The African plan of Action that follows addresses the most frequently raised problems with a view to providing a framework within which the problems can be resolved.

Conceptual overview

It is now five years since the Dakar PFA was adopted. In the intervening period, since the Beijing Conference, there have been a number of new developments and commitments made, which provide a new context for formulation of the African Plan of Action for the next five years. Some of these developments include the many and relevant recommendations emanating from the World Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II, Istanbul, 1996), and more recently (June 1999), the conclusions and recommendations of the third meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the DND and the ICDP-POA adopted by UNGASS in June 1999.

The combined impact of past macro-economic policies and globalisation has resulted in a number of adverse consequences. These include overall social dislocation and increased

numbers of people living below the poverty line. In many African countries, women continue to carry increasingly large burdens of responsibility for the poor, aged, orphaned children and the sick. Poor women and orphaned children head many households. The family is ordinarily the primary source of economic and social protection for those who cannot support themselves because of disability, illness, old age, inflation, low wages, unemployment, or displacement. Unfortunately, urbanisation and its accompanying lifestyles, coupled with the poverty that has resulted from the poor performance of most African economies, have left the traditional African social welfare system weakened and ineffective. The burden therefore falls disproportionately on women, who have to assume greater responsibility for the care of the poor and the helpless, in addition to other productive and reproductive roles.

These experiences require policy shifts from a single-factor approach to a more comprehensive, multisectoral approach to people's wellbeing and security. Governments should consider, as a matter of priority, innovative actions to respond to this growing problem. In view of the urgency of this matter, governments should consider setting up new mechanisms where they do not exist and strengthening existing ones. Some countries have made a start in this direction.

Such measures are strongly recommended to run parallel to poverty alleviation programmes, in order to lighten the heavy responsibilities that women carry to maintain those unable to care for themselves.

It is against the background of these major structural shifts, which offer opportunities and challenges, that this plan should be interpreted.

Statement of mission

The African Plan of Action is proposed to help implement the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action through national, subregional and African plans of action. It is a synthesis of strategies and mechanisms proposed to address and resolve a number of issues that, in the past five years, have been identified as posing serious constraints to implementing the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.

The issues fall in six categories:

While most countries had drawn comprehensive national plans of action for implementing the platforms, few had defined concrete strategies for co-ordinating the activities that were actually implemented by a range of actors in a variety of sectors. Duplication of effort and consequent waste of precious resources at the expense of the targeted beneficiaries was a major concern in most countries. Although there was an attempt to assign the co-ordinating role to a particular structure in some countries, these structures, for the most part, lacked the necessary mandate or the accompanying tools and resources to carry out their role effectively.

Yet another weakness that was linked to the national plans of action was that they omitted well-defined mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation process, which should be predicated on a clearly formulated set of indicators. In the absence of such a mechanism, it was

impossible to gauge accurately the level of progress made and thus correct the process as necessary.

Practically all countries were silent on the issue of accountability. While commitment to implementing the Dakar and Beijing Platforms was explicit, as demonstrated by declarations and resolutions the Governments adopted, the national reports were silent on the issue of accountability to the people who were supposed to be the beneficiaries of the Platforms. Silence in this sense leads to negligence and lip service, which safeguard the status quo at the expense of the advancement of women, gender equality, and sustainable development.

In the platforms for action, gender mainstreaming in policies, plans, and programmes in all sectors was accepted as the most effective strategy for achieving gender parity. This strategy places on all sectors the responsibility for implementing the platforms. Unfortunately, few countries to date have either formulated comprehensive national gender policies or drawn up gender-sensitive sectoral policies. At the same time, the presence of women in critical masses at decision-making levels continues to be elusive, thus pushing back even further the likelihood of a demand for accountability. It is imperative to ensure that those who attain decision-making positions have the necessary leadership skills and the capacity to analyse and evaluate policy and programmes from a gender perspective.

Countries implementing the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and their vision of equality, development, and peace, have encountered a preponderant shortage of resources due to lack of access and control of those resources at the individual, national, subregional, and regional levels. Existing legislation, economic liberalisation policies, privatisation, debt repayments, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), and world trade terms respond unfavourably to the interests of the marginalized and the underprivileged in Africa, particularly women. Large and widening economic inequalities have resulted in insecurity, squalor, and inefficiencies, and they have undermined family systems, thus running the risk of institutionalising poverty. Recent reports show that the world's wealthiest 16 per cent uses 80 per cent of the world's natural resources. Yet, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights guarantees all people the right to "freely dispose of their wealth and natural resources . . . at their exclusive interest in no case shall a people be deprived of it" (article 21.1).

In the recent past, a number of emerging issues have become pervasive and life threatening to the entire African society. Governments and the entire population must address them directly and decisively. Two of the issues, HIV/AIDS and the problem of the needy and helpless, pose particular threats due to their magnitude and far-reaching effects. In most African countries, the level of poverty is growing annually as the number of people who are living below the poverty line increases by the millions. The strength of the extended family to take care of these people, a role that largely falls on women, has been eroded to bare bones as evidenced by the number of street children and beggars of all ages in the cities. The question of where the responsibility lies for helping the victims of HIV/AIDS and of poverty must be answered and acted upon as a

matter of urgency, before the situation is accepted as a normal way of life and eventually becomes the demise of Africa.

The African Plan of Action examines the issues outlined above within the context of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and the priorities selected for focus by the different actors. It proposes a framework within which strategies and mechanisms for addressing them can be put in place and activated, nationally, subregionally, and regionally. The ultimate goal of the African Plan of Action is, therefore, to accelerate implementation of the Platforms for Action in the next five years, after which time, the accomplishments of the decade since the Beijing Conference will be evaluated.

I. Coordination machinery and strategies

Justification

Governments have committed themselves to implement the Dakar and Beijing Platforms. NGOs, United Nations specialised agencies and other structures are also contributing to the exercise locally, nationally, subregionally, regionally, and internationally. Since the Beijing Conference, many structures have been set up at every level to promote gender equality. Member States have made efforts to involve their institutions in formulating policies, programmes and plans with a view to translating the Dakar and Beijing Platforms into action. This poses a problem in eliciting the participation and co-operation of the myriad institutions of Government, civil society, the private sector, and NGOs. The national, subregional, and regional institutions suffer from ill-defined statutes and mandates, lack of skills in gender analysis, inadequate financing and equipment, centralised authority, poor capacity to mobilise, an unprofessional approach to the issue of gender, and lack of co-ordination.

The multiplicity of structures and actors, diversity of strategies pursued, and poor co-ordination of activities constitute obstacles to both harmonious implementation of national plans of action and realistic evaluation. Each of the countries has to develop strategies and machinery for co-ordinating gender activities, to promote smooth implementation, follow up, and evaluation but also remedial action and better planning. Indeed, the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms would be easier if all players established close links and shared information.

Vision

Each member State regularly attempts to co-ordinate, through appropriate machinery located either in the Office of the President or the Office of the Prime Minister or any other highest-level office, the different activities conducted to promote gender equality among the various actors under the 12 critical areas of concern. Co-ordination makes it possible to avoid duplication of effort, save time and resources, and maximise impact.

Strategic objectives

At the national level:

1. Establish a National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committee at the highest-executive level of the State, which will decide the composition. Ministries and actors including the civil society would be represented on this committee, whose responsibility should be to design, co-ordinate, monitor, and evaluate the implementation of official commitments. The committee would be vested with the authority to enforce compliance with all official commitments and ensure that they are implemented.
2. Build and enhance the capacity of the National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committee for gender and development.
3. Circulate official policy, programme, and planning documents among the partners.
4. Build or enhance the capacity of the United Nations agencies in each country to interact with the NC-CC.

At the subregional level:

5. Create or strengthen a gender mechanism responsible for following up the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action in each intergovernmental organisation (IGO).

At the regional level:

6. Strengthen the capacity of the existing gender structures in the regional IGOs to facilitate their role in following up implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.

Strategic actions

National level

1. Establish a National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committee for promotion of gender equality.
2. Provide gender training for all national, bilateral and multilateral development partners.
3. Establish, under the leadership of the UN resident co-ordinator system, a consultative and co-ordinating mechanism for United Nations agencies to support the implementation of the Platform for Action. This mechanism will provide technical and financial support to the national follow-up teams responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Platforms.
4. Have United Nations agencies lead, in co-ordination with national, subregional and regional organisations, capacity building of gender analysis and related skills.

Subregional level:

1. Create or strengthen a gender mechanism responsible for overseeing follow - up of the Dakar and Beijing PFA in each subregional IGO. Such a mechanism should be placed at a sufficiently high level to influence decision-making directly and ensure adequate resource allocation to the programmes and activities.
2. Subregional IGOs should work closely with the ECA Subregional Development Centres (SRDCs) to ensure complementary planning, programme delivery and co-ordination.

Regional level:

7. Strengthen the status and the human and financial resources of gender units in ADB, ECA, and OAU, to facilitate their rôle in co-ordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the implementation of the Platforms for Action.
8. Strategically locate the gender equality promotion mechanisms within OAU, ECA and ADB as close to the policy-making level as possible to enable them to influence policy directly.
9. Establish an institutional mechanism at ministerial level within the framework of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community to promote, monitor and evaluate gender equality.
10. Member States are responsible for providing resources for gender mainstreaming.

Actors

Members and officials of governmental, intergovernmental, United Nations agencies, NGOs, civil society, and private sector officials, by becoming effectively involved, have an important role to play in promoting gender equality.

Indicators

- ◆ Establishment and operation of National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committees for the promotion of gender equality.
- ◆ Number of people and structures trained in the gender approach.
- ◆ Number of people and structures receiving official documents.
- ◆ Existence and efficient operation of a gender mechanism in each subregional IGO.
- ◆ The number of programmes monitored and evaluated by the gender focal points of ADB, ECA and OAU.

Time frame

For the coming four years, each country should have an operational consultative and coordinating committee for the promotion of gender equality and a consultative and coordinating mechanism in United Nations country offices to support the implementation of national plans of action.

Resources

Member States, together with development partners including bilateral and multilateral cooperation, should take responsibility at the national, subregional and continental level to provide resources for gender mainstreaming projects.

II. Strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Platforms for Action

Justification

Through the Addis Ababa Declaration on the African Platform for Action on Women in June 1995, the African Heads of State and Government “declared their solemn commitment to the principles, objectives and priorities enshrined in the African Platform for Action”. They also reaffirmed that “the implementation of the African Platform for Action is the primary responsibility of African Governments and peoples”. In this connection, they asked ADB, ECA, and OAU to “closely monitor the implementation of the Platform and to submit periodic reports thereon to the Council of Ministers and to [their] Conference”. Similarly, the Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 committed themselves “to implement the [Beijing] Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programmes”. They also recognised that “it is essential to design, implement and monitor effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women”.

Unfortunately, although most countries have already formulated and started to implement their national action plans, they have not been as efficient in creating mechanisms to monitor how the implementation process evolves so that they can evaluate it periodically. The national action plans in most of the reporting countries lack indicators to measure movement towards the defined objectives, or at best, the indicators have been inconsistently defined. It therefore becomes impossible to estimate progress made towards the overall goal of mainstreaming gender as a strategy towards sustainable development, equality, and peace. For a comprehensive solution to this problem, each country needs to develop ways to monitor and evaluate how well the platforms for action are being implemented.

Vision

Each country monitors annually and every five years evaluates the implementation of the platforms for action through a clearly defined mechanism with concrete indicators for each of the 12 critical areas of concern.

Strategic objectives

At the national level

1. Constitute a national technical team of experts in each country, which will define clear indicators in the 12 critical areas of concern by which it will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation progress.

At the subregional level

2. Ensure that the subregional IGOs develop appropriate tools with which to monitor and evaluate performance in gender mainstreaming.

At the regional level

3. Ensure that the regional institutions have monitoring and evaluation tools that they use regularly in following up their implementation performance.

Strategic actions**National level**

1. Identify and, where possible, appoint staff specially in all the 12 sectors for the national technical team, trained in:
 - Formulating indicators for measuring progress made in the implementation process;
 - Analysing policies and programmes to ensure that gender concerns are integrated into monitoring and evaluation processes.
2. Formulate monitoring and evaluation tools.
3. Monitor annually the implementation process and mid-term and biennial evaluation of progress made in the implementation.

Subregional and regional levels

4. Monitor and evaluate teams within the IGOs and regional institutions selected and trained in:
 - Formulating indicators for measuring progress made in the implementation process;
 - Analysing policy and programme to ensure that gender concerns are integrated into monitoring and evaluation processes.
5. Formulate monitoring and evaluation tools.
6. Monitor annually the implementation process and biennial evaluation of progress made in gender mainstreaming.
7. The follow up mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the African Platform for Action should be accelerated by the formation of a joint secretariat comprising the OAU, ADB, ECA. The OAU shall have responsibility of chairing the secretariat which shall work out precise modalities of co-ordination among the three organisations

Actors

- ◆ Selected staff from sectors representing each of the 12 critical areas of concern appointed by the highest authority within Government ministries who come together to constitute one national technical team for monitoring and evaluating the implementation process. Evaluation and monitoring teams in IGOs and regional institutions (ADB and OAU).
- ◆ Trainers in formulation of indicators, policy analysis for gender audit, and monitoring and evaluation processes. ECA and the African Centre for Women (ACW) should train them in collaboration with OAU, ADB, other UN agencies, and subregional, regional, bilateral and multilateral training institutions.

Time frame

In the next four years, each country should have a trained national follow-up team that conducts monitoring and evaluation exercises for the national evaluation report due in 2004.

Resources

The cost should be shared among Governments, which should provide the team members, host the training workshops and carry out the monitoring and evaluation exercises. ECA should take a leading role among UN, bilateral and multilateral agencies and the subregional and regional training institutions, in formulating and implementing the training programme.

III. Women and decision-making

Justification

Comprehensive development can happen only when women achieve better social, economic, and political status and take active part in the management of public affairs. In most countries, women are under-represented at every level of administration in the public or private sector. They account for less than 10 per cent of the legislature. Discriminatory attitudes and practices, family responsibilities, low income, little education, lack of self-confidence, the inability to control their sexuality and reproductive roles, and the non-competitiveness of women leaders all combine to prevent women from attaining positions of power. It is therefore the responsibility of each State to take the measures required to create an enabling environment that will allow women to participate more in development, enhance the capacities of women leaders and achieve social justice.

Vision

Each country is supposed to have concrete, timebound and effective institutional framework for promoting equal gender representation in decision-making bodies in the public and private sector, the legislature and political parties, and in international organisations.

Strategic objectives

1. Increase the number of women in political and decision-making positions.
2. Promote affirmative action to reduce gender disparities in decision-making organs.
3. Provide women with the opportunity to participate in decision-making.
4. Increase the capacity of women in decision-making.
5. Promote democratic values, liberty, gender equality and separation of powers.
6. Develop gender sensitivity in all decision-making processes and at all levels.

Strategic actions

National level

1. Ensure that there is an irreversible critical mass of women in decision-making positions.
2. Ensure that professional women from relevant fields constitute at least 33 per cent of the national delegations attending all statutory meetings, nationally and internationally.
3. Ensure that men at technical and decision-making level constitute at least 33 per cent of the national delegations for statutory meetings to discuss gender and women issues at national and international levels.
4. Train for capacity building in leadership skills.

Subregional level

5. Provide women with equal opportunities to head subregional IGOs. An effective search for candidates should be built into the normal recruitment process.
6. Ensure that, at all times, at least 50 per cent of the managers of the technical departments in the IGO are women.

Regional level

7. Make a concerted effort to ensure that women candidates are promoted to decision-making positions in OAU and women candidates are supported for the post of the Secretary-General of OAU.
8. Build into the recruitment policy an effective search for qualified female and male candidates for the posts of Secretary-General, assistant secretaries-general and technical directors.
9. When the Secretary-General is a man, ensure that 50 per cent of assistant secretaries-general are women, or vice versa.
10. In the soon-to-be-established African parliament, ensure that at least 33 per cent of the parliamentarians are women.
11. Ensure that women constitute at least 50 per cent of decision-makers in the soon-to-be-established African Monetary Fund, the African Court of Justice and the African Central Bank.

The Organisation of African Unity should in particular:

- (a) Devise mechanisms that facilitate and ensure women's participation in the electoral process of the Pan-African Parliament, or their appointment to these new structures (the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Union, the African Court of Justice) and other leadership areas.
- (b) Ensure equal access to and full participation of women in the preparation of the constitutional legal texts of the Union and all the related structures.
- (c) Ensure that women's interests are taken into account and their perspective incorporated in the constitutional legal texts of the Union and all the related structures.
- (d) OAU and ECA should strive to involve the African Women Committee on Peace and Development in implementation of the Sirte plan of action.

Actors

Governments bear responsibility for promoting women to decision-making positions.

Indicators

- ◆ The number of women in decision-making positions at national, subregional, and regional levels increased to at least 33 per cent;
- ◆ Gender policies formulated;
- ◆ Legislation put in place;
- ◆ Gender-sensitive programmes designed;
- ◆ Recruitment policies and effective mechanisms for women candidates put in place;
- ◆ Training programmes instituted.

Time frame

In the coming four years, Governments should take adequate institutional measures to promote the advancement of women into decision-making positions.

Resources

The necessary resources for establishing and operating these structures should come from governments, NGOs, civil society organisations and bilateral and multilateral development partners.

IV. Mobilising resources for implementing the Platforms for Action

Justification

Insufficient resources continue to present an important constraint in implementing the platforms. Practically all the reporting countries cited this as a critical obstacle; similarly, it has been declared responsible for the low implementation rate of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies. Yet it is also a fact that there are enormous quantities of national resources, a great deal of which nationals take out of the continent for external spending or banking. Conversely, large quantities of financial resources enter the continent in different ways and for various purposes without seeming to make much difference to the perpetual cry of shortage. The issue of access and control of both external and internal resources therefore needs to be examined in depth in light of its crucial position in successfully implementing the Platforms for Action.

The high debt burden coupled with structural reforms in most African countries has affected the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. In most African countries, civil service reforms, and cutbacks in social sector budgets have led to decline in the resources allocated to the implementation of the Platforms for Actions. Consequently, these problems have had devastating multiplier effects, especially on programmes aimed at poverty alleviation, since most countries have to give more priority to debt servicing.

Yet, States are entitled to “undertake to eliminate all forms of foreign economic exploitation, particularly that practised by international monopolies so as to enable their peoples to fully benefit from the advantages derived from their national resources” (article 21.5).

The problem of access to and control of resources applies equally to resources that originate from external sources such as loans or grants. Their distribution and utilisation is often perceived as neither transparent nor equitable. Moreover, women benefit least from them, due to their absence in positions of decision-making and their limited access to and control of credit and productive resources due to socio-cultural causes.

African governments have the moral responsibility and the protective role to eliminate the current situation of large inequalities and the human misery aggravated by poverty because people have lost their access to and control of their national resources. They have the responsibility to create political, economic, and social stability by facilitating the exploitation of available national resources to shape the future of the nations for the benefit of the people. They need to formulate policies that will reconcile the imperatives of global markets with the national needs of the people, their welfare, cohesion, and the assurance of increased participation of women in decision-making at all levels.

Vision

In the planning period, to attain an increase in the rate of national wealth creation, while preserving national resources and equitable distribution of the benefits of economic and social growth and development. This will forestall further impoverishment of the poor and the powerless, particularly women.

Strategic objectives

At national level

1. Engender budgeting and macro-economic planning processes to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to accelerate implementation of the African and Global PFAs.
2. Reinforce the capacity to absorb and manage the resources allocated to implementation of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action.

At the regional level

3. Mobilise external resources from bilateral and international partners for successful implementation of the PFA, including resources from debt cancellation and conversion.
4. Advocate for the strengthening of funding agencies such as UNIFEM that are mandated to support women and gender programmes.

Strategic actions

To achieve the above objectives, governments should:

1. Ensure that privatisation increases the number of national stakeholders and owners in the national economy through empowerment and fair competition in wealth creation for the nations. To this end, governments should find a way to retain enterprises that are fully or partially privatised, until a critical mass of nationals, including women, are financially in a position to purchase and run them profitably. Governments should ensure that women have access to ownership and management of businesses, within the context of privatisation. This was successfully done in Malaysia and in the Association of South East Asian Nations (SEAN) countries that have indigenized privatisation.
2. Link negotiations for terms of debt repayment, including debt relief, with resources for implementation of the Platforms for Action, in order to recycle debt relief for gender mainstreaming.
3. Develop and strengthen gender budgeting and macroeconomic planning mechanisms to ensure funding for activities carried out to implement the PFAs.
4. Where there is no specific target and/or less than one per cent is currently being allocated, intergovernmental, subregional and regional economic structures and civil society organisations should alleviate at least 1 per cent of their total annual budget for women- and gender-related activities. UN agencies that have set targets for resource allocation for gender mainstreaming and advancement of women should set a time frame and undertake to implement their commitments in this regard.

Actors

The actors are the governments, the national committees, the NGOs, the civil society and other collaborating institutions at national and international levels.

Indicators

Indicators include the level of budget allocation for Platform for Action implementation.

Time frame

In the next two years each country should have developed and strengthened its gender budget and macro-economic planning mechanisms, and in the next four years each country should have developed and strengthened other resource mobilisation mechanisms.

Mechanisms and structures

The national co-ordination committee should be responsible for promoting and monitoring mobilisation of resources from the sources stipulated above. The committee should also determine the financial needs for implementation of the Platforms for Action in different sectors.

V. Strategies and mechanisms for accelerating the integration of a gender approach in policies, planning and programming

Justification

Gender is a social construct linked to the norms of a given society. It constitutes a variable for differentiating, organising, and structuring social roles and relationships. In describing such societal roles and responsibilities, gender analysis facilitates taking into account the economic and social roles of women and men and effectively integrates their specific constraints and strengths in development activities. Using a gender approach, a community can conduct activities that promote equal participation of men and women in its development at the same time as it achieves an equitable sharing of resources. For Africa to develop sustainably, its men and women must participate equally, but lopsided appropriation of resources and prevailing social norms do not allow women to play their role in development fully or to reap the benefits for their own wellbeing.

In adopting the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, member States committed themselves to working for gender equality. They should therefore effectively integrate the gender approach in national policies, planning, programming, and evaluation with a view to achieving the set objectives. Five years since the adoption of the regional platform, however, there is still a long way to go to integrate the gender approach systematically in national policies, planning, programming, and project evaluation. This weakness is evident both in the state structures and in the civil society, private sector, and non-governmental organisations. Some subregional organisations have also taken steps to institutionalise and mainstream gender into their policies, programmes and activities, while others are in the process of doing so. These efforts need to be encouraged and strengthened.

Vision

The public and private sectors and civil society responsible in each country for implementing the national plan of action should understand and use the gender approach in programme formulation and implementation.

Strategic objectives

At national level

1. Promote capacity building for members of the National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committee for the promotion of gender equality, the national technical team members of all sectoral committees or commissions responsible for implementing national plans of action, and all development partners.
2. Integrate national plans of action in all projects implemented by national and international partners.

3. Promote a system for collecting gender-disaggregated data and building related databanks in every ministerial department and structure responsible for national statistics, planning, and programming.

At subregional and regional level

4. Promote the mainstreaming of gender concerns, and capacity building in the policies and programme activities of all subregional and regional organisations.

Strategic actions

At national level

1. Institutionalise systems for collecting gender-disaggregated data.
2. Establish gender-disaggregated databanks in the relevant structures.
3. Provide initial and regular gender training for policy makers, legislators, planners and programme implementors as well as development partners.
4. Develop of gender mainstreaming guidelines adapted to national realities.

At subregional and regional level

5. Develop and strengthen mechanisms for mainstreaming of gender concerns, and capacity building in the policies, programmes and activities of all subregional and regional organisations.

Indicators

- ◆ Engendered national plans of action;
- ◆ Availability of sex-disaggregated data;
- ◆ Resources for data collection and analysis;
- ◆ Number of policy makers, parliamentarians, legislators and programme implementors trained;
- ◆ Number of training sessions.

Time frame

Over the coming four years, each State should systematically use the gender approach in all official documents and monitor their implementation. The National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committee for the promotion of gender equality is appropriate for implementing the

various measures, with the assistance of national, bilateral and multilateral development partners and the national technical team members of sectoral committees or commissions responsible for implementing national plans of action.

Resources

Implementation of this programme will require a close working relationship among States, NGOs, civil society organisations and bilateral and multilateral partners.

VI. HIV/AIDS and its Implications for Women's Empowerment

Justification

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is progressively wiping out the post-colonial gains of public health and economic development efforts of the last 30 years in Africa. It is ruthlessly killing young people in the prime of their productive life. Nearly 11 million Africans have died of AIDS alone, at an average rate of 2 million per year, and nearly 6000 per day, at a cost of up to \$US1000 per funeral. Infections gallop at the daily rate of 10,000 adults between 15 to 49 years, mainly women, and 2000 children under 15 years, mainly girls. In this regard, it is noted that the incubation period in Africa is generally much shorter than the 20 years so far experienced elsewhere. The birth rate, the only means of replacing the dead and dying, is only 72,000 per day, and it is declining.

The prevailing neglect, mystery, myths, stigma, prejudice, and intolerance for a primarily public health concern continue to fuel the spread of a deadly disease that is contracted primarily through sexual intercourse, an act central to male and female relationships. Yet, once again, females find themselves disadvantaged due to social and economic dependence, and physical and physiological differences that expose them, more than their male partners, to infections. Young girls are at greater risk due to some traditional practices, sexual abuse, forced marriage, prostitution, and myths that infected men can be cured by having sexual relations with a virgin, thus exposing the girl to tearing of the genitals, which accelerates infections. Women with disabilities also are at a greater risk of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS infection arising out of their double marginalization as women and as disabled. Elderly relatives, with little means or support particularly carry the burden of orphans. The breadwinners die, families disintegrate, and poverty and despondency reign.

Although infection rates vary between African countries and subregions, high mobility within the continent means that no country will remain unaffected by HIV/AIDS. Prevention is the key to slowing the spread of AIDS in Africa and curtailing its ultimate impact - devastation of African populations. Prevention strategies must address the structures that place the woman in a disadvantaged position in society and instead empower her to protect herself and her children. Local resources must be mobilised to prevent infections and manage health care, not only to bury the dead.

Vision

The vision of the Plan of Action is to reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS infections by 50 per cent by 2004 by creating awareness and reducing the socio-economic devastation of HIV/AIDS.

Strategic objectives

- ◆ Increasing resources to fight the disease and its effects;
- ◆ Empowering women socially and economically; and

- ◆ Demystifying or removing fear and the sense of mystery about HIV/AIDS, through realistic information, education and communication (IEC) programmes in the community.

Strategic actions

To demystify HIV/AIDS and reduce the spread of infection, central governments have the responsibility to take the following strategic actions:

1. Formulate or review HIV/AIDS policy to check spread of the infection and then to eradicate it through non-discrimination, demystification of the disease, and protection of both the infected and the uninfected.
2. Set up or strengthen national HIV/AIDS committees or their equivalents, to develop national HIV/AIDS prevention and control programmes.
3. Legislate against all discriminatory practices that have implications on HIV/AIDS, including promoting/regulating the age of consent and controlling and prohibiting deliberate contamination of the uninfected by the infected.
4. Promote community-based health care (for example, as in Zambia), which encourages the infected to live positively within the community. The approach enhances information, education, and communication to reduce myths and subsequent isolation. It also empowers, involves, and protects the woman and caters for the orphans.
5. Prevent transmission through transfusion of infected blood, use of contaminated needles, syringes, surgical and dental equipment, and breast-feeding by infected mothers. To do this, governments in close collaboration with NGOs, women's groups, the private sector, and international agencies, should design and implement programmes and projects for:
 - ◆ Sensitisation, training and inspections;
 - ◆ HIV screening and contact tracing to protect public health, particularly of the high-risk groups, to be determined at the national level;
 - ◆ Conducting family life and sex education on the dangers of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, targeting the youth;
 - ◆ Building community associations through age groups and professional, religious, or other clubs, to facilitate information interchange and networking and to promote community feeling and concern for one another. Through these, transmission will be reduced and the care of those already infected will be intensified and made more effective;
 - ◆ Setting up homes and centres (for example, as in Zimbabwe) to rescue orphans, particularly girls, from defilement, violence, neglect, or abandonment, and build or reassign hospitals, health centres, and clinics, under professional and skilled personnel, to provide health services, including counselling, to the communities;
 - ◆ Enable countries to investigate and negotiate for a supply of available testing kits and medicines at a reasonable cost;
 - ◆ Safeguard all nationals against unethical practices, such as drug-testing studies conducted without informed consent. Women need to be educated, trained, and empowered socially and economically, with their human rights protected from violation by one in any way;

- ◆ Enable the national HIV/AIDS committee, national women's groups and organisations, and the civil society to ensure political will and commitment, such as through lobbying;
- ◆ Support applied research by compatriots in Africa using indigenous or modern methods;
- ◆ Conduct educational programmes and sensitisation campaigns, including counselling for the women and youth on illicit drug-related issues.

Subregional level

6. Set up or strengthen subregional mechanisms for collective negotiations for bulk purchase of HIV/AIDS drugs at reduced costs.

Actors

Actors include individuals, both infected and uninfected; the community; governments; NGOs; collaborating national, subregional, regional, and international institutions.

Indicators

Indicators include:

- ◆ Number of communities organised and functioning in the control of HIV/AIDS;
- ◆ Number of information, education and communication groups and clubs;
- ◆ Number of health centres, clinics, homes, and hospitals responding to community health-care and social needs;
- ◆ Number of people seeking assistance at these centres;
- ◆ Rate of new HIV/AIDS infections;
- ◆ Rate of sexually transmitted disease infections;
- ◆ Death rates;
- ◆ Birth rates;
- ◆ Fertility rates and population growth rates;
- ◆ Rate of condom use;
- ◆ Number of HIV/AIDS rape cases and subsequent convictions;
- ◆ Regular monitoring and evaluation of PFA implementation to eradicate the HIV/AIDS threat by the national multisectoral teams, which will involve experts in this field.

Resources

Governments have the moral obligation to allocate sufficient resources to control the pandemic as a matter of priority. Resources for the community-based approach should be mobilised internally as well. However, access to available tests and medicines should be negotiated externally without the conditionalities that distract nations from their priorities or which encourage external dependence.

Mechanisms and structures

National governments should set up national HIV/AIDS committees or their equivalents comprising representatives from sectoral ministries, particularly health, social services, education, finance, and law enforcement agencies. These committees will include representation from women's groups, the private sector, and the civil society. The national committees will form subregional and regional committees in which they will involve related subregional and regional organisations to facilitate exchange of information and monitoring of the cross-border interactions that could influence control of the spread of the epidemic. National multisectoral monitoring and evaluation teams should carry out monitoring and evaluation, and report to the national coordinating and consultative committees with mandate, status and power for effective coordination.

VII. Access to and contribution towards the provision of basic goods and services by the women in the African society

Justification

Poverty and lack of control of resources are the main causes of inequality in African societies where women suffer the most. With the breakdown of traditional African family support and increasing poverty, the woman, while still without means, is overloaded with care of the poor and the needy, besides her other productive and reproductive responsibilities. The Platform for Action rightly recognises the multidimensional problem of poverty with its origins in national and international domains, continued decline of employment at a faster rate for women than for men, unsustainable economic growth and deepening interdependence among nations due to globalisation.

Women have stressed the need for African countries to create national, subregional and regional markets for national, subregional and regional products. They have re-affirmed the need for their workload and the family burdens they carry to be lightened and to be included in national accounts at macro and micro levels. The African society must assist them to do so. African governments have the moral responsibility to lighten women's workload, add value to their activities, acknowledge women's role in national development and make their contribution visible. In support, the PFAs restate the need to empower women to utilise national and other resources sustainably, with adequate institutional and financial frameworks and support at all levels.

Vision

National manufacturing, including women's contribution, is directed towards production and provision of essential goods and services for African communities through small and medium industrial enterprises that will provide labour remuneration and subsequent capital earnings for women. This will be achieved through total commitment by governments, their partners and civil societies in the setting up and running of basic industrial income earning enterprises. New and extended manufacturing programmes will be up and running in two years. Reduction in poverty among the women by a minimum of 1 per cent will be achieved at the end of five years.

Strategic objectives

National governments should aim to:

1. Raise the purchasing power of the communities and that of women in particular, by creating employment.
2. Industrialise entrepreneurial activities.
3. Achieve self-reliance in the production and provision of utility goods.

4. Allocate adequate financial and human resources for establishing indigenous small and medium industrial enterprises.
5. Reduce women's domestic workload.
6. Encourage the private sector to set up small and medium industrial enterprises in an enabling, protective and supportive environment.

Strategic actions

At national level

To develop small and medium enterprises that will provide paid employment for women, governments in collaboration with partners in development should:

1. Formulate policies that will enhance women's participation in national development and their access to and use of national resources.
2. Repeal all laws and amend all regulations prohibiting access to and use by women of national resources for national development.
3. Build capacity for setting up and running small and medium enterprises, ensuring training in technology, management, marketing and networking.
4. Provide access to capital and assets for setting up and running industrial plants that will lighten women's workload and technologically produce articles required and marketed in African communities. Funds and credit guarantee schemes should be established to facilitate this endeavour.
5. Encourage franchises for enterprise development.

At subregional and regional levels

6. Facilitate the establishment of small and medium industries for the production and provision of utility items in the country, the subregion and the region.
7. Promote intra-African trade at the subregional and regional levels within the African Economic community, guiding the location of different types of enterprises and avoiding duplication and undue saturation of sections of the markets.

Mechanisms/structures

The National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committee should ensure that the National Machinery and the Ministry of Industry facilitate policy formulation, programmes and project

design as well as the development of indigenous small and medium industries which add value to women's participation in national development.

Actors

The main actors are:

- The national government;
- The private sector, NGOs and IGOs as government partners;
- The civil society;
- The National Consultative and Co-ordinating Committee;
- The National Women's Machinery;
- Women as groups and as individuals;
- International partners.

Monitoring and evaluation

The indicators should include:

- ◆ Number and distribution nationally and regionally of industrial enterprises set up in the planning period;
- ◆ Gender-disaggregated data on number of people employed in new enterprises;
- ◆ Gender-disaggregated data on the number of people in industrial-related, decision-making positions;
- ◆ Per capita income by gender;
- ◆ Gross national product per year.

Resources

Governments will allocate resources from the national budget. Governments may seek assistance from partners sympathising with the principle of empowering women for self-determination in economic affairs; distinct inputs from UNIDO and ILO are anticipated. The private sector will be encouraged to set up franchises in small and medium enterprises that will employ women in various parts of the country. Women should also be encouraged to use savings and credit facilities among themselves and in financial institutions to expand their entrepreneurial activities. Other sources are national women's banks where they exist and specialised funds created for reducing poverty among women.

Annex III

Workshops outcome

Workshop 1. Women and Poverty and Economic Empowerment

Facilitators: - Marguerite Monnet
- Beth Mugo

Presenter: - Perpetua Katepa Kalala

In presenting the paper on *Women and Poverty and Economic Empowerment*, the consultant underscored the extent of poverty on the continent with approximately 44 per cent of population in Africa living below the poverty line of \$US39 per capita per month. However, there is some regional disparity. In sub-Saharan Africa, 51 per cent of the population live below the poverty line of \$US34 per capita per month, while in North Africa, 22 per cent of the population live below the regional poverty line. Women comprise a disproportionately larger share of the poor than do men. The presentation recalled the objectives in the Beijing Platform for Action for addressing poverty reduction among women and their economic empowerment.

Objectives

These objectives covered the following areas:

Objectives in the area of poverty reduction

- Formulate macro-economic policies and development strategies which support women in poverty;
- Adopt laws and administrative practices for equal rights and access to resources;
- Promote women's access to savings and credit mechanisms as well as institutions;
- Promote gender-based methodologies, including the availability of disaggregated data; and
- Undertake research to address the feminisation of poverty.

Objectives in the area of economic empowerment

- Promote women's economic rights and independence;
- Ensure women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;
- Business services, training and access to markets;
- Strengthen women's capacity and commercial networks;
- Eliminate occupational segregation and discrimination; and
- Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for both women and men.

Progress and achievements

Given the inter-linkages between these two areas of focus - poverty reduction and economic empowerment – it was important to have a combined assessment with regard to the progress and achievements made in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The progress

and achievements to date were summarised at three levels: (a) policies and institutional frameworks, (b) programmes and projects activities, and (c) at the level of impact.

Institutional frameworks: Countries reported that they have established and strengthened institutional mechanisms for gender equality, increased the political participation of women and established women's institutional machineries such as ministries, desks, and commissions. They have adopted legislation and policies to increase women's access to resources and have conducted research into gender-sensitive budgets. SADC was cited as an example of an institution that has started a subregional gender programme.

Activities: Some governments have ensured the provision of credit, job-creation and increased income-earning opportunities; support for women entrepreneurs to participate in trade fairs and study tours; campaigns against poverty; capacity building and skills training to increase income-earning capability and enhancement of food security.

Impact: Greater awareness of issues surrounding the gendered nature of poverty has led to programmes for poverty reduction targeted at women. However, the paucity of data or benchmark indicators, particularly of disaggregated data, has been a major constraint in measuring impact. A global assessment of growth figures from 1995 to 1998 did not indicate the rate of reduction in poverty that would enable attainment of the goal set at the 1995 Social Summit, which was to reduce poverty by half by 2015.

Constraints: The constraints that were mentioned in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action included: lack of resources, women's multiple roles, which prevent them from fully participating in development programmes, the national debt burden, war and civil strife.

Emerging issues: In the next five years, emphasis should be placed on:

- Policies and programmes that show increased political will;
- Enhanced gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes;
- Implementation of programmes for economic growth;
- Continued support for women in poverty and women's participation in the economy;
- Involvement of poor women in articulating, implementing, and monitoring programmes to reduce poverty;
- Promotion of inter-country trade and collaboration among women;
- Increased training for women;
- Establishment in particular, of benchmarks and indicators for monitoring, as an early priority in the next 12 months; and
- Identification and implementation of effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Outcome of the workshop

1. At the level of institutional mechanisms

Strategies

The workshop identified a number of strategies that had been put in place to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, including the following:

- Creation of institutional committees on access to land by women, for instance in Zambia;

- Creation of social safety nets and funding;
- Job creation to young graduates in Algeria;
- Establishment of national credit institutions that take gender dimensions into account, for example, in Burkina Faso and Burundi and, further developed in Madagascar.

Constraints

A number of constraints were identified at the level of institutions, which impede implementation of the Plan of Action. These included the following:

- Insufficient funds allocated to sectors in which most women are employed, for instance, in the agriculture and informal sectors; and
- Lack of gender sensitivity at the level of programme officers.

Recommendations

The workshop came up with a number of recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action, which included the following:

- Greater involvement of civil societies in the design of policy, the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects;
- Transparency and greater accountability of government in resource use;
- Strengthening of national capacities (including women's organisations) for international negotiations, e.g., at the World Trade Organisation (WTO);
- Harmonising positions among African countries at international negotiations (e.g., at WTO);
- Debt cancellation and allocation of ensuing resources for poverty reduction.

2. At the level of activities

Strategies

The workshop identified a number of activities that had been undertaken in various countries, for example:

- Encouraging women to go into commercial food processing;
- Providing credit facilities particularly to women;
- Job creation;
- Establishing mutual banks and solidarity funds;
- Engendering or genderizing national budgets;
- Adopting systematic affirmative action to facilitate women's participation in decision-making;
- Strengthening regional networking institutions among experts of gender approaches; and
- Facilitating women's access to training.

Constraints

Despite these efforts, a number of constraints were identified by the workshop, including the following:

- High interest rates charged for micro-credit;
- Short duration of loans;
- Inappropriate micro-financial systems;
- Disruption of household financial arrangements;
- Lack of capacity to manage the loans;
- Lack of adequate land tenure, security, and services for the urban poor;
- Consequences of HIV/AIDS; and
- Consequences of war and conflict.

Recommendations

Infrastructure and finance

- Improve national infrastructural facilities, e.g., roads, information networks, water, electricity;
- Create funds designed to improve general infrastructures such as health centres, schools and child-care centres;
- Develop programmes to enhance land tenure and security and appropriate infrastructure and services for poor urban dwellers, addressing both issues of poverty alleviation and economic empowerment;
- Create specific funds for developing women's income-generating activities;
- Develop micro-financing systems that are adapted to local needs, and that can effectively be used in poverty alleviation, for example, for improving indigenous credit systems such as tontine;
- Establish an African Bank for Women; and
- Increase women's access to formal banks.

Access to information, technology and markets

- Adopt national practical strategies that promote the access of rural women to information and communication and functional literacy;
- Subsidise agricultural inputs including fertilisers and implements;
- Adopt appropriate technology to alleviate women's workload;
- Encourage the sharing of existing indigenous technology among different African countries;
- Promote access to markets at the intra-African and international levels;
- Devise coping mechanisms to enable women to better manage their time; and
- Reduce military budgets and re-allocate these resources to poverty alleviation, health and education.

Workshop 2: Inadequate Access of Women to Education, Training, Science and Technology

Facilitators: - Thokozile Ruzvidzo
- Chaabouni Habiba

Presenter: - Khardiata Lo Ndiaye

The workshop agreed that education was a key factor in the growth and well being of any individual. It was not only a fundamental right of women, but was also a powerful tool for integration of women into the social, economic and political spheres. Yet, Africa had the lowest literacy rate in the world, at 50 per cent. In 1990, the adult literacy rates in sub-Saharan Africa were 61 per cent for men and 41 per cent for women.

African governments and civil society have committed themselves to ensuring gender equality in national policies and programmes, in universal primary, secondary and tertiary education, and in adult literacy. There is also a strong commitment to attaining gender equality in enrolment levels, in both formal and non-formal education, by the year 2000.

Similar enabling commitments have been made by the Organisation of African Unity, the Conference of African Ministers of Education, the United Nations System and UNESCO, often with special reference to the education of girls and women in Africa, and their scientific, technical and professional training.

The Beijing Conference might not have appeared to be the genesis of a remarkable phase in the development of education. It was, in fact, an extraordinary source of inspiration for a new perspective on the education of women and girls, and a new frame of reference. The mid-term review of its implementation revealed that real progress has been made in this area, although the follow-up mechanisms set up at national, subregional and regional levels have not worked optimally. The process has underlined that the education of women and girls, greater participation of women in development programmes and projects, and definitely gender equality in education, are not only some of the best ways to empower women, but are also an investment in the future of Africa.

Evaluation of the programmes and mechanisms put in place to address gender equality in education and training

Progress

A number of countries reported progress in elaborating strategies and implementing programmes to ensure gender equality in education. Examples included:

- Adoption of new policies in education and training, with specific policy intentions on girls' education and its prioritisation, especially at primary level;
- Establishment in some countries of universal, free, and in some cases, compulsory education at primary and other levels;

- Deliberate recruitment of female teachers to serve both rural and urban areas;
- Implementing flexible programmes in rural areas to encourage greater enrolment and retention of girls;
- Establishing rural schools closer to communities;
- Providing incentives and facilities such as boarding, transportation, free uniforms, nutritional packages, and reduced school fees to girls in special circumstances, and awarding scholarships and bursaries to retain girls in schools;
- Revising the curricula and materials, removing sexist stereotypes and introducing gender sensitivity;
- Decentralisation of school management to local councils for more efficiency, and to serve community interest and needs better;
- More dynamic partnerships between governments, NGOs, local communities (including parents) and donors have played a key role in gender mainstreaming;
- Strengthening networks of schools to get them closer to communities; and
- Allowing teen-mothers and pregnant girls to continue their education.

Constraints

Whilst varying from country to country, a number of constraints were noted as impacting on programme implementation: Many countries reported:

- A double gap between policy adoption and implementation and between policies and community needs;
- Socio-cultural constraints militate against girls' education, such as the prioritisation of boys' education;
- Lack of human and financial resources, infrastructure and facilities;
- Lack of well-qualified teachers in some countries, especially in the sciences;
- Difficulty in recruiting female teachers, especially for rural schools;
- High dropout rates of girls, due to pregnancy, early marriages and domestic-chore demands at home; and
- Poverty as a hindrance to participation of women and girls in education and literacy programmes.

Recommendations

In addition to the obvious overall imperative of allocating more national resources to education, and establishing free and universal education, the following recommendations were made:

- Reduce the workload of women and girls to enable them to continue their education;
- Increase co-ordination and partnership among all agents involved in education: government, local communities, NGOs, religious missions and donors;
- Encourage local communities to raise funds to support schools;
- Create more attractive incentives for teachers;
- Introduce gender-sensitisation programmes for teachers;
- Revise curricula and training materials to remove gender biases, and increase their relevance and sensitivity to community needs;
- Establish bursaries and scholarships, particularly for girls;
- Remove restrictions to re-admission of teen-mothers and pregnant girls;
- Raise the awareness of communities on the importance of girls' education;
- Foster women's adult literacy programmes; and
- Enlarge the diversity of training programmes on income generation.

Women's access, participation and visibility in science and technology

Progress

Various countries have recognised that the participation and visibility of women and girls in the sciences is marginal. They have been increasing their emphasis on policies and programmes that accentuate the teaching of science and technology in schools. In some countries, the numbers of girls going into the scientific field have increased. To achieve this, activities carried out included:

- Guidance and counselling that orient girls to the scientific field;
- Allocation of accommodation, especially at university level, to girls studying science;
- Establishment of women's associations in the sciences to provide support and networking for women;
- Training of women in special scientific areas, such as computer science.

Constraints

However, the successes reported in this area were limited. The workshop pointed to major factors that hinder gender mainstreaming in science and technology:

- Lack of necessary human and financial resources, infrastructure and facilities;
- Lack of gender-sensitive teaching methodologies, which often result in discouraging girls from taking up scientific careers;
- The periods spent in training are relatively long for girls, and there is no guarantee of employment; and
- Science is still seen, in several communities, as an area for boys and not girls.

Recommendations

Among the steps to take to make the field of science and technology more attractive and accessible to women are:

- Revising the curricula and educational materials at all levels to remove the stereotypes that discourage women from choosing technical professions, and to increase their relevance to job opportunities;
- Encouraging industrial and other employers to prioritise the employment of female graduates;

- Monitoring the progress of women graduates in science and technology, to assist them in their career development;
- Establishing guidance and counselling programmes for girls to enable them to make career choices at an early stage;
- Promoting successful role models of women in science and technology;
- Sensitising girls, teachers and parents in particular to the benefits of technical careers; and
- Developing indicators to evaluate gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in science and technology.

Conclusions of the workshop

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, education of the girl-child was an important issue. Education was a key tool for the empowerment of women at all levels of society and in the social, political and economic sectors. The Extraordinary Summit of the OAU on Education should include the issues of gender and education.

Therefore, countries should:

- Set gender-based targets, develop gender indicators and provide gender-disaggregated statistics for evaluating the extent to which policies and programmes have led to the empowerment of women by the year 2005.
- Address the gap between the educational needs of the population, and the provision and quality of education, with special reference to the training of employable young people.
- Advance women's education as essential for increasing their economic and political integration.
- Encourage South-South co-operation and networking in science and technology.
- Increase women's participation in decision-making in Education Ministries.

Workshop 3: Women, Culture, the Family and Socialisation

Facilitators: - Miriam K. Were
- Fatou Sow

Presenter: - Khardiata Lo Ndiaye

The workshop on *Women, Culture, the Family and Socialisation* was held on 23 and 24 November 1999 at ECA-UNCC in order to review the progress made in the implementation of this area of concern in the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. It also made recommendations for future actions. The workshop was chaired by Dr. Miriam Were and Prof. Fatou Sow as the facilitators. Ms. Wambui Karanja and Mr. Pierre Demba were nominated as rapporteurs. The workshop considered the document entitled, "*Women's vital role in culture, the family and socialisation*" which is annexed to the present report. The discussion was in two main parts. The first part dealt with family, culture and gender relations while the second part focussed on issues specific to the family.

Culture, family and gender relations

In this first part, the workshop examined the socio-cultural and economic context within which African women were playing their vital role. It also examined the commitments of African governments, and of international and regional organisations to the implementation of the strategies of the Beijing Platform, the progress made and the constraints encountered.

The meeting recognised that the family as the basic unit of society was the most critical environment for socialisation; and was a space of power relations (domination, conflict, negotiation, etc.) between men and women, parents and children. Therefore, the family should promote gender equality.

The debates also covered various phenomena that influence relationships between men and women in African societies and their perceived gender roles. They further examined the socio-cultural values, both positive and negative, which affect family structures and relations.

Among the constraints discussed were the stresses from increasing urbanisation; the crisis of modernisation; the culture of consumption; political crises and armed conflicts; widespread and acute poverty; and the hegemony of male culture and of gender-based unequal power relationships. The prevailing ideology was reinforced through language, cultural values, and legal systems that reinforce male domination and lead to the subordination and submission of women. Therefore, even though women played a crucial role within the various forms of the African family and society, they remained at large, powerless. Some cultural practices were also blamed as some of the causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). These included polygamy, inheritance of widows by male relatives of the late husband, and sexual subordination, among others. Women should get information about their rights in the family and be empowered to negotiate and communicate within the family

Family and society

In discussing the relationship between society and family institutions, five key areas emerged as needing special attention. These were:

1. National environment and legislation;
2. The relationship between men and women within families;
3. The critical role of women in perpetuating oppressive practices against other women;
4. Empowerment of youth for effective living, preparation for marriage and parental responsibility; and
5. Child rearing and socialisation.

Many speakers pointed out that in order to deal effectively with issues of subordination of women in society, it was necessary to examine the structures and above-mentioned institutional arrangements that perpetuate female subordination as expressed in the five areas.

It was noted that a national environment supportive of the advancement of women should consist of peace and stability for sustainable development. It should have supportive laws, with provisions for affirmative action in favour of women, as their condition affect the family, the workplace, and economic and political spheres.

With respect to gender relations within families, the meeting agreed on the importance of sharing responsibilities within the family, based on the gender ideology in which women are not disproportionately burdened. The relationship between spouses has been negatively impacted by the rapid movement of people from rural communities to urban centres, which still carry forward rural-based relations. Furthermore, women lose the limited power they exercised in the rural setting and important supportive social networks.

Additionally, the recent unprecedented socio-economic crises in many African countries have exerted enormous pressure on the institution of the family. The meeting felt that there was need to educate both men and women about their responsibilities and what they should expect of marriage.

Several delegates pointed out, that many men, affected by the crisis, were no longer able to contribute towards the maintenance of their families. They were facing a situation that should be addressed if family stability and integrity are to be ensured. In many instances, men have not been given an opportunity to address issues that impact negatively on the family or those that promote their own well being.

While the ideology of the extended family has remained the norm in many societies, the nuclear family has also gained momentum but not without many unresolved contradictions that need to be addressed.

The issue of sexuality was important for the family because sexuality was not only about reproduction. Sexuality was also about pleasure and communication between partners. However, sex relations were often relations of domination based on gender and often expressed in rape, incest, sexual harassment and other forms of gender violence. Societies

therefore needed to explore ways of transforming those relations of domination to relations of equality and caring.

In discussing women's role in perpetuating negative practices on other women, e.g. supporting FGM, early marriage, mistreatment of widows, etc., it was pointed out that women needed to be made aware, especially through women's organisations, of the fact that they have internalised values of male domination that lead to their continued subordination.

Parenting and socialisation posed important challenges that include challenges specific to the young; differential socialisation that perpetuates the ideology of female inferiority; division of labour on strict gender lines and major discrepancies between family values and those of education institutions regarding issues of gender equality.

It was felt that if families succeeded in inculcating and helping children to internalise values of gender equality, this would be the answer to transforming societies towards gender equality. Communities needed to explore child-rearing patterns such as organised group day-care arrangements under adult supervision, rather than leaving young children in the care of other children.

It was acknowledged that the media plays an important role in disseminating ideas and philosophies in societies. In Africa, partnership was needed between the media and women, so that media reports about the advancement of women are positive and supportive. This support should promote gender equality and refrain from perpetuating negative stereotypes of women. The workshop agreed that equality is imperative for long-term, sustainable development, in the interest of the entire society and not only for "the good of women".

The workshop ended on a positive note by requesting national governments and development partners at all levels to provide strategies and programmes designed to enhance the stability of the family institution. Since culture was dynamic, there would be opportunities for positive change. In this respect, family well being must be included in the national development agenda.

Recommendations

- Peace and stability are prerequisites for the sustainability of the well being of societies and families. These prerequisites should be promoted in all countries.
- The negative cultural attitudes and harmful traditional practices that hinder women's participation in the political and public spheres must be removed, through education in all social institutions. In particular, women need to be made aware, especially through women's organisations, of the fact that they have internalised values of male domination that lead to their continued subordination.
- The States need to provide the legal framework – in family codes – that establishes equality between men and women and protects the rights of all family members.
- There should be sharing of powers, tasks and responsibilities within the family for more equality between men and women.
- Given the isolated nature of families in urban communities, building of solidarity and structures designed to enhance family stability and/or social support systems, especially to newly married couples, needs attention.
- Governments should provide strategies and programmes designed to promote life-enhancing stability and strengthening of family institutions.

- **Research on the African family should be promoted, including family dynamics with regard to culture, HIV/AIDS, economic well being, the care of the disabled, the aged, etc.**
- **The role of the media in promoting gender equality is critical.**

Workshop 4: Women's Legal and Human Rights

Facilitators: - Gladys Mutukwa
- Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson

Presenter: - Jean Kamau

The workshop on the critical area of concern entitled "*Women's Legal and Human Rights*" had more than 150 participants from governments, NGOs, regional and sub-regional organisations, UN agencies and bilateral and multilateral partners.

The discussions were preceded by the Consultant's summary presentation, which highlighted the fact that although African governments had committed themselves to implement all the human rights instruments, including CEDAW and CRC, that they had ratified, many women faced additional barriers to the enjoyment of their human rights. African women's human rights were clarified to include rights to, *inter alia*:

- Security in the private and public sphere;
- Access to resources at the family, community and state levels, including right to credit;
- Participation in decision-making, leadership and governance at the family, village, community, state, subregional, regional and international levels;
- A fair, just and equitable justice system;
- Education, training, jobs and other opportunities.

Statistics from various countries on FGM, rape, femicide, sexual abuse and other forms of violence were presented to demonstrate the fact that women's human rights are being systematically and continuously violated in many countries.

The report also stated that there had been such significant achievements as wide ratification of CEDAW, adoption of its Protocol, and enactment of progressive constitutions and laws in some countries. However, *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women continued, partly because of the conflict arising from the existence of dual or triple legal systems and insufficient political will to implement the PFA fully.

It was further noted that a number of countries had not submitted their reports to the monitoring bodies. The process of preparing reports was seen as one way of reviewing and assessing the rate of implementation.

In the workshop, the participants agreed with the Consultant's report and recommendations and gave further examples of what needed to be done in order to have real and sustainable improvements.

Discussions

Participants noted that although there were excellent examples of progress achieved, such as legislative reforms, and improved policy frameworks by governments and civil society, a great deal still needed to be done to establish a culture of respect for women's rights.

It was also noted that the conflict of laws arising from the application of statutory, customary and religious laws in matters of personal life had led to denial of women's rights, as most of them were inconsistent with international women's human rights standards.

In the search for ways to accelerate the protection of women's human rights, it was observed that institutional mechanisms at national, subregional, regional and international levels could be effective in promoting women's rights.

At the national level, governments needed to establish effective national machineries for enhancing recognition of women's human rights. The national mechanisms require adequate financial and human resources to carry out their mandate.

Participants mentioned excellent initiatives at the subregional level to demonstrate that effective steps could be taken for implementing the PFA. The SADC subregion and French-speaking West African States had undertaken comprehensive legislative and policy changes as a strategy to eradicate violence against women. The SADC Addendum on Violence against Women was a clear example of subregional efforts that can be replicated and that can be catalytic for actions at the national level in other parts of Africa. Recommendations were made on actions that governments, NGOs and other stakeholders should adopt to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls effectively in the new millennium.

Recommendations

Recommendations for accelerating the protection of women's human rights included:

- Enactment and effective implementation of legislation that protects women from various forms of violence;
- Domestication of the provisions of CEDAW and CRC by adoption of constitutional clauses for automatic conversion of international conventions into national law upon ratification;
- Removal of reservations on CEDAW;
- Harmonisation of all laws with international conventions to resolve contradictions between statutory, customary and religious laws;
- Sensitisation of all stakeholders, especially those in charge of legislation and law enforcement, on the importance of women's rights;
- Education of women on their rights, including training of women trainers;
- Training of judges and magistrates and of law enforcement officials;
- Use of the media to disseminate information on women's rights and cases of violations;
- Training of parliamentarians, and civil society and government officials on gender issues and women's rights;
- Building of linkages between women's rights and their access to resources and services, such as education;
- Increasing the number of women lawyers and legal experts as one of the effective ways of ensuring participation of women in the promotion of women's rights and in the enactment of laws in favour of women;
- Documentation and publication of best practices in the enforcement of women's rights, in view of possible replication and institutionalisation;
- Regular reporting by countries to the CEDAW Committee and the CSW to enable systematic monitoring and co-ordination of activities with respect to women's rights;

- Establishment and application of democratic rules and universal law for all citizens irrespective of gender; in some cases there is a tendency to misinterpret religious and customary laws deliberately in favour of men; and
- Institution of sanctions against those law enforcement officials who do not enforce legal provisions and court rulings in favour of women.

Noting that gender-based violence forms of sexual harassment and exploitation were persistent human rights violations caused by prevailing patriarchal systems, the unequal status and role assigned to women, and by lack of adequate legal protection against violations of women's rights, participants also recommended:

- Provision of legal assistance and rehabilitation services for women victims of violence, including victims of marital violence as well as refugee women and those affected by conflict;
- Legal literacy for grassroots women in local languages, and human rights education for boys and girls at the earliest age and throughout schooling;
- The UN Declaration on Violence against women should be made into a treaty so that its provisions become binding on the signatories;
- Studies on the incidences and cases of violence against women to improve the data and information on this issue for the purpose of lobbying for more adequate protection of women;
- Collaboration among all actors including the police, health services, judiciary and NGOs, in the enforcement of laws on women's rights.

Regarding the political commitment and concrete actions towards elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, participants further recommended the following:

- Inclusion of reports on violations of women's rights in all reports under any human rights treaty;
- Promotion of more women at decision-making at all levels including parliament;
- Establishment of special committees on human rights at different levels;
- Wide dissemination of information on the optional protocol on CEDAW and the additional protocol on women's rights being introduced in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. These should be made accessible for women to use as a mechanism for the defence of their human rights. However, the complaint systems should be simplified in order to make them easily accessible.
- Documentation of best practices to give visibility and recognition to countries with highest performance while shaming and even sanctioning those that fail to respect their commitments, in order to encourage countries that actively promote women's rights.
- Encouragement of public-interest litigation that uses international conventions in the absence of explicit national legislation.

Among the benchmarks and monitoring indicators to measure progress in the elimination of gender-based discrimination, participants listed:

- Gender-responsive legislation and policy frameworks;
- Society's improved perceptions;
- Sensitivity of the police to gender-based violence;
- The level and quality of media coverage;
- The delays in ratifying and domesticating CEDAW; and
- Regular and quality reporting to the monitoring bodies.

Effective and sustainable protection of women's human rights called for adequate resources and support. The participants therefore recommended:

- Mobilisation of partnerships and resources at national and regional levels;
- Establishment at the national level of broad partnerships among relevant government and non-governmental bodies, civil society and development partners, to ensure efficient co-ordination, synergies and greater impact of actions;
- Building of strategic alliances with departments in charge of justice, national planning, and budget and finance, to secure resources for legal assistance and rehabilitation programmes for victims of violence;
- Establishment of inter-ministerial committees with clear terms of reference and resources to monitor the implementation of various international obligations;
- Use at the subregional and regional levels of groupings such as SADC, ECOWAS, and EAC, as the institutional framework for partnership and capacity building among countries, for effective exchange of experiences and replication of best practices. Other subregional groupings are urged to follow the example of SADC in adopting the Gender Declaration and Addendum on Violence against Women;
- Inclusion by international partners of higher commitments to programmes and activities to promote women's rights in their co-operation agreements;
- Donor co-ordination of activities, to build on their respective comparative advantages in providing material, financial, technical and institutional support for the promotion of women's rights.

Workshop 5: Mainstreaming of Gender-Disaggregated Data (GDD)

- Facilitators: - Yassine Fall
 - Mr. Onsembe
- Presenter: - Solange Goma

After the progress report on implementation of the commitments concerning the mainstreaming of gender-disaggregated data (GDD), the discussion focused on four main questions:

Elaboration of indicators

The first question, in three parts, related to the elaboration of indicators and guidelines for decision-makers, planners and stakeholders in the socio-economic, cultural and political spheres.

Progress at the country level in the adoption of GDD and formulation of guidelines

Most of the participants were conversant with gender-disaggregated data in the socio-economic sphere, particularly in education and employment statistics. However, the coverage of gender-disaggregated data was more modest in the rural areas, although various collaborative mechanisms exist between government departments responsible for gender issues and other ministries. These collaborative mechanisms are particularly visible in the case of data gathering and/or processing for gender, population and household censuses or agricultural surveys.

The participants stressed that more effort was required to internalise the gender dimension and integrate it as a statistical tool, so that indicators could be developed to serve as benchmarks in the follow up and evaluation of programmes. Users should be conversant with the development of indicators by formulating accurate categories of data to suit their needs.

Regarding guidelines and laws, not many contributors gave an account of their experiences in connection with the introduction of statistical legislation or draft legislation to integrate gender into the data-gathering process.

Best practices

- An experience worthy of emulation by other countries was the development of lists of reference for submission to planners and macro-economists to guide them in the allocation of resources towards women's advancement. This gender mainstreaming of public expenditure should be taken up in subsequent discussions. It was reported that South Africa was already set on that course, and other SADC countries were following suit.
- Training sessions and sensitisation campaigns for statisticians have proved useful in familiarising them with the subject and integrating the gender approach.

Developing common indicators for African countries

Under this heading, it was recognised that a set of indicators common to African countries should provide a conceptual framework and a regional mechanism for comparison. This scheme of reference should, however, be flexible enough to be able to suit country-specific realities and needs.

Evaluation of public expenditure

The second question concerned the evaluation of public expenditure allocated to women. The experiences of Southern Africa in this areas was noteworthy. On the basis of the practice in Zambia, the process consists of the following stages: development of lists of reference on gender issues for planners and economists, and their utilisation for advocacy and training for macro-economists and planners in the use of lists of reference.

The whole purpose of gender-disaggregated data was to help highlight inequalities in the allocation of resources between women and men. The resultant indicators could then be used in advocacy with decision-makers for corrective measures in the allocation of resources.

It emerged, for instance, that in Botswana, gender-sensitive analysis of public expenditure revealed a number of sources of marginalization in the application of interest rates. Those results led to corrective measures designed to reduce interest rates in favour of women.

All the same, difficulties remained, particularly in the context of structural adjustment and stabilisation. In particular, the participants underscored the difficulties faced at country level in the formulation of new budget lines devoted to research on, and elaboration of, new statistical data.

Another area of difficulty related to lack of expertise in national economics and national accounts. People working in GDD and gender mainstreaming frequently faced difficulties in accurately articulating their needs to statisticians and macro-economists.

Problems of methodology

The third question related to the methodology employed in formulating quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the work done by women. It emerged that the formulation of methodologies for evaluating the work done by women entailed the definition of homogeneous concepts. For example, the activity in question should be defined so that it takes non-monetary work into account. The nature of the data to be gathered necessitated the adoption of new approaches, which were mainly qualitative:

- (a) Participative approach, involving women in the principal phases of data gathering, processing and analysis;
- (b) Operational research;
- (c) Group discussions, etc.

In evaluating the work of women, it was necessary to review the cluster of information to be gathered. In the case of agriculture, for example, a review of the concept of the household, taking into account the milieu in which agricultural activity takes place, was an

example of the methodological approaches through which the gender dimension could be well reflected.

Other avenues of methodological innovation included new information technologies and decentralisation of data gathering. Evidently, the effectiveness of GDD as a strategy depended upon the support of women in general as well as on the government departments responsible for women's affairs in particular, in terms of appropriate training and involvement in various stages of the process.

Capacity building

Fourthly and lastly, capacity building for women, the priority areas of intervention in the coming years, and the key partnerships required, were considered.

Capacity building for women was seen as entailing training in advocacy, establishment of women's networks and women's associations, and establishment and dissemination of databases.

Among the priority areas identified, the following were retained: the productive economy, the informal sector, the economy in general, and national accounts—the last-mentioned as a source of disaggregated data showing value-added.

Regarding the principal partnerships, the role of government, through its data gathering, processing and dissemination agencies, remained paramount (i.e. the national statistical agencies), as do NGOs, women's associations, development partners and other bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Recommendations

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Centre for Women (ACW) should:

- Elaborate a basic conceptual framework for the development of gender-disaggregated data;
- Develop an advocacy strategy aimed at decision-makers at the national and regional levels, for the integration of GDD into data gathering, processing and analysis;
- Produce homogeneous indicators that can be used in different countries;
- Produce and disseminate quantitative and qualitative profiles on women;
- Conduct training in gender mainstreaming to survey personnel engaged in data gathering;
- Establish a follow-up and evaluation framework for the implementation of commitments on GDD;

- Provide assistance to countries in the use of new technologies for GDD dissemination;
- Develop national statistical expertise on gender and on GDD utilisation;
- Identify national priorities in concert with country experts;
- Utilise social accounts matrices by sector on the gender approach to internalise the work and contribution of women;
- Establish an open space for country experiences and best practices;
- Encourage and facilitate dialogue between women's organisations and networks that are users of GDD and data-producing agencies.

Workshop 6: Political Empowerment of Women

- Facilitators:** - Sylvia Tamale
- Linda Vilakazi - Tselane
-Presenter: - Anthony Mawaya

The presentation pointed to several limitations in the preparation of the report. Firstly, not all national reports were available at the time of its preparation. Secondly, mostly English national reports were considered. Many countries which reports were not available provided complementary information on their situation during the workshop.

Following adoption of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, commitments were taken by:

- African countries by ratifying CEDAW, elaborating National Plans for Action, and adopting affirmative action and quota systems;
- The UN system by adopting quota systems;
- Subregional organisations, particularly SADC, which adopted a Declaration on Gender and Development endorsing its decision to establish, *inter-alia*, a quota system.

Constraints:

While several implementation activities took place, progress was slow. At times, it was difficult to measure impact. The limitations in the implementation of strategies included capacity and management problems, lack of disaggregated data, and inadequate methodologies and indicators to measure progress. Resources were inadequate and it was not easy to determine the sources or the amount allocated to the political empowerment of women. This, and lack of indicators affected mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

Challenges:

Traditional/cultural barriers and the division of labour within the household should be addressed.

Recommendations:

To increase the political empowerment of women, the concept of political empowerment should be articulated and an overall vision with strategies and benchmarks adopted.

The workshop process: The workshop focused on the broader meaning of decision-making, within the public, corporate, and social sectors, stressing the need to build women's participation and leadership in all these sectors.

Reasons for slow progress:

Political

- Lack of political will among political leaders and parties;
- Absence of affirmative action;
- Lack of political and leadership training;

- Inadequate civic and voter education for the masses;
- Inadequate allocation of resources to women's structures;
- Absence of a critical mass of women in decision-making bodies; and
- Discriminatory laws and practices against women.

Structural

- Institutional sexism;
- The patriarchal system that undermines solidarity among women;
- Low level of women's education

Cultural

Traditional and cultural barriers.

Social

- Capable women avoid the risks and exposure involved with political positions;
- Socialisation;
- Sexist attitudes and perceptions towards women.

Contextual

- Lack of effective monitoring mechanism at the national, regional and UN levels;
- Lack of resources;
- Need for sponsoring women to run for political positions;
- Lack of women role models;
- Lack of solidarity among women.

The lessons learned which need to be built on:

1. Quota systems and affirmative action work best when they are accompanied by capacity building and enforceable measures that are applicable to government and all political parties (such as the case with the ANC in South Africa).
2. There must be strong political will and commitment.
3. Countries with a background of political struggles seem to have made more progress in access than those that have been fairly "stable."
4. Time frames and targets must be set for achieving equal representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.
5. Decentralisation programmes have enabled more women at grassroots level to enter into decision-making.

The indicators of women's political and decision-making empowerment

The following framework with quantitative and qualitative indicators developed by SADC was adopted for the purpose of elaborating indicators, challenges and recommendations. The framework covers the issues of:

- Access, which is a quantitative issue;
- Participation, which is qualitative;
- Transformation, which is qualitative; and
- Monitoring, at national, subregional and regional levels.

Indicators

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quotas ▪ Support for women candidates ▪ Voters ▪ Public support and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affirmative action ▪ Supportive networks ▪ Selection and recruitment policies ▪ Public awareness and support
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Representation of women in the decision- making structures of parliament (speaker, chairs of committees) ▪ On which committees women are represented ▪ To what extent women ask questions/debate/lobby ▪ Training ▪ Retention rate ▪ Knowledge and control of processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At what levels of the public/private sectors (directors, chief directors, DGs, permanent secretaries, etc.) ▪ In which ministries; in which areas of private sector (finance, human resources, etc.) ▪ Extent of influence ▪ Training and promotion policies
Transformation Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting times ▪ Child care ▪ Gender-sensitive language ▪ Gender-sensitive environment ▪ Attitudinal change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work times (flexible time) ▪ Child care ▪ Gender-sensitive language ▪ Gender-sensitive environment
Transformation External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of gender considerations into legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of gender consideration into policies and programmes

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
<i>Access (Quantitative)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional/cultural/stereotypical attitudes ▪ Social barriers for married and single women ▪ The brutality, loneliness, machination associated with politics ▪ Lack of affirmative action ▪ Quota system has limitations ▪ Lack of commitment by governments ▪ Laws are not implemented ▪ Lack of training for leadership ▪ Lack of financial resources ▪ Conflict situations ▪ Inadequate attention to women with disabilities by women leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create awareness among different groups of population ▪ Increase women's participation in local elections ▪ Scrap all discriminatory laws and entrench the equality clause in all constitutions ▪ Endorse and entrench a quota system/mechanism in national and political party constitutions ▪ Review electoral systems and adopt those most conducive to women's participation (for example, proportional representation) ▪ Political parties should adopt the principle of equality ▪ More women in political parties ▪ Target youth for leadership positions ▪ Identify women with leadership qualities, including from countries in conflict and disabled women, and increase their presence in regional and subregional fora ▪ Establish a fund at international, regional and national level to provide women with access to resources to stand for political positions ▪ Networks at national, subregional and regional level
<i>Participation (Qualitative)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional and cultural values ▪ Attitudes and behaviour ▪ Lack of affirmative support ▪ Women's multiple roles in society ▪ Conflict/war situations ▪ International embargoes ▪ Women are not aware of the risks involved with politics ▪ Limited knowledge and control over parliamentary processes ▪ Donors do not finance women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a gender-sensitive environment in the public sphere, e.g., accessible language, session/ meeting hours, child-care facilities ▪ Networks/linkages at national, sub-regional and regional levels ▪ Create training centres for women leaders ▪ Carry out training in analytical

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Women lack confidence▪ Lack of training and analytical skills for leadership and decision-making▪ Low retention rate of women parliamentarians▪ Need for more research	<p>skills, including media and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Electoral processes should avoid conflicts before and after polling days▪ Promote inter-party caucuses/networks among women parliamentarians▪ Develop research

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
<i>Transformation (Qualitative)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional/cultural attitudes and behaviour ▪ Gender perspective is not integrated ▪ Expectation and pressure for women in decision-making to act like men ▪ Women are not used to being in power positions ▪ Women leaders have no constituency ▪ Lack of solidarity among women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective communication and support networks at national, subregional and regional level ▪ Establish a dialogue between women and men leaders ▪ Revisit the role of women's wings/units ▪ Promote a gender-sensitive media ▪ Encourage effective self-regulating mechanisms in the media, to ensure positive portrayals of women in decision-making positions ▪ Interface of women politicians and women's groups at grassroots level ▪ Research patriarchy, sexual politics and power in contemporary Africa ▪ Transform institutional culture, through transformative leadership training ▪ Set up exchange programmes among countries to share experiences and best practices ▪ Target male politicians with gender-awareness programmes ▪ Women parliamentarians should make use of the Action Plan of the Inter-Parliamentarian Union (IPU) ▪ More involvement in parliamentary processes such as preparation of agendas
<i>Monitoring</i> - National - Sub-regional - Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of resources ▪ Lack of indicators ▪ Lack of a regional mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional and subregional institutions should take up the challenge of monitoring, i.e. mechanisms at the level of OAU and subregional institutions to monitor the implementation of national commitments ▪ Monitor the electoral process including registration of voters ▪ Monitor the use of money as

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
		<p>a dominant factor in electoral politics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish annual national review processes, and regular workshops and training on review techniques ▪ Monitor the use of national budgets ▪ Establish biannual subregional review processes ▪ Establish regular regional reviews ▪ Monitor the use of donor funds at international and regional levels ▪ Allow media to attend parliamentary sessions to cover debates continuously and expose those raising their voices against women's issues such as access to land ▪ Develop a database on women in leadership positions through UNIFEM's website

Workshop 7: Women's Health, Family Planning and Population

- Facilitators:** - Jane Kwawu
- Pap Syr Diagne
Presenter: - Daraba Saran Kaba

The summary of the report on health, family planning and population that was presented included the objectives of the African Platform of Action in these areas as well as the main findings of twenty national reports. These were submitted to the African Centre for Women (ACW) by ECA member States by July 1999. Since that time, more country reports have been received by ACW and the final regional report will be amended accordingly.

In implementing Beijing and Dakar Platforms of Action, many countries have revised their policies and reoriented programmes/activities to meet the challenges of the Platforms. But they have faced many constraints during the past five years. The main ones relate to inadequate financial, human and material resources and the high level of illiteracy. These constraints are all related to the widespread poverty situation at all levels: governmental and individual. Different objectives have been identified in the national plans of action, among which are: reducing maternal and infant mortality, improving health services, reducing HIV/AIDS and reducing sexually transmitted diseases impact, improving and facilitating access of family planning services to populations and improving social security.

Despite commitments made by governments at several meetings, including the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, the meetings of the Committee on CEDAW, the annual meetings of WHO, access to health services for women is still very limited for the majority of African countries. The women's health situation is, in some cases, even worse. The governments and NGOs are urged to take more aggressive actions to overcome the constraints they are facing. In that regard, health issues should be considered as crosscutting issues in the various sectoral programmes.

Summary of discussions

In elaborating the evaluation report, participants in the workshop drew lessons from different sources such as ICPD+5, as well as their own country experiences. In so doing, considerable achievements were reported in certain health sectors. However, the workshop observed that the evaluation report on *"Improvement of Women's Health, including Family Planning and Population-related Programmes"* was not exhaustive.

In the area of reproductive health and reproductive rights, 39 countries have taken measures to improve the quality of care, which entailed extensive training of health-care providers including traditional birth attendants; expanded and improved facilities, revised protocols and procedures for health-care services; and undertook evaluation and monitoring of health-care services. The female condom is being piloted with success in several countries and is gaining popularity because it ensures an appropriate choice to women's reproductive needs.

Most countries reported on the urgent need to address the issue of adolescent reproductive health. Thirty-four countries have taken some measures to do so by adoption of national youth policies, and development of youth strategies and action plans. Others have launched new initiatives involving young people such as IEC/advocacy campaigns, youth-friendly services including peer education, counselling services and sexual health programme that serve the

needs of youth. However, much more remains to be done given the demographic size of this group.

Twenty-six countries noted that civil society including NGOs continue to play a major role in providing reproductive health services to members of the community including adolescents.

Several countries have also initiated or expanded programmes promoting male responsibility in reproductive health through advocacy campaigns and specific services to men. Some countries are conducting socio-cultural research to understand better how to address the reproductive needs of men. In a few countries, coalitions against gender violence have been formed to address gender violence. However, ongoing initiatives for promotion of gender equality were not sufficient.

Africa was reported to be the only continent where maternal mortality rates had continued to rise. All the causes were known, but the necessary political will to put appropriate emergency obstetric care in place was still lacking. This was an area in which Africa had to re-strategize in order to reduce maternal and infant deaths.

Despite the fact that the majority of African countries had made health the priority, women's health as a special area had not been given due attention, neither in advocacy programme development nor in resource allocation.

In particular, the life-cycle approach to women's health has neither been understood well nor implemented appropriately. This means, for example, that the health of elderly women is not addressed and the nutritional status of young girls and nursing mothers is not receiving the necessary attention.

It was also clear from the assessment that women's health was most often interpreted in terms of maternal health, which excluded women not of reproductive age. In particular, the concept women's sexuality as a legitimate health concern had not begun to receive attention.

Although several initiatives have started to combat violence against women, the lives of too many women still remain endangered, because these initiatives need to be institutionalised in the health sector. Likewise, initiatives against FGM and other harmful practices are still heavily being spearheaded by NGOs; although some governments have enacted laws against FGM, the consequences on women's health remain grave.

Another emerging threat, according to the assessment was from the tobacco industries, which had suffered marketing losses abroad and were now focusing their attention on Africa, targeting especially young people and women.

Finally, the assessment noted that HIV/AIDS remains one of the most devastating pandemics and a major health concern for Africa. Women in particular are not only vulnerable to the disease, but also provide almost all the long-term care for AIDS sufferers in their families and communities.

Constraints

Major constraints observed in the workshop include:

- (a) Lack of sufficient skills among service providers particularly in the rural health facilities;

- (b) Brain drain of skilled health personnel to developed countries where their skills are utilised effectively and they are well remunerated;
- (c) Emphasis on medical treatment rather than prevention ;
- (d) Limited partnership in some countries among governments, NGOs, private sector, and civil society;
- (e) WHO recommendation on 10% allocation of the national budget to the health sector has not been followed by most countries;
- (f) Limited contraceptive choice in several countries;
- (g) War and internal conflict have devastated health systems and structures;
- (h) Lack of political will to support adolescent reproductive health and services;
- (i) Lack of reliable data on important aspects of women's health including maternal morbidity and mortality;
- (j) Inadequate indicators of programmes outcome, which makes it difficult to document successful programmes;
- (k) Lack of health insurance schemes, particularly for women working in the informal sector, coupled with the high cost of drugs are also major issues;
- (l) Infertility as a gender issue is not yet being addressed;
- (m) The health of disabled women – the blind, deaf, etc. - is completely ignored by health programmes, exposing them to the double tragedy of gender and disability discrimination and neglect; and
- (n) Globalisation, privatisation of health systems and servicing of the debt burden, have severely reduced the availability of resources, even at the level of women as consumers of health services.

Recommendations

HIV/Aids

1. Adopt policies of non-discrimination towards people suffering from HIV/AIDS;
2. Provide support and livelihood opportunities for people suffering from AIDS;
3. Adopt multisectoral approaches in addressing HIV/AIDS programmes and their resource allocation.

Reproductive health and family planning

1. Reinforce education of men about the importance of reproductive health and family planning;
2. Strengthen programmes in both urban and rural areas to address sexuality, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;
3. Design programmes that address the needs of special groups such as the visually impaired, the deaf, and refugees, and take their programmes to scale.

Maternal mortality

1. Develop an Africa - specific strategy to address the rising rates of maternal mortality and develop mechanisms at regional, subregional and national levels to track the number of deaths, as opposed to maternal mortality rates.

Others

1. Develop global and integrated approaches to health issues;
2. Standardise data collection and availability to ensure that data is collected for and about women;
3. Adopt policies that block the designs of tobacco companies;
4. Increase the availability and coverage of social security programmes;
5. End traditional practices harmful to women's health;
6. Encourage collaboration between NGOs, governments and international organisations;
7. Enforce laws on domestic violence;
8. Increase government's commitment to the women's health objectives of the PFA, by increasing resource allocation to curtail the brain drain of health professionals and ensure expansion of current programmes;
9. Set mechanisms in place to reduce the debt burden of African countries in order to increase resource flows to the health sector and mitigate the effects of globalisation;
10. Ratify and implement the government commitments related to the health of women and use them as benchmarks for addressing women's health needs.

Conclusions

In spite of many achievements in the women and health sector, a great deal still needs to be done to implement the Beijing Platform of Action fully. Many challenges lie ahead which need recognition and re-addressing. The existing gaps in health policies, programmes, resources, and institutional arrangements are of concern both at regional, national and programme levels. More emphasis is required on non-discriminatory policies and practices and on multisectoral programmes to promote women's health, rights and equality, as well as community strategies for health care and male participation.

Of crucial importance is the need to recognise that five years after the Beijing Conference, Africa as a continent, has a peculiar need for women-specific-health strategies. These needs are underscored by the accelerating rate of maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS pandemic. As long as women continue to be vulnerable to the risk of mobility and death, either from pregnancy or HIV/AIDS, African women's opportunities for progress would be limited. These different issues which create an excessive burden of ill-health of women in Africa must be brought to the top of Africa's development agenda.

Workshop 8: Women and Peace

- Facilitators:** - Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika
- Khadidja Ladjel Aloui
- Presenter:** - Jean Kamau

The presenter began by providing a background on the governments commitments underscored in the African Platform for Action, adopted in Dakar in 1994. The Platform called for the representation of women in peace-negotiation mechanisms and supported the establishment of women peace networks accredited to the OAU, the United Nations and their national, subregional and international institutions. The Global Platform adopted in Beijing was influenced by the African Platform in calling for governments, the international community and civil society to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuses in conflict situations.

Governments were also called upon to make full investigation of all acts of violence against women committed during war, including rape, forced prostitution, and other forms of indecent assault and sexual slavery, as well as to prosecute all acts of violence and in particular to pay attention to rape.

Several governments made specific commitments in their action plans to undertake various activities to ensure the inclusion of women in the peace process. These initiatives included integrating women in peace talks, undertaking peace education and supporting peace initiatives. A review of government reports showed that some Governments kept their commitments to the Platforms for Action. Several governments took unprecedented action by supporting the destruction of arms in public, as a sign of commitment to peace.

The Federation of Women Peace Networks, through its members in various countries, has undertaken effective activities to influence alternative political solutions to conflict and war. Strategies have varied but the end result has demonstrated that women have useful and effective strategies in the resolution of conflict on the African continent.

Mechanisms for monitoring the inclusion of women in the peace process were outlined in the Platform for action. At the national level, responsibility lay with the governments, and at the subregional level with such intergovernmental structures as SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD. At the regional level, the key mechanism is the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which has undertaken key initiatives to include the participation of women in the peace process. The development of the African Committee for Peace and Development was a key achievement for the OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa. A lot of hope has been placed in this Committee, which should galvanise the real and effective participation of women in the peace process in Africa. It was noted that, at the international level, the global community was committed to safeguarding the rights of women, including in times of conflict. The recent establishment of the International Criminal Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was testimony to this commitment.

In conclusion, the presenter called for firmer commitment and action from governments to include women in the peace process. Governments should support peace education initiatives

and promote women's participation in decision-making structures. The legal status of women should be reviewed to ensure that all forms of violence against women are prosecuted.

After drawing attention to the point of brevity in the debates so that the proceedings of the workshop could be completed within the time allotted, and also to the need for succinctness in the formulation of recommendations, the facilitator called upon the participants to focus on the following key issues:

Given that peace is not only the absence of war but also the presence of a situation in which people can enjoy the benefits of economic and social justice on an equal footing, and considering the close linkages between peace and equality of women and men on the one hand, and between peace and development on the other, what recommendations could be formulated so that African governments might continue to pursue equality between women and men, as part of development?

(a) In view of the dire consequences of strife and armed conflict on women and children in terms of increased responsibility on women heads of households and in terms of violations of the fundamental rights of women and young girls, the problems faced by women and children in conflict situations raise the following issues:

- How the rights and the roles of women and children can be protected in conflict situations?
- Are there any positive experiences in that connection that African countries can share *inter se*?
- How to benefit from these experiences in such a way as to be able to spread them further afield?

(c) Given that women are hardly involved in decision-making mechanisms relating to conflict prevention and resolution or to the launching of peace initiatives, how can the role of women in decision-making and conflict resolution be strengthened?

(d) In view of the commitments made by governments to the Dakar Platform for Action, and to take concrete measures to afford women and men the necessary training in the areas of peace negotiation and conflict prevention and resolution, the following areas of concern served as the basis for discussion:

- How to accelerate the implementation of the measures adopted?
- What examples of traditional forms of conflict prevention may be cited?
- How these could be integrated into regional decision-making and conflict- prevention mechanisms?

Overall, a number of key areas of concern emerged from the debates. The main issues are listed below:

- Violence against women in conflict situations;

- Violence against refugees and displaced persons;
- Lack of equality of access to decision-making bodies and mechanisms, and to material resources as well as education;
- Lack of a culture of peace, and of capacities for negotiation and the maintenance of viable peace;
- Harmful traditional practices and occult rituals;
- Genocide and the issue of its impunity;
- Women and children bearing arms;
- Poverty and the aggravation of food insecurity;
- The proliferation of small arms in conflict-ridden areas and neighbouring countries;
- Lack of perception or awareness on the part of women of their human, political and legal rights;
- Lack of interest in politics on the part of women;
- The role of the media in sensitising women;
- The need for implementation and broad dissemination of the provisions of international conventions;
- Governments not attaching due importance to issues relating to discrimination against women;
- Use of women and children as human shields, thus exposing them to grievous harm;
- Lack of knowledge concerning the dangers posed by mines and other injuries caused by weapons of war;
- Lack of solidarity among women themselves and also between women and the civil society;
- Inadequate attention given to the training of soldiers in the rules governing warfare;
- Adverse effects of sanctions on women and children;
- Domestic violence and dangerous attitudes;
- Rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants;
- Aggression against elderly or disabled women on the grounds of witchcraft;

- The need for lobbying against the manufacture and sale of arms, as well as the purchase of arms;
- The need to sensitise women in other parts of the world to eradicate the sale of arms and establish a network of solidarity with them.
- Inadequate access of women to education and training;
- Inequitable handling of conflicts by the international community; and
- Laws for the protection of women and children.

Recommendations

In view of the concerns itemised above, and the key issues described, the workshop formulated the following recommendations:

Government actions towards greater equity and equality between women and men should:

- (a) Ensure women's access to decision-making bodies, education and training, and to property ownership
- (b) Ensure greater participation of women in decision-making, appointing more women in decision-making positions at the national, regional and global levels (in government, parliament, and in subregional, regional and international organisations). In that connection, the quota system should be supported when it is to the benefit of women, without abandoning application of the principle of competition between men and women;
- (c) Promote the adequate representation of women in military establishments by increasing the numbers of women officers and sub-officers;
- (d) Promulgate laws that actualise the veritable will of governments to involve women in decision-making, and above all, ensure the strict application of those laws;
- (e) Modify school curricula to include a unit for children, on the culture of peace (i.e. respect for property, tolerance, acceptance of differences, etc.). This unit should be based on the cultural reality of each country;
- (f) Promote teaching of the principles of human rights and the provisions of international conventions on peace in schools, rural areas and refugee camps, in order to counter the indoctrination of young people in particular;
- (g) Significantly boost resource allocations to education and training, and promote equality of access to education for men and women;
- (h) Promote literacy programmes for women to make it easier for them to internalise their role in development;

- (i) Promote the teaching of African geography in primary schools and the preparation of IEC programmes on solidarity of African countries;
- (j) Concrete measures should be taken by governments to promote the equitable distribution of national wealth by guaranteeing women's access to property ownership. To that end, laws and regulations should be adopted to promote women's access to land ownership, financial resources and income-earning opportunities;
- (k) Encourage and promote the participation of women in debate and consultations for peace. In that connection, all laws and traditional practices that are discriminatory and pose obstacles to the involvement of women in any process of debate or consultation should be abrogated;
- (l) Establish programmes designed to create awareness among women about their rights as guaranteed by the laws and norms obtaining in each country.

Protection of the rights and roles of women and children in conflict situations

- (m) Promulgate laws designed to protect women, children, refugees and displaced persons against:
 - All forms of violence in conflict situations (e.g. rape, forcible recruitment into armed groups, destruction of property, physical mutilation, etc.);
 - Traditional practices that exclude women from peace processes; and
 - The hazards posed by mines.
- (n) Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and conflict resolution; and
- (o) Speeding up implementation of the commitments made by governments under the Dakar Platform for Action, to take concrete measures to ensure women and men's necessary training in peace negotiation, as well as conflict resolution and prevention.

Workshop 9: Women and the Environment, and their Role in Natural Resources Management

Facilitators: - Naomi Ngwira
- Dorthy Gordon

Presenter: - Solange Goma

The document prepared by ECA on the linkages between women and the environment, and their role in natural resources management, was presented to the workshop to delineate the scope of its deliberations more clearly.

The evaluation of the progress made internationally since the Dakar and Beijing Conferences showed some streamlining of methodologies and progress towards better understanding of the management of ecosystems. At the regional level, this evaluation takes into account the profile and level of deprivation, methodology-related results in sector-specific research, and the management of water-distribution systems. The dynamics of integration in the mining sector and the status of subregional programmes were at the Centre of the evaluation at the subregional level. At the national level, several issues such as discriminatory traditional laws and practices, land-use patterns, strengthening support agencies, the situation of women in employment and operational integration were re-examined.

Concerning the adequacy of resource allocation and the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms and approaches for resource mobilisation, the discussion focused on the difficulties encountered in representing specific resource allocations by development agencies and institutions. Nonetheless, the importance of co-financing between institutions was underscored.

From the debate that followed the presentation, it emerged that owing to the lack of well-defined follow-up indicators, the progress made since the Dakar Conference could not be effectively measured, therefore their development within national mechanisms was imperative. The workshop further stressed the need for a clearly defined conceptual framework for the linkages between gender and the environment in view of the crosscutting nature of both gender and the environment. In addition, the workshop drew upon best practices such as the establishment by some countries of environmental plans of action and national mechanisms integrating the gender dimension.

Summary of the debate

The discussions were mainly focused on the following issues:

1. The need to enhance the level of awareness among women concerning the legal provisions in force;
2. Constraints connected with application of the pertinent conventions as a result of a lack of sustainable alternatives for African communities in general and the poor in particular; an example here is the dissemination of information concerning the use of renewable energy sources such as solar energy;

3. The need to enhance the level of awareness among decision-makers concerning environmental questions;
4. The weak representation of women in high-level decision-making organs over all, despite decentralisation efforts;
5. The inadequate financial resources allocated to natural resource-management development programmes;
6. The lack of gender-disaggregated data on the one hand, and gender-integrative statistical data on the other;
7. The search for relevant follow-up indicators has culminated in the compilation of a list of variables that can be streamlined by the statistical services of member States with the assistance of ECA and its regional partners;
8. The promotion of functional literacy on environmental problems;
9. Human and institutional capacity building through the development of technical training with a view to improving women's access to scientific culture in general and environment-related knowledge in particular;
10. Strengthening the role of NGOs in the areas of training, information, sensitisation, and financing. Cooperation among local, subregional and international NGOs should be encouraged to that end;
11. Abandonment by women, over time, of certain environment-friendly traditional practices for modern practices and technologies that cause pollution;
12. The adverse effects of population movements on the environment;
13. The negative effects, in the short term, of structural adjustment and stabilisation programmes on the environment.

Recommendations of the workshop

In sum, the workshop formulated the following recommendations for effective implementation of the programmes of action:

1. Ensure the ratification and application by States of international conventions on the environment, and particularly the Convention on combating desertification and the Bamako Convention on waste;
2. Strengthen coordination at the regional level for better natural resource management and a more active exchange of information among the various stakeholders;
3. Establish focal points charged with the follow - up of the linkages between various sectors such as health, education, the environment, and so on;

4. At the national level, strengthen coordination among the various government departments involved in the implementation of the Platform for Action at the national level;
5. Carry out systematic reviews of policy orientations with a view to integrating the gender dimension into the pertinent budgeting and implementation processes;
6. Protect women's and community knowledge from improper appropriation by multinationals through patenting, in accordance with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements;
7. Examine the possibilities of optimising the utilisation of debt-for-nature swaps as a financing mechanism;
8. Establishment by States, with the support of regional and international financing institutions, of a support fund for rural women for the management of natural resources;
9. Establishment of an African "women-and-environment" observatory, managed by the State(s) that is (are) competent in that area;
10. Encourage the use of environmental information systems (EIS) so that they can be developed in line with user needs;
11. In the context of policies and projects, ensure that environmental impact studies, after initial diagnosis, take into account the gender dimension; conditionalities can be instituted at the national level to ensure that the women-and-the-environment dimension is taken into account in investment projects, and particularly in the rural areas;
12. Train extension personnel who originate from rural areas to ensure better dissemination of extension programmes;
13. Develop "gender and natural-resource-management" training programmes by national, subregional and regional training institutions;
14. Disseminate information on renewable energy sources and alternative energy sources;
15. ECA should, through ACW and in close collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development and other key partners, extend its technical support to African women in the preparation for Rio + 10, in order to ensure that their interests are duly taken into account.

Conclusions of the workshop

The workshop recognised that significant progress had been made in the implementation of the Dakar Platform, but that it was necessary to maintain, at the national level, the process of identification of indicators initiated at the workshop.

The workshop also recognised the need to promote the large-scale utilisation of environmental-conservation technologies if they are to have a significant impact on natural resources management at the national level.

It underscored the need to coordinate the follow up of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms with those of Rio in view of the importance attached to gender in Agenda 21, the World Food Summit, Habitat II, and the International Conference on Population and Development.

It also noted that any action towards the implementation of environment-related platforms for action was bound to face difficulties if it did not integrate poverty-alleviation parameters.

Workshop 10: Institutional Mechanisms

Facilitators - Ms. Jacqueline Odhiambo-Oduol
- Dr. Ellen N. Kornegay

Presenter : - Anthony Mawaya

The interest in the topic was affirmed by the participation of approximately 46 countries, three subregional bodies, regional NGOs and international organisations.

Among the specific actions defined as a basis for meeting the Dakar and Beijing commitments are:

- (a) Vesting the responsibility for advancing the status of women in the highest possible levels;
- (b) Developing strategies and methodologies for mobilising resources;
- (c) Empowering women through research, information, education, training, lobbying and advisory services;
- (d) Co-ordinating various actors at the national, subregional, regional and international levels;
- (e) Monitoring impact;
- (f) Building capacity for gender analytic research;
- (g) Leading the collection of disaggregated data; and
- (h) Providing leadership regarding the concerns of women for gender equality.

National machinery

The national machinery refers to a single or combination of structures established by a country to advance gender equality. These machineries are usually created by governments and managed by public-sector officials and the wider civil society, NGO and private-sector structures.

Different characteristics of the national machinery

There are varying structures, such as:

1. Those at the level of the Presidency, functioning through gender focal points and in partnership with civil society;
2. Clearly defined Ministries of Women's Affairs;
3. National machineries located within a particular department;

Two countries reported having commissions as fully integrated structures of the national machineries.

Prerequisites for an effective national machinery

Most national machineries have been formalised in the post-Beijing era. The Beijing Platform of Action was emphatic about their establishment as a means to implementing the twelve critical programme areas of concern. Given their different locations and status, they have

varying degrees of effectiveness and impact. Despite their differences, these national machineries have been serving as the primary anchor of the national gender programmes. There was consensus that for national machineries to be effective it was critical that they:

- Be clearly defined, with specific roles and authority;
- Be located in the highest office that can influence all other Ministries and organs of civil society;
- Are able to enforce gender mainstreaming;
- Be funded principally by national governments and supplemented through external funding;
- Have adequate financial and human resources with substantive knowledge and skills;
- Develop partnerships with civil society as an integral part of their programme implementation;
- Recognise organs of civil society as integral structures of the national machinery.

Goals of the national machinery

Taking national and subregional differences into consideration, three generic goals were proposed for national machineries:

1. Develop programmes of action to create equality for women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in political, civil, social, economic and cultural spheres;
2. Prioritise the needs of marginalized groups;
3. Transform all institutions (public, private and civil society) by mainstreaming and integrating issues of women's empowerment and gender equality into their work.

Functions of the national machinery

Among their specific functions are to:

- Manage policy development and advocacy relations with other institutions, and network information among the stakeholders ;
- Ensure that all stakeholders adopt planning procedures, structures, programmes and resource allocations that reflect the needs of women, and address gender inequality;
- Set appropriate priorities, targets, time frames and performance indicators;
- Act as a catalyst for action by all institutions and build capacity for effective gender mainstreaming; and
- Co-ordinate the implementation of gender-equal policies and monitor and evaluate programmes.

Issues raised

Although some government machineries had made successful efforts to link up with all stakeholders, most were still in the evolutionary stage. A great many machineries were still operating with limited financial, human and skills resources. Thus, their ability to provide the intellectual leadership and co-ordinate programmes was extremely limited.

Many countries still lack decentralised structures to reach the rural communities effectively. Capacity building in gender analysis, planning and mainstreaming was therefore seen as vital to the effective performance of national machineries. Systematic partnership and consultation with NGOs and civil society on the strategies for implementation of the Platforms for Action was also necessary.

The shift in government priorities due to economic crisis, and the recurrent conflicts and outbreak of hostilities in Africa had also been major obstacles to the effectiveness of the national machineries. Relevant government departments should make budgetary allocations to reflect the gender-equity concerns and needs of the national machinery. Monitoring mechanisms to ensure timely implementation of commitments should also be established.

In many countries, the macro-indicators and mechanisms for monitoring progress have not been fully articulated. There was a need to ensure a minimum threshold of gender mainstreaming capability and capacity. Placing the machineries in the highest political office would give them political clout and authority, and political will was imperative to ensure co-operation and advancement on gender programme. In fact, it should be noted that some machineries were assigned extra responsibilities to implement the Platforms without the requisite increase in capacity and resources.

In some countries, machineries also suffered from lack of autonomy and authority to influence policy and operate independently and effectively. In countries where national action plans were formulated in consultation with NGOs to identify priority areas, resources were not directly or specifically allocated. There were also no time bound targets or benchmarks.

Lack of information and poor sensitisation of policy and decision-makers, together with the low-level of training for staff and gender focal points make implementation difficult. There is a need to decentralise to local levels for increased popular participation.

Some countries have started to develop tools and methodologies for statistical research on gender. However, the general cost of monitoring, training, maintaining databases, reporting, and carrying out evaluation and research was expensive for African economies, even without considering the question of mainstreaming gender.

Recommendations

Key recommendations were:

1. Recognition of national machineries as the co-ordinating and consultative mechanisms for the whole national process of implementing the Platforms for Action.
2. Establish a gender management system for co-ordination and collaboration, with strong NGO input and clear terms of reference for all components.

3. Duplication of efforts, parallel responsibilities, and unco-ordinated interventions should be avoided at all levels through systematic and participatory planning.
4. Government and NGOs are partners in development and should not work as opponents.
5. National machineries should be strengthened through appropriate legislative and policy support, and human, technical, material and financial resources.
6. National machineries should be placed at the highest level of government and have full authority to make decisions.
7. They should have the capacity to provide technical expertise on all matters relating to the advancement of gender equality.
8. National machineries should ensure that gender focal points are appointed in all line ministries, agencies and programmes. These gender focal points should be at levels that give them access to policy formulation and decision-making.
9. Gender focal points should be provided with clear terms of reference, training and information.
10. Undertake gender audit of all sectoral activities at all levels- national, provincial and district levels.
11. Training in gender analysis and gender auditing should be provided to the staff of national machineries and all gender focal points.

National machineries should prioritise the development of gender-sensitive indicators to facilitate their monitoring function. Such indicators should be qualitative and quantitative in nature and include measures for:

- Political will and support;
- Degree of institutionalisation of policies, structures, and resources;
- Clear objectives and targets for national machineries at all levels;
- Existence of an inclusive national policy on gender and the advancement of women.

It was also suggested that each Head of State appoints an Advisor on Gender and that an Act of Parliament should be passed to enable the national machinery to play its co-ordinating role, and allocate the resources it needs to implement the Platforms for Action for the Advancement of Women. National machineries should depend mostly on government funding or locally mobilised funds. External assistance should only be supplementary. Women Ministers and Members of Parliament should form strong networks and support structures to carry out advocacy for strengthening the machineries.

In the context of regional integration and promotion of an African renaissance, statutory subregional groupings should develop subregional plans of action and political and legal frameworks that could serve as additional tools for reinforcing action at the national level. Concerted efforts should be made to engender the proposed Pan - African Parliament.

Regional assessments should be regularly carried out by OAU and ECA to ensure that each member country is carrying out its commitments and responding to gender equality needs.

Workshop 11: Women, Communication, Information and Arts

Facilitators - Beldina Auma
- Yahya Diabi

Presenter : - Hoda Mejri

This workshop reviewed the general progress made in this area, not only as a specific priority area, but also as a crosscutting vehicle that could be used to link all the other critical areas interactively, in an effort to achieve the advancement and empowerment of women in Africa. Media was seen as one sector that could and did play a major role in promoting women by integrating the gender perspective and respecting the dignity and value of the human person.

In this regard, the workshop reviewed four key issues, namely:

- Major achievements;
- Lessons learnt;
- Key partners and their roles; and
- The enhancement of women's access to transformation of information, communication and the arts within African States.

To guide the discussion, a background evaluation report entitled "*Women, Communication, Information and the Arts*" was presented to the workshop. This report focused on the need to use communication and information to counter gender stereotyping and provide equal opportunity for women to participate in communication systems, particularly the media. The key issues reviewed included the summary of the Platforms of Action, some of the background problems in media and communication as related to gender-blind policies, illiteracy, poverty, unequal opportunities, the follow-up mechanism within the United Nations system, follow-up at the African level, and synthesis of the regional and country-level progress achieved thus far. It also examined the prospects and the areas that need to be strengthened over the coming five years.

The report identified major constraints and gaps, namely: shortage of resources, high illiteracy rates, little ownership of radio/TV and newspapers, poor state of communications and lack of monitoring and evaluation systems. While ambitious and commendable initiatives had been taken in countries and subregions, they were scattered and isolated and further action was still necessary.

Assessment of steps taken and results achieved after the Beijing Conference

The set benchmarks/indicators for measuring progress in actions at the national level could either be quantitative or qualitative. Some of the key ones identified were:

- Number of women in decision-making, management and control of media production, as a sign of ownership and readiness of the national media to respond to women's concerns.
- The salary level of women in the media and communications in comparison with that of their men counterparts. This indexes the level of incentives available for women to join the profession and remain sufficiently motivated to do their jobs.

- Scholarship allocation to women trainees in the areas of media production and communication.
- Increase in the number of programmes devoted to women issues as a sign of determination to ensure a widespread attempt to correct media bias against women.
- Measure of the number of women journalists as a percentage of the total number of journalists in the country. This indicator measures the balanced representation in the coverage of issues of importance to women, among others.

The workshop agreed that it was still necessary to have national commissions responsible for ensuring that the process continued to develop in a balanced and positive way. The media has to play a key role in the process of empowering women.

Examples of country-level achievements included:

- Provision of free airtime for the discussion of women issues in the national electronic media – as in the case of Namibia and South Africa, as opposed to commercial media productions that marginalize women.
- Introduction of talk shows in place of the use of magazines, as a way of increasing the audience for women's programme broadcasts. This was also implemented in Cameroon.
- Renaming of women's programmes, for example, from a title such as "*Fem-Line*" to a more inclusive one such as "*Women and Development*" as a strategy for capturing higher audience interest, as done in Cameroon.

The key partners and their role in transforming the information and communication sector for the empowerment of women

The key partners identified were: governments and governmental agencies, legislative bodies, the private sector, international organisations, civil society, religious leaders, training institutions at national, subregional and regional levels, NGOs, media watchdogs, pressure groups, men and the general public. The identified partners would assist in strengthening the local organisations, both public and private, that are associated with advancing the cause of women by mobilising resources, elaborating adequate legislative and policy framework, as well as promoting their activities where possible.

Recommendations

The key areas of focus of the recommendations were public policy and adequate institutional mechanisms, resource mobilisation and development, training and capacity building, involvement of the private sector and development networking.

Public policies and the role of government:

- Higher priority should be given to the critical area of women, information, communication and arts. Since it is of a crosscutting nature, governments should make it a priority in their national plan of action.

- Government should endeavour to minimise or totally remove all the fiscal distortions and high tariffs that tend to make communication materials very expensive and unaffordable.
- National policies should provide regulatory frameworks that assure discipline and balance in the broadening of media production on women issues.

Resource mobilisation and development

Because resource mobilisation constitutes a major constraint impeding women's access,

- Government should allocate adequate resources and ensure a more efficient utilisation of these resources.
- International organisations and donor agencies are called upon to increase their financial and technical assistance to women communication organisations, networks, and gender-sensitive media.
- Free airtime for women programmes should be discretely realigned to be sensitive to most women's schedules.

Training and capacity building

Training is imperative in transforming information, communication and arts for the advancement of women. As such, the recommendations were the following:

- Training of NGOs and other organisations that use the media in order to assure more efficient utilisation of the facilities and resources available to them.
- Training is strongly needed for the media, as well as for the legislative bodies to ensure a better understanding of the gender approach. This may take the form of issue-oriented training to enable the media to achieve better coverage of issues.
- Incentives should be provided to professionals already in media production to allow them to increase the number of national languages used in communication in order to reach a larger portion of their local and rural population.

Involvement of the private sector

- The legal framework and fiscal incentives should be extended to the private sector to encourage its involvement in facilitating women's developmental issues.
- The female private sector should seek opportunities to invest in women-related media production.

Development networking

The recommendations in this area require collective effort and constant exchange of ideas and inputs:

- Creation of fora and networks among the producers of information and communication as a way of monitoring the state-of -the - art technology and its utilisation;
- Continued maintenance of communication among media professionals including exchange of programmes related to women's issues.
- Maintenance and use of a list of regional media experts.

Workshop 12: The Girl-Child

Facilitators - H.E. Janat Mukwaya
Mrs. Florence IHEME
Presenter : - Khadjata Lo Ndiaye

The girl-child as a special category: Experiences, interventions, methods, approaches and tools put in place that must be strengthened and replicated

There were three areas of focus:

1. Education
2. Health
3. Legal Rights

1. Education: Achievement / Progress

- Overall improvement in the enrolment and school attendance of the girl-child due to compulsory universal primary education;
- Establishment of non-formal education, literacy programmes and life skills training for girls;
- Introduction of policies, which allow girls that drop out of school due to pregnancy to return to school after a certain period.

Constraints included:

- Inadequate resources, political will and lack of information/awareness of the importance of the education of the girl-child;
- Lack of early childhood educational systems (pre-school) in most countries;
- Lack of motivation from poor parents who would prefer to have their girl-child work rather than go to school; and
- Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM).

2. Health: Achievement / Progress

- Establishment of multisectoral health programmes involving Ministries such as Health, Youth, and Education, as well as NGOs, for the establishment of community-based programmes;
- Reduction of teenage pregnancy through the inclusion of sex education in the school curricula as well as in the media;
- Establishment of national bodies to advocate the abolishment of FGM;
- Establishment of 24-hour child-lines for abused children; and
- Efforts made to prevent prostitution.

Constraints included:

- In the context of poverty, sex is becoming a coping mechanism for the survival of young girls. This has a negative impact on girls' health with regards to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS.
- The spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has brought a new health challenge for the girl-child.

3. *Legal Rights: Achievement / Progress*

Many countries reported that:

- Their governments have ratified the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC), on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the ILO Convention on the Employment of Children.
- Laws aimed at preventing and severely punishing perpetrators of FGM, sexual harassment, rape and the corruption of minors have been adopted.
- National campaigns for the application of legal rights have been implemented.
- Alliances have been established, for example, two NGOs working groups have established an International Network for Girls to contribute to the follow - up of the commitment made by governments and international organisations.

Constraints included:

- Inadequate application of laws and conventions on the rights of the girl-child;
- The emergence of new forms of violations through exploitation of child labour and child slavery;
- Abuse of the girl-child by internal as well as trans-border child-trafficking networks;
- Overburden of household responsibilities of some girls resulting from the spread of armed conflicts;
- Armed conflicts render girls vulnerable to rape, and other forms of sexual violations.

Additional resources and technical expertise are required to ensure that the gains made are not lost

So far only UNICEF had participated in this respect; therefore, there was an urgent need for support from other UN Agencies to implement and follow up national plans of action.

Reasons for mainstreaming the girl-child as a special and separate area of concern and as a separate category

Education:

The girl-child is the woman of tomorrow and should therefore be protected and empowered in view of the disadvantages she faces.

Health:

- Vulnerability to sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS and victim of negative cultural practices such as FGM and of cultural beliefs that encourage old men to defile young girls as a cure for diseases.
- Future generations depend on the survival of the girl-child

The special needs of the girl-child for integration into the programmes for empowerment of women

- Develop girl-child-specific policies;
- Put in place multisectoral approaches;

- Continue the sensitisation and advocacy of the rights of the girl-child at all levels.

Benchmarks and indicators for measuring progress in addressing the special needs of the girl-child

Indicators:

Countries should have baseline data against which achievements can be measured, including these qualitative and quantitative indicators:

1) Education

- The extent of sensitisation of parents and the community at large on issues of the girl-child, such as education, early marriage and FGM.
- The extent to which guidance counsellors form part of school administration.

2. Health

Implementation of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes targeting the girl-child through sex education seminars, media and peer alliances.

Establishment and strengthening of girl-friendly adolescent reproductive health services.

Sensitisation of parents on reproductive health issues.

3. Legal protection of the rights of the girl-child

- Setting up of national committees to put in place institutional structures that supervise and review the implementation of laws;
- Setting up of community-based child panels at district levels;
- Translation of laws protecting the rights of the girl-child into local languages, especially in the rural areas;
- Mainstreaming of girls' concerns in all related areas/sectors, not only in women's affairs departments.

Sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, as well as early parenthood have a devastating effect on children's health and girls tend to be more vulnerable than boys.

The most important indicators that should be used to highlight the plight and conditions of young girls

- Statistics have to be disaggregated by sex and age;
- Rate of STDs and HIV/AIDS infections by sex and age;
- FGM prevalence and its consequences;
- Share of the public budget devoted to problems associated to the girl-child;
- Sensitisation of mothers on the harmful effects of differential socialisation of girls and boys.

Approaches to ensure girls' access to better health and education

Education:

- Compulsory and free primary school (at least 9 years of schooling);

- Financial support for poor families to send girls to school beyond 9 years;
- Social mobilisation community campaigns and advocacy for parents to maintain girls at school;
- Development of alternative educational experiences with vocational training.

Health:

- Provision of free medical health services for the girl-child;
- Payment of special attention to the needs of the refugee girl-child;
- Introduction and development of school curricula on sexual and reproductive health and drug abuse.

Country-level actions to accelerate implementation of the Platform to address the special needs of the girl-child

- Adoption of an active participatory approach by reflecting the needs of the girl-child in development plans and programmes and by encouraging the participation of the youth in national and international events;
- Establishment of children's parliament and community-based child panels to serve as appropriate frameworks for sensitising children to the issues of gender discrimination and rights;
- Sensitisation of the media, civil society, stakeholders (including religious leaders and community leaders) and mobilisation of influential national leaders for the promotion of children's rights as fundamental human rights;
- Lobbying for ratification and application of Conventions and laws which protect the girl-child;
- Promotion of laws against sexual violence and harassment of the girl-child and establishment of structures to support victims, including legal support;
- Amendment of Criminal Codes to reflect the severity of sex-related and other violent practices such as FGM;
- Establishment of 18 years as a minimum age for marriage;
- Mobilisation of resources for programmes targeting the needs of the girl-child, such as the 20//20 initiative; and
- Development (with stakeholders, including trade unions) of tools and mechanisms for assessing the impact of the plans of action.

Strategic actions that can be adopted in light of the experiences of the last five years

Partnerships among stakeholders in improving the situation of the girl-child at the national, subregional and regional levels **are highly recommended for action at all levels.**

The group recommended the following actions at the sub-regional, regional and international levels:

ECA, UNFPA, UNICEF and other relevant agencies should provide support to governments for the implementation of the plans of action;

Resources from UN agencies should be mobilised to assist civil society in the implementation of the Platform at the national level;

More NGOs should be active in the International Network for Girls to give heightened visibility to girls' issues in the work of the United Nations, in particular, that of the

Commission on Human Rights, and to promote and implement international conventions at the country level; and

ECA / OAU should be involved in regional and subregional programmes and should set up structures that help in eliminating violence against the girl-child.

Recommendations to foster inter-generational relations within families and communities

- Eliminate cultural attitudes that forbid open discussions on topics related to sex ;
- Encourage education programmes, which include parent-child workshops, to encourage the girl-child to participate in debates on issues of interest to her.

Finally, the critical area of concern of the girl-child should be considered in a holistic form. It goes beyond the three areas of education, health and legal rights, as it is also a crosscutting issue in all other areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Annex IV

Declaration/Statements/Appeals adopted by the Sixth Regional Conference on Women

1. NGO Declaration at the Sixth Regional Conference on Women

We the African NGOs meeting here in Addis Ababa for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women:

Reflecting on how far we have come since the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women in Dakar in 1994;

Recognising that institutionalised patriarchy, structural inequality, deep-rooted prejudice and misogyny continue to entrench themselves firmly in all African societies;

Noting with great concern that in spite of efforts made by civil society, governments and other actors, the situation of women has continued to deteriorate in all sectors of development;

Disappointed at the lack of political will on the part of some African States towards commitments made in the Global and African Platforms of Action;

Emphasising that some external and internal forces have hampered the implementation of the twelve critical areas of concern, in particular, the process of globalisation, with its focus on the competitive free market, resulting in the end of the social state. This has created the conditions for continued marginalization of women and girls in world and local trade, eroding many of their efforts towards economic empowerment;

Convinced that the involvement of women as equal partners in the decision-making process at all levels is critical in bringing about lasting peace, development and respect for women's rights;

Disturbed that the rapidly disintegrating status of the social sector, particularly in health, education, employment and the environment, has continued to impact adversely on women, girls and persons with disabilities;

Shocked at the rising manifestations of all forms of violence against women in the private and public sector;

Alarmed that the devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic is completely eroding even the minimal gains women and girls have made in the past decade, and is destroying the social fabric of the African continent;

Aware of the high incidence of ratification of international instruments which, unfortunately have not been integrated into domestic law to confirm the standards of universality, inalienability and indivisibility of women's rights;

Encouraged that a few African countries have recognised women's dynamism and made progress in bringing women into the political arena;

Observing how the lack of an enabling environment has constituted a major obstacle for women in leadership, and has prevented African States from benefiting from the potential transformative leadership of African women;

Recognising that the goals of equality, development and peace set twenty-five years ago still remain largely unfulfilled on the eve of a new millennium.

We, therefore, demand that:

- (a) All Governments demonstrate their integrity by showing compliance with regional and international commitments and standards through the harmonisation and domestication of national laws and constitutions in line with all obligations;
- (b) Governments institute participatory legal and constitutional measures to outlaw and eliminate all forms of patriarchal oppression and discrimination against women;
- (c) Governments acknowledge the outstanding contributions of African women in their countries and their political power in the installation of our governments, by developing the necessary political commitment to the empowerment of women;
- (d) There be a moratorium on the implementation of global treaties that have impoverished women and demand recognition that will ensure equal and fully informed participation of women, and gender responsiveness to the implementation of these treaties;
- (e) Both creditor and debtor countries share the moral responsibility for the defective policies that have led to the deterioration of the social sector and the impoverishment of women;
- (f) Debt relief be treated as a poverty-alleviation instrument for bringing about social justice and gender equity, with particular multisectoral response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- (g) African Governments recognise the Zanzibar Declaration for a Culture of Peace and implement the recommendations therein.

We call on all Governments and development partners to reinforce their commitments to and collaboration with, local, national, regional and international African women's non-governmental organisations, in order to promote a transformative development agenda for Africa.

2. Declaration of Women with Disabilities

We women-with-disabilities' delegates at the Sixth Regional Conference on Women, 22-27 November 1999 in Addis Ababa:

Having observed that:

The sequence of these meetings aims at dealing with the development concerns of marginalized persons, who include women, youths, persons with disabilities, and women with disabilities in particular;

And having realised that:

Women with disabilities still remain marginalized within this marginalized category; and that

Women with disabilities are specifically missing out in the designing and, to a large extent, in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action in most African countries;

Also concerned:

With the inadequate representation of women with disabilities in this Sixth African Conference on Women,

That some Governments have not ratified CEDAW and even those who have, still do not adequately address the concerns of women with disabilities,

That some Governments have not ratified the United Nations Standard Rules for the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and,

That hence, there are no policies, laws and representation of women and girls with disabilities at decision-making levels and that they are therefore not adequately targeted by development programmes;

Aware that:

Nothing can be done for us without our involvement;

And also concerned that:

Women and girls with disabilities have a central role to play in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action;

We therefore recommend the following, for each thematic area:

Poverty and economic empowerment of women:

Women with disabilities should participate and advise in the formulation of economic policies and in implementation of economic empowerment programmes, with a view to ensure that all concerns that relate to women with disabilities are addressed.

Education, training and access to science and technology:

Policies, laws and resources both human and financial, for education and training to cover all disciplines, technology and skills of girls and women with disabilities should be urgently addressed by all Governments.

All African Governments should set up institutes for special education that will particularly address the educational, technological and training needs of persons with disabilities, especially Sign Language for women with hearing impairments and Braille for blind women.

Culture, the family and socialisation:

African Governments, NGOs, the African Centre for Women in ECA, the UN system and other development partners, should support awareness programmes on the plight of women and girls with disabilities.

Legal and human rights:

The United Nations system, Governments and NGOs, should mainstream the human rights issues of women and girls with disabilities in policies, plans and programmes.

Organisations of women with disabilities that undertake human rights advocacy work should be supported.

Gender-disaggregated data:

Governments must involve persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities, in the designing and execution of census exercises. This should be accompanied by appropriate data disaggregation.

Political empowerment of women:

Governments, NGOs and partners should seek to build the capacity of women with disabilities in politics, and the capacity of organisations of women with disabilities that advocate promotion of women with disabilities.

They should also provide for representation of women with disabilities in legislative bodies at every level, and this provision must be backed up by legislation.

Health, reproduction, family planning and population:

Financial and human resource support should be provided to organisations of women with disabilities that are involved in education and advocacy for the reproductive health needs and rights of women with disabilities.

The health needs of women with disabilities should be mainstreamed.

Women and peace:

Women with disabilities should be included in programmes on peace.

Women and the environment:

Governments, NGOs, and development agencies need to collaborate with organisations of women with disabilities, for effective redress of the concerns and needs of women with disabilities.

Institutional mechanisms:

Organisations of women with disabilities should be supported to build their capacity to implement planned programmes geared to improvement of the lives of women and girls with disabilities.

Governments, NGOs, and development partners should assist women with disabilities to get organised formally at all levels, so that they can acquire a consultative status.

Women, communication, information and arts:

Media personnel should be educated and trained on the issues of women with disabilities.

The girl-child:

The education of parents, caretakers, communities and policy makers on the rights of girls with disabilities should be intensified.

The concerns of the girl-child with disability should be considered in programmes targeting communities.

Governments, NGOs, and development partners should earmark resources to focus specifically on girl-children with disabilities.

General:

All African Governments should support the OAU Declaration of the African Decade for Persons with Disabilities, which will run for the years 2000-2009; by emphasising the plight of women with disabilities who suffer double jeopardy, first as a woman and secondly as a person with a disability.

ACW should be requested to include the term “the advancement of women with disabilities in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action”.

3. *Algiers Appeal*

Following the deliberations of the Pan-African Women's Organisation and Peace Forum, held in Algiers, 6 to 7 November 1999, under the distinguished patronage of His Excellency, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and current Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU),

We the participants at these two meetings have decided to launch a unanimous appeal, from the Algerian capital, in line with the promotion of culture, peace and tolerance in Africa, for the international community as a whole to be sensitised so that it demonstrates greater solidarity with the continent.

Despite the commendable efforts made by African countries themselves, Africa is still faced with many problems, which hamper its endeavours to devote itself resolutely to economic and social development as the only guarantee of sustainable peace, and to address the legitimate aspirations of African peoples to peace, progress and prosperity.

Reiterating the determination of African women to fully assume their rightful place in society and contribute to economic, social and cultural development in Africa, the participants, in the first place, welcomed the important decisions made at the Thirty-fifth Conference of Heads of States and Government of the Organisation of African Unity, held from 12 to 14 July 1999, in Algiers.

These decisions underscore both the commitment on the part of African leaders to work collaboratively towards building a united, strong and prosperous continent and their desire to spare no effort to ensure that Africa becomes a land of peace, democracy, security and concord, and a land that is open to the world. The decision adopted at that summit, making 2000 the year of peace in Africa, is instructive in that regard.

Accordingly, the Algiers Declaration, adopted at the conclusion of the Thirty-fifth Conference of the Organisation of African Unity, is a source of inspiration and example, towards initiating joint action to enable Africa to overcome the many challenges it faces at the dawn of the next millennium and to take its rightful place in the international arena.

Now, therefore, we the delegates at the Algiers Conference of the Pan-African Women's Organisation and the African Women's Committee for Peace and Tolerance in Africa:

Convinced that, as citizens, African women have a central role to play in the promotion of culture and tolerance in Africa,

Aware that without the restoration of just and lasting peace, all effort toward development would be in vain and doomed to failure,

Deplore the persistence of conflict in Africa, which tarnishes the image of a continent that is heir to an ancestral culture characterised by tolerance, conviviality, and concord, and which causes profound trauma among the various communities, with women and children being most affected. These conflicts are at the root of the exodus of millions of people who lack any

form of assistance whatsoever, in addition to the fact that Africa sadly holds the record for the largest number of refugees and displaced persons the world over,

Recommend recognition of the need for unconditional respect for the valid principle of inviolability of the boundaries inherited at independence and of the right to self-determination of all peoples,

Exhort all the parties concerned in the many conflicts still besetting the continent to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and restraint and settle their differences by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the OAU,

Recall the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council in the maintenance and preservation of peace and security in the world,

Encourage in particular, the ongoing efforts of His Excellency, Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and current Chairman of the OAU, towards a just and peaceful settlement of the many conflicts besetting the continent,

Consider that the mechanism of the OAU for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts is an appropriate avenue, which should be strengthened in order to transform it into an effective instrument for peace in Africa, through which the efforts of African countries to find immediate solutions to the critical situations that may arise from time to time across the continent, may be coordinated,

Strongly condemn the recruitment of children into armed groups, and pledge our support to the campaign launched by the Pan-African Youth Movement to eradicate that practice,

Consequently call upon Governments to strengthen their national legislation for child protection, in order to shield their youth from this reprehensible practice and guarantee their fundamental rights,

Recommend that civic education incorporating the teaching of a culture of peace, be integrated into national education programmes, to inculcate into children the principles of tolerance and respect for others,

Recommend also that the programmes of the Decade of Education launched by OAU in 1997, in collaboration with UNESCO, should lay more emphasis on the teaching of the culture of peace,

Salute the struggle of African women, who, after contributing heroically to the liberation struggle, continue to pay a heavy price so that the ideals of peace and concord are not mere slogans but a tangible reality at the present time,

Call for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and for their involvement in the political, economic and social affairs of their respective countries, and for their representation, on an equal footing with men, in decision-making organs. This will enable them to apply their knowledge and experience in the service of peace and development, in conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and fulfil the recommendations of the African and global conferences on women,

Urge African Governments to strengthen their national legislation in the area of the protection and promotion of women's rights and to implement the decisions, made at the continental and global levels, in that connection,

Encourage the speedy implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) in our conviction that Africa must first mobilise its own forces and potential if it is to assert itself as a credible partner in the world economy;

Call for the establishment of a fairer and more humane world order that respects the sovereignty of States and the principle of reciprocity, and supports more equitable sharing of world resources and their rational use for the benefit of all;

Further appeal for the reduction of military expenditure and the channelling of the proceeds into socio-economic projects that can improve the living conditions of the people;

Condemn without any reservation the incidence of terrorism which today constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security and for that reason requires the mobilisation of the international community;

Welcome the adoption of the African Convention on Prevention and Control of Terrorism and call for the speedy conclusion of an international convention to combat this scourge;

Call on African women's organisations and associations to pool their efforts and coordinate their activities so as to achieve greater efficiency and address more effectively the many problems facing Africa;

Pay tribute to the Organisation of African Unity for the work it is doing daily to project a good image of Africa and to defend its interest;

Also call for the mobilisation of all constructive forces to help in the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the promotion of a culture of peace;

Decide to submit this Appeal from the people of Algiers to the Sixth Africa Regional Conference on Women as a working document for the meeting taking place in Addis Ababa from 22 to 26 November 1999.

4. Statement by African Women Parliamentarians

1. African Women Parliamentarians met at the ECA meeting in the Seychelles in February 1999.
2. At that meeting, an idea was mooted to form an African Women Parliamentarians Forum with the following objectives:
 - To strengthen the voice of African Women Parliamentarians;
 - To unite efforts and resources of Women Parliamentarians;
 - Participate actively in the evaluation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action; and
 - To formulate, amend and legislate relevant Bills to benefit and enhance the welfare of women.
3. At the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, the African Women Parliamentarians from the continent met on 24 November 1999 and endorsed the idea of forming the African Women Parliamentarians Forum with great enthusiasm.
4. We therefore, look forward to registering and working together as African women. We believe Women Parliamentarians have a critical role to play.

We thank you.

5. Statement to the United Nations Development Programme from delegates at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, held 22- 26 November 1999

We, the delegates convening in Addis Ababa at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women held from 22 to 26 November, 1999 to review the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and to draw up Beijing +5 strategies, recognise and acknowledge that *poverty eradication* is pivotal to development in Africa. This Conference received with disquiet the information that UNDP has embarked on a programme of restructuring in its mission, and thus its direction. We write to voice our deep concerns about the changes currently being instituted in UNDP.

We believe that the focus on poverty eradication should continue as a matter of highest priority. This is a crosscutting issue that affects all aspects of the lives of all people in Africa – women and girls in particular. A strong focus on poverty eradication would have a beneficial impact on health, education, human rights and all other areas necessary for the well being of the continent. Moreover these critical areas of concern were endorsed by governments and multilateral agencies during the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Addis Ababa Conference has re-affirmed these critical areas and has reviewed them exhaustively in the 12 thematic workshops of the Conference.

UNDP has, in the past, shown exemplary commitment to promoting development with a human face. This has included serious discussion that has resulted in a re-definition of the development paradigm as this relates to Africa. Moreover, UNDP has been in the forefront of multilateral agencies to endorse and institutionalise a gender perspective in all its policies and programmes in the Africa region.

We are particularly concerned about two immediate consequences of this shift: the reduction in the status of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa; and the downgrading of UNDP's corporate Gender Unit and capacity for gender mainstreaming. This change, if implemented, threatens to undermine the ability of UNDP to address effectively the concerns that are crucial to Africa. Indeed, this would undermine the institutional capacity of UNDP to conceive, formulate and operationalize relevant policies and programmes for the region.

The intended shift of UNDP from poverty eradication and human development was brought to the floor and later confirmed by information contained in the speech given at Harvard on 30 September 1999 by Mark Malloch Brown, the Administrator of UNDP.

It should be noted that governments have made commitments to and investments in poverty eradication programmes. Many countries have developed 25-year development plans around this issue, under the auspices of and guidance from UNDP. The women's movement across the continent has taken up the challenge and is heavily involved in poverty eradication activities. The imminent change in emphasis in UNDP's focus potentially derails their initiatives and the implementation of critical national efforts.

We therefore recommend that this shift in policy be reviewed and debated as a matter of urgency to give African governments and, women in particular, the opportunity to continue the programmes already begun in partnership with UNDP.

It is not clear how the focus on governance will translate into improved living conditions at the household level and impact on women who remain the poorest of the poor. Thus, we need further clarification and an operational definition of governance to ensure that it does not hamper our efforts to eliminate poverty as the major impediment to the advancement of African women.

We further urge that UNDP enter into dialogue with governments and civil society with regard to the shift from poverty eradication to governance. This will enhance the spirit of partnership that exists between African governments, women's movements and other sectors of civil society.

We are further concerned about the implications of the restructuring for gender balance and African women's representation at the highest echelons of decision-making within the UN System. We wish to voice our deep regret that top positions held by African women at the United Nations appear to be highly vulnerable when restructuring and shifts in emphasis take place. We have learned, in the context of this meeting, that the post of the incumbent head of UNDP's Africa Bureau has been eliminated. We have also become aware that recently, a senior African woman at UNFPA had to vacate her post.

By these actions, UN agencies will:

- Reduce the visibility of Africa in its policy-making and operations;
- Reduce the capacity of the UN in general, and UNDP in particular, to speak on the concerns of Africa;
- Downgrade African women's leadership in key positions within the United Nations;
- Undermine the stated UNDP policy goal of achieving gender balance in the UN System by the year 2000;
- Discourage governments, institutions and women from putting forward strong women candidates as role models for women in decision-making in the United Nations; and
- Send a message that UNDP places a low priority on consensus-building around the crucial issues of gender mainstreaming and gender balance at the corporate level; and that
- For African women a glass ceiling still exists even in the United Nations.

In the spirit of partnership which Africa has enjoyed with UNDP, we ask that such far-reaching decisions be taken in consultation with a broad constituency in Africa, including governments, intergovernmental, regional and subregional bodies, as well as civil society organisations concerned with gender equality and women's empowerment.

We look forward to further discussions with UNDP on the issues we have raised above.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
26 November, 1999

6. *Open Letter from PALOPS Women*

We, the women from Portuguese-speaking Countries in Africa (PALOPS), participants at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 22 to 26 November 1999.

Given the fact that we represent a significant and very important linguistic and population group on the continent;

Concerned with the blunt and systematic discrimination/marginalization that African countries, whose official language is Portuguese, have been subjected to during regional, subregional, international and world conferences, manifested by the ignoring the Portuguese language for services such as simultaneous interpretation, translation of documents, etc. during the above mentioned forums;

Concerned with the restrictions imposed upon us, due to the fact that we cannot convey our message in the official language of our respective countries;

Aware of the role we play as women in our respective countries and on the continent;

Determined to participate effectively in discussions and share our experiences, in aforementioned forums, we demand that:

1. The Portuguese Language be recognised as an official language at conferences at all levels, whether regional, subregional, international or world level;
2. Simultaneous interpretation be provided in Portuguese language;
3. Documents for such conferences be translated into Portuguese for distribution;
4. Organisations involved and Governments of Portuguese-speaking African countries endeavour to find and put in place, with the shortest delay possible, efficient mechanisms to implement our appeal.

7. Declaration of the Youth Delegation at the Sixth Regional Conference on Women

We young African delegates,

Gathered at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, from 22 to 26 November, 1999 in Addis Ababa,

Note with appreciation the inclusion of youth in delegations, by ECA, governments, non-governmental organisations and international organisations;

Deeply concerned about the inadequate representation and participation of youth in the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women;

Fully aware of the predicament of young women and girls in our countries;

Concerned about the exclusion of youth from formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action even though they are a majority of the African population;

Strongly convinced that youths and youth organisations have a central role to play in the process of change on gender issues;

Fully aware of the fact that youths are not only future leaders but partners of the present;

Strongly convinced that the future cannot be planned without involving the youth;

Convinced that the youth must take it upon themselves to be involved actively in the critical areas of concern;

We therefore,

1. Invite the ECA to work with youths and youth organisations in all activities on a participatory basis, in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action;
2. Invite all governments, NGOs, IGOs, specialised agencies and other stakeholders to work in partnership with the youths;
3. Call upon all governments to take into account youth participation and contribution in all critical areas of concern.
4. Urge all governments who have not done so to include the "girl-child" as a critical area of concern;
5. Request all governments, multilateral donors and others to provide funding for the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action by youths.

6. Request the ACW to submit a report on youths and youth-related activities in the next session of the African Regional Conference and other relevant meetings;
7. Further request that the item, "*The Place, Role and Contribution of Youths*" be placed on the agenda of the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women, Beijing +5 preparatory committee meeting and the special session on the Review of the Beijing Platforms for Action.
8. Welcome any further recommendations that will foster the advancement of youths in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.

Done at Addis Ababa, 25 November, 1999

8. Motion of the Indian Ocean Islands

To the Plenary Session of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, in
Addis Ababa:

- Desirous of achieving greater efficiency in terms of actions and results, towards the speedy implementation of the:
 - Beijing Platform for Action; and
 - Recommendations of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, in the various subregions of the continent;
- The Indian Ocean Islands, signatories to the present motion, namely:

The Comoros,
Mauritius,
Seychelles, and
Madagascar

Request that they be:

1. Either categorised in a **specific subregional group (Indian Ocean islands)** instead of being split into two subregional groups, namely:
 - The Comoros and Seychelles in Eastern Africa,
 - Mauritius and Madagascar in Southern Africa;
2. Or be categorised in one of the groups mentioned above.

Addis Ababa, 26 November 1999

The Heads of Delegation:

COMOROS: The Minister of Education;

MAURITIUS: The Ambassador of Mauritius to Ethiopia;

MADAGASCAR: The Minister of Population, the Status of Women, and Children;

SEYCHELLES: The Representative of the Minister for Social Affairs.

9. Special Message of the Delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on Peace

Madam Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we all know, our continent, Africa faces the malady of underdevelopment, and this in spite of its immense riches.

Further, we are sure it must be clear to all of us, from the presentations made here, that armed conflict is among the principal causes of Africa's slide into enduring poverty and underdevelopment; and that it is women and children who suffer most.

The Conference on the Culture of Peace and Non-Violence, held last May in Zanzibar, recommended that the participants establish adequate operational mechanisms to enable African women and women's associations to play a stronger role in building a culture of peace in Africa.

Last November, in Algiers, women came together to reaffirm their commitment to the restoration of peace on the continent. This commitment was reflected in a decision to stop talking endlessly about peace, for too much had been said already.

Hence the proposal we had made, apart from any other action, that the women of Africa fix a day on which they will demonstrate to the whole world their rejection of war, by an indication to be agreed upon at this Conference.

In connection with the conflict besetting our country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, we had invited our sisters in Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda to join our effort and help realise our drive for peace.

The delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo therefore takes the opportunity offered by these deliberations to call upon Madam Kazibwe, Vice-president of Uganda, as a woman, a mother, and as President of the African Women's Committee for Peace and Development, to actualise her commitment made at the Special Forum on Peace, by rekindling the Flame of Peace of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, held in Addis Ababa, from 22 to 26 November 1999.

In concrete terms, the women of DRC request her to:

1. Personally lead a peace mission to the DRC;
2. Unreservedly prevail upon the Government of her country to ensure the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Ugandan armed military personnel from the national territory of DRC, which has been occupied for almost 15 months.

At the same time, we appeal for the involvement of other African women in efforts for the defence of the cause of women and children of our Central African subregion, which the international community has largely forgotten.

We believe, on our part, Madam Chairperson, that it is through that course of action that solidarity among African women will become a reality.

We thank you.

10. Statement by African Regional Labour Organisations

We, the African regional labour organisations, namely the African Regional Organisation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (AFRO/ICFTU), the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and the ISP professional secretariat, meeting in Addis Ababa on the occasion of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, from 22 to 26 November 1999, would like to state our position on general recommendation No. 2, which deals with:

- (a) The health of women and children; and
- (b) Education, training and information.

The union addresses the wish for international solidarity among male and female workers. It seeks to establish social justice in the whole world and in Africa in particular. It prepares and leads campaigns on questions such as: respect for labour rights and the rights of women workers (including protection from violence, sexual harassment, as well as AIDS), and conducts training, information and education programmes through seminars, conferences and workshops.

For all the reasons mentioned above, we request the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women to take into account the following areas of concern:

(a) Health

As we deliberate here, the observation on AIDS in relation to teachers in Abidjan confirms our contribution during the workshop of 7 to 24 November 1999 on this subject.

(i) To Governments

- We emphasise the need to ratify "Convention 103", on maternity, and to ensure its stringent application, particularly in free areas;
- We request that budgetary votes for health should be raised; and
- The participatory system for health should be reintroduced. Poverty being a reality in Africa and, more so, in view of its distinct impact on women, it would be illusory to hope for a healthy population of women, any more than a healthy population of children under current conditions.

(ii) To Governments and labour organisations

- Ensure implementation of the Conventions that have been ratified; the establishment of hygiene, health and safety committees in the work place; the protection of health workers against possible infection with AIDS (lack of time and access to medicine against HIV, in the case of women workers);

- Take all necessary measures to ensure the independence of social security establishments in Africa, and to strengthen them, for better protection of workers of both sexes.

(b) Education, training and information

Adjustment programmes and globalisation are not apt to bring about improvements in the education-and-training sector.

Ideally, national programmes should be discussed and implemented in collaboration with education professionals and their representatives.

To the International Labour Organisation

- We request overall co-ordination with ECA and the International Labour Office to enable us to participate in all the fora as a syndicate;
- We seek assistance to labour organisations to improve their training in keeping with new information technologies.

Finally, we congratulate ECA and all the women's organisations present at this Conference.

11. Statement by African Rural Women Delegates to the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women

We, African rural women delegates,

Meeting in parallel with the proceedings of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, held from 22 to 26 November in Addis Ababa,

Positively appreciate the presence of rural women at these deliberations,

Considering that over half of Africa's active rural population are women;

Considering that they devote 12 to 19 hours a day to domestic and farming chores without remuneration, assisting children and the elderly people (production, reproduction and community activities);

In view of the importance of the economic, social and cultural roles played by African rural women, making them an indispensable development agent;

Announce the establishment of the African Rural Women (ARW) network on this Friday 26 November 1999, with the following countries participating:

- Algeria
- Côte d'Ivoire;
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Senegal

Appeal to rural women from all other African countries to join this network;

Recommend that particular attention be given to the specific needs of African rural women through an *integrated approach* (policy, programme, project, etc.);

Recommend enhanced development of the production derived from the activities of rural women through:

- Access to training and appropriate technologies;
- Access to the factors of production (land, credit facilities, equipment, etc.).

Recommend the creation of a databank to represent the condition of African rural women, gather experiences and promote exchanges at the national, regional and global levels,

Invite governments and development partners to take all necessary steps to enable rural women to play their role fully and take advantage of the opportunities offered by globalisation;

Appeal to ADB, ECA and other international development partners to support the establishment of a "support fund for rural women";

Invite African rural women to participate in the World Summit of Rural Women, which will be held in Dakar, Senegal, in November 2000 under the auspices of the International Steering Committee for the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women;

Done at Addis Ababa on 26 November 1999

The ARW network is composed of the following:

President:	N'Deye Sarr Diop	Senegal
Vice-President:	Lassel Djaouida	Algeria
Secretary General:	Ben Mahi Malika	Morocco
Deputy Secretary-General	Assienan Cho Juliette	Côte d'Ivoire
Treasurer:	Fatma Khoubah	Mauritania
Deputy Treasurer:	Kone Sira Sissoko	Mali

12. Message from the Women's Association of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Madam Chairperson,

We have the honour to address to your high office our motion of exhortation, in our desire to seek durable peace in our country, the Democratic Republic of Congo and, more generally, in the Great Lakes region.

Indeed, the Congolese people, like other peoples all over the world, aspire to peace, development, international cooperation and peaceful coexistence among nations. These ideals are contained in the Charter of the United Nations and are supposed to govern relations among people of all nations.

This norm has not been applied since the beginning of the war of aggression directed against the Democratic Republic of Congo by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi.

This aggression constitutes a threat to the national integrity and sovereignty of Congo. Since 2 August 1998, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda have violated the territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since then, the conflict has assumed alarming proportions, in that the theatre of conflict has spread to six provinces (North Kivu, South Kivu, Manyema, Eastern Province, Katanga and Equateur), and that all the fundamental rights of the people, and in particular, women and children, have been flouted. The aggressors have also resorted to looting of property and plunder of surface and mineral resources and the fauna, to rape of women and children, displacement of entire families, and so on.

The situation prevailing in this part of the country borders on colonisation. Foreign troops from Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda bestride Congolese territory-- clashing on occasion, as was the case recently in Kisangani, where death and destruction occurred as a result. Foreign powers have even gone to the extent of creating new provinces (such as Kibali-Ituri and Beni-Lubero) and organising their own public administration structure, which removes the boundary between Goma in Congo and Gisenyi in Rwanda. They have settled Rwandese and Ugandans on Congolese territory.

As a result of the war of occupation, Congolese have been the helpless witnesses to the nefarious destruction of Congo's ecosystem, and particularly, the national parks of Virunga, Kahuzi, Garamba and Epulu, as well as the forests. National wealth, in the form of gold, copper, diamonds, coffee, cobalt and wood, has been systematically plundered. The urban road infrastructure has also deteriorated rapidly as a result of the movement of military tanks in Kisangani and in the other occupied areas.

A sense of insecurity has pervaded the civilian population, and there have been massive troop movements and the abusive use of children in armed groups. Moreover, after thirty-two years of a brutal dictatorship, the same people who have suffered under dictatorial oppression are now confronted with this calamity.

The Congolese women's associations participating in the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, in Addis Ababa, on 19 and 20 November 1999, convey to you their concerns, namely the need for:

1. The unconditional withdrawal of the foreign armed invaders (that is, the Rwandese, Burundi and Ugandan armies);
2. Total support to the Lusaka Accords;
3. The unreserved mobilisation of Africans for the restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
4. The urgent deployment of United Nations peacekeeping troops in Congo;
5. Humanitarian assistance to the Congolese communities that have been ravaged by war;
6. A mission of inquiry to determine the extent of the crimes against humanity that have been committed;
7. A regional conference of women of the countries involved in the conflict, who are struggling for lasting peace for the African continent.

Madam Chairperson,

We wish to recall that, at the inauguration of the Peace Forum, the President of the African Committee for Peace and Development and Vice-president of the Republic of Uganda, emphasised convincingly that half of the continent is beset by armed conflict which occasions famine, insecurity, disease, dislocation of families, and gross violations of human rights. The survival of Africa and of our country Congo, depends on the survival of women.

Do we, Madam Chairperson, have two sets of rules? When the presence of several armed groups on our land impoverishes women by depleting surface and mineral resources through plunder, when soldiers infected with HIV/AIDS prey upon women and young girls, raping them and thus exterminating our population, is it possible to imagine worse forms of crime against humanity?

As she has spoken with so much conviction, we would like, Madam Chairperson, to request the President of the African Women's Committee for Peace and Development, as a mother, a woman, and Vice-president of Uganda, which is one of the three countries occupying our country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, to be involved in the resolution of the conflict in the Great Lakes region and, in particular, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

To paraphrase the First Lady of Nigeria in her speech to the Peace Forum, those who wage war are our sons, our husbands, our nephews; and we believe the President of the Committee for Peace and Development and Vice-President of Uganda can use her influence and the opportunities available to her by virtue of her office, to rekindle the flame of peace which we all lit at the Peace Forum of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women.

Please accept, Madam Chairperson, our heartfelt gratitude and sincere regards.

For the women of Congo,

The delegation of the Women's Associations of the Democratic Republic of Congo:

1. MUHIMUZI Elise Comité National Femme et Développement
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Telecel: 880121440
2. TAYAYE MUYALA Réseau des ONG programme d'Appui aux
Actions Féminines "P.A.A.F."
Avenue Mfumu Nsaka 26, district, Gombele
Lemba – Fax: 00243-12-21604
B.P. 393 Kinshasa-Limete
3. TSITUKA Albertine Eveil de la femme ASBL, B.P. 5467 Kin Gombe
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4. BAPU Marie PROFER, Av. Shabunda, 131
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5. MWIKA Berthe ONES C/O CNONGD Av. Shaba, 2
Kinshasa Gombe
6. NYEMBO FEZA Association des journalistes de la presse féminine
"A.J.P.F" C/O CONAFED
7. BUKA Astrid FOLECO
8. GERMAINE COMEMECO

Annex V

Modalities for Africa's participation at the Global Mid-Term Review

A Drafting Group that included representatives from governments, subregional and regional NGOs and United Nations agencies reviewed a draft document prepared by the ECA secretariat. The Group was chaired by H.E. Mrs. Janat B. Mukwaya, Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda and facilitated by Ms. Angela King and Ms. Rose Odera, Chairperson of the preparatory process of the Special Session of Beijing +5.

Terms of reference of the drafting group:

- ◆ To examine modalities for Africa's Participation in the Special Session on Beijing +5.

Recommendations of the Group:

1. Participation of NGOs in the Plenary of the Special Session of Beijing +5

The group recommended that the NGOs holding consultative status with ECOSOC should select one representative to be their spokesperson in the Plenary, taking into consideration the subject area, geography and time allocated. In the event that the Global Meeting will recommend fewer than five NGOs to speak, all efforts must be made to ensure that Africa is represented.

2. Role of the Committee on Women and Development

In order to ensure co-ordination and harmonisation of the preparatory activities, the Committee on Women in Development (CWD) should work in collaboration with the OAU Secretariat in Addis Ababa and with its Permanent Mission in New York, to:

- ◆ Co-ordinate and harmonise the position of African States and;
- ◆ Ensure wide and active participation of African States at the Session of the Preparatory Committee in March and at the Special Session in June 2000.

The Secretariat of the CWD, that is the African Centre for Women/ECA and OAU are called upon to collaborate closely in order to ensure successful organisation of the two meetings of CWD and the African Group.

ECA's representative to the UN in New York will be the focal point to work with the OAU Permanent Mission to the UN, in the preparations.

3. Role of ECA

ECA will ensure timely delivery to New York of the following documents:

- ◆ Synthesis of National Reports on the Progress made in Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action;
- ◆ The African Plan of Action to Accelerate Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action;
- ◆ Declaration of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women;
- ◆ Decisions regarding modalities for Africa's Participation in the Special Session on Beijing +5.

ECA is also called upon to disseminate the relevant information and documents to the meeting of the preparatory committee in March 2000, to all mechanisms responsible for the advancement of women in ECA member States and other relevant actors. ECA will facilitate as much as possible the mobilisation of African participants to the Special Session of the General Assembly in June 2000.

ECA and OAU together will facilitate the consultations of the African Group during the session of the preparatory committee in March 2000 and the Special Session in June 2000 and ensure the integration of the outcome of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women.

4. Recommendation to member States

Member States should strive to expand their delegations to include Ministers of Finance and Planning, the youth and people with disabilities.

Annex VI

Parallel Activities

During the conference from 17:30 to 19:00 on 24 November 1999 and Thursday, 25 November 1999 from 9:00 to 13:00, parallel activities were organized. Various NGOs and United Nations Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds organized workshops, briefings, caucuses and short video presentations on subjects such as a campaign on violence against women, the multipurpose platform being used in Mali and maternal mortality.

Workshop on land and property rights

A workshop on Land and Property Rights was organized by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNHCS), (otherwise known as Habitat), UNDP, UNIFEM and ECA. Presentations, including one by a consultant, provided an overview of the situation of women *vis a vis* the right to land. The participants looked at land reform and how this it is impacting on women including those in urban areas, which is of increasing concern due to the rate of urbanization in the continent. An account was given of the efforts of one grass roots women's organization to ensure that a land redistribution programme did not exclude women. Discussion centred around country experiences, highlighting the importance of the issue and its link to human rights, poverty and food security. Concrete proposals were made for future initiatives.

The point that land and property rights are also political and governance issues was raised. Lack of transparency and accountability combined with a low level of representation of women in decision-making at the level of community and local authorities as well as at national level. This negatively affects the involvement of women in decision-making and sensitization of law enforcement agents such as the judiciary, land administration boards and so forth.

Participants recommended that appropriate research be undertaken in order to: document the current reality of women *vis a vis* land and property ownership and use; the effects of land reforms and redistribution programmes on women; and the milestones in the struggle of women for equal rights to land and property. It was suggested that this documentation be done at local and national levels, but that information exchange and future initiatives be undertaken at subregional level, so as to benefit from various experiences and to strengthen work on local and national-level initiatives. The group also requested that subregional, regional and international agencies working on women, poverty, governance and similar issues relevant to land and property rights (e.g ADB, COMESA, ECA, ECOWAS, UNCHS, UNDP, UNIFEM, SADC) collaborate on forming a support mechanism for regional initiatives.

Another proposal made was to set up a regional inter-agency initiative or technical group initiated by the East African Subregional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI) linking the organizations and UN Agencies named above with appropriate resources and women's networks.

Poverty and economic empowerment

The Council for Economic Equity for Women in Africa (CEEWA) and the World Bank Institute together ran a Forum. The World Bank Institute focused on its recent report "*Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction*", while CEEWA focused on engendering national economic policies in Africa as a means of sharing experiences on initiatives designed to promote women's participation in economic policy formulation and their increased access to natural resources.

Workshops on entrepreneurship/rural women/leadership

The African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE) organized a workshop with a short video presentation on the "Role of African Women Entrepreneurs in the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth in the 21st century".

A Workshop on "*Developing Alternative Frameworks for African Women in Leadership*" was organized by Akina Mama wa Afrika and a Forum entitled, "Beijing +5: What do National Plans of Actions contain for rural women?" was organized by FAO. During the Forum, the establishment of a network of rural women was announced.

Gender and gender mainstreaming

UNIFEM organized a briefing entitled "*Gender and Media: Lobbying at the PrepCom for Beijing +5 Review*". FEMNET organized a workshop on *Gender Mainstreaming* and also used the opportunity of the conference to invite a group of approximately 50 to plan the participation of African women in EXPO 2000 to be held in Hanover, Germany in 2000.

A workshop on *engendering national budgets* was organized by UNDP and UNIFEM. Participants were briefed about the importance of gender budgeting as a tool for enhancing gender equity and equality and ensuring a fair distribution of resources to all members of society. Work done in this area in specific African countries was presented and the need to raise awareness on this issue and build capacity was stressed.

Constitution reform

African women parliamentarians met on 25 November 1999 at a workshop convened by the Kenya Women's Political Caucus and funded by UNDP and UNIFEM, to discuss *the role of women in constitution-making and constitutional reform*. The workshop was attended by delegates to the conference who had made valuable contributions to constitution-making processes in their own countries. Experiences from six African countries – Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia – were shared. In addition, a presentation on the implications of constitution-making for women with disabilities was made.

Workshop participants observed that most African independence constitutions were influenced by colonial powers and were therefore oppressive to women. They also noted that

many such constitutions did not expressly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which amounts to a barrier to the advancement of women. Constitutional reform in African countries such as South Africa and Uganda, had resulted in some of the most progressive constitutions in the world. Determined to ensure constitutional equality for all African women, the workshop made several recommendations concerning various aspects of the issue.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs)

Representatives of the African Information Society Gender Working Group (AISGWG), Association for Progressive Communications (APC) Africa-Women's programme, FEMNET, International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Task Force on Gender Issues, Worldspace Corporation and Wommed-Femmed, (a network supported by UNESCO), presented their work and discussed various issues surrounding information and communications technologies (ICTs) as they involve and impact women. Issues discussed included using ICTs as advocacy tools, and realizing benefits for women from technology trends and developments.

HIV/AIDS

An entire morning was devoted to HIV/AIDS, with presenters from UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNIFEM covering different aspects of the issue such as HIV/AIDS and reproductive health of African youth, and its impact on children and HIV/AIDS as a gender issue. Participants were briefed on the current situation whereby in Africa, the rate of infection is much greater for women as compared to men and the number of orphans is skyrocketing. The trend is expected to continue its upward climb for the foreseeable future. Concern was expressed for some countries in Africa in which religious leaders are denying the existence of an HIV/AIDS problem and preaching that message to their congregations.

Women in mining

The SADC Women in Mining Trust, with assistance from ECA and UNIFEM, organized a Forum on Women in Mining as a means of disseminating information about how women are faring in traditionally heavily male-dominated professions, recommending specific steps to improve opportunities for women in mining and highlighting initiatives already underway. Specific country experiences as well as general concerns affecting women miners were discussed.

NGO capacity building

The NGO Abantu launched its "GAP Alliance" (Alliance for Gender and Policy Advocacy). The main principle of the alliance is to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to influence governmental policies in order to make them more responsive to gender concerns. The objectives of the alliance include information dissemination, promotion of good practices, and building the capacity of women's associations and of organizations that work in collaboration with African women.

Violence against women

The Inter-African Committee (IAC) on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children organized a Forum on 22 November 1999 after the plenary entitled "*Traditionally Condoned Forms of Violence: How to Bring about Positive Changes of Attitude*". The guest speaker was Mme. Chantal Compaore, First Lady of Burkina Faso and Goodwill Ambassador of IAC. Panelists made presentations to a large audience.

Statistics on women

On the last day of the Conference, media representatives were invited to a launching of a CD-ROM in the final stages of production by ACW. It is entitled, "*The Status of Women in Africa*" and contains gender-disaggregated data on a wide range of social, political and economic development indicators that especially affect women.

Gender and the media

About 60 men and women from national and international print, radio and television media attended the media symposium of 21 November 1999, a pre-conference activity. All subregions were represented and both public and private media representatives. The participants were welcomed by Mr. Peter da Costa, Senior Communication Advisor for ECA, and by Mme. Joséphine Ouédraogo, Director, African Centre for Women (ACW), ECA.

Mme. Ouédraogo explained the objectives of the Sixth Regional Conference and the process of reviewing the implementation of the African and Global Platforms for Action which was the focus of the Conference. She gave some examples of areas in which greater effort was needed to improve the situation of women and stressed that implementation could not be left only in the hands of governments, as they frequently lacked political commitment, positioning and adequate human and financial resources. She pointed out that the African Platform lacked adequate stress on institutional mechanisms for implementation.

She stressed the need to involve journalists and other media practitioners in the work of the Conference, and invited their support for sensitization of decision-makers and of the general public on women's issues. They were key to the follow-up action on policies and strategies and she invited their contribution to the evaluation of progress achieved with gender and development in Africa. She invited the media to:

- Study the needs and demands of women and compare them to the current levels of response and action;
- Review tools of information and institutional mechanisms in place for implementation of the recommendations with regard to the twelve areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform
- Study the texts of the commitments made and review the extent to which rhetoric has been transformed into resources and action;
- Assess the degree to which women are involved in political and economic decision making, and their access to economic and political structures;

- Upgrade the negative portrayal in the media of women as sufferers to that of positive actors for change;
- Lobby for access to statistical data for situational analysis and for national planning, especially for production and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data;
- Examine shifts and changes in concerns and actions since the Dakar and Beijing Conferences in 1994 and 1995 respectively;
- Target the gender and women's programmes being launched at national and regional levels;
- Assess actions and the accountability of Members of Parliament and of government institutions, NGOs, civil society, the United Nations system, and so on;
- Assess the level of awareness and sensitization in each country;
- Assess the level of consideration of women's roles and concerns in each sector, and the adequacy of the resources available;
- Analyze the reasons for insufficient progress;
- Involve themselves in follow up to the actions decided at the Conference, to be contained in the Regional Plan of Action and the Declaration.

Mr. da Costa, in his intervention, emphasized the need for the media to see themselves not only as reporters and broadcasters but also as development activists with a collective responsibility for the development of Africa. Development should not be left only to governments but the media should be a powerful group that helps to influence the development agenda. He deplored the negative, stereotyped way in which African women were portrayed in the international press, as refugees and victims of hunger, disease and war. Many national newspapers, in their turn, relegated women's issues mostly to fashion and culinary pages and ignored their substantive contributions to their communities and economies. He urged truthful reporting that gives an accurate picture and announced that the lack of gender-disaggregated data would be remedied somewhat by the upcoming release by ACW of a CD-ROM, with national statistical data on women and girls in various sectors.

He raised a number of questions that challenged professional media policies and practices:

- Are women's causes being advanced by media reports, or are they possibly facing a backlash?
- Is gender analysis being used to help to change stereotyped images and to recognize women's voices and the truth about their contributions?
- Is editorial policy facilitating or hindering coverage?
- Does policy mainstream or categorize coverage?
- Does coverage go beyond mere reporting of women's projects and events to in-depth analysis and insistence on accountability?
- Is effort being made to employ women writers and other women media professionals?

Floor interventions were frank and useful and included such comments as the following:

- There is inadequate understanding of gender and gender analysis and some journalists feel that women's issues in Africa have not been dealt with sufficiently.

- Men are not being involved enough as gender issues are being treated as a responsibility for women only; men should be involved fully if progress is to be made.
- Editors and producers need far more sensitization on women's issues and tend to be mostly men. They are in a position to do a great deal to affect professional policy and practice and public opinion but very few have adopted gender analysis. Ways and means should be found to influence editors and producers on women and gender issues.
- More women producers, editors and writers are needed, and more journals and newspapers for women. Women's pages and women's magazines need to be upgraded to cover more than fashion and beauty and household advice. They should also reflect conceptual and substantive issues and terms of women's wider involvement in intellectual, legal, political and economic activities.
- Society in general needs gender sensitization and training. Attitudes towards women and women's activities are still lagging behind the reality and world standards.
- Media professionals should strive to assess national capacity for women's advancement and the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms and help to lobby for filling the gaps in information, accountability and structures.

Some participants said that there are certain difficulties in promoting women over the public media in some countries, and of drawing attention to such harmful traditional practices as female genital mutilation, which, in the countries of the Horn particularly, affect more than 90% of women and girls. Due to tradition and belief, the exposure of certain issues is often obstructed and the media should take up such matters and press for change persistently. It was recommended that attention be paid to the legal environment, to equal rights and opportunities, since law is the standard bearer of society. The UN Conventions that set global standards for the status of women should be monitored to ensure their adequate reflection in national legislation. It was also felt that the media should embark on conscious efforts to entrench gender analysis in coverage of issues. The case of Inter Press Service (IPS) was noted as a good example of increasing women's voices in stories and as journalists in the field. The need for training in and commitment to gender analysis was also noted.

It was suggested that one way for the media to promote attitudinal change is by featuring positive, progressive female role models in the society. There were instances of a media backlash against women's activities due to general fears that women want to oust men and take over; some men and women feel threatened by departure from tradition. Men were accused of sometimes deliberately hampering women's access to and use of information. A serious challenge for media professionals, therefore, is how to cover women's issues with accuracy and awareness without creating resistance to advancement of women.

UNHCR and IOM were particularly concerned about the undignified and degrading image of African women refugees and migrants. They were being portrayed as unfortunates, starving, having AIDS and other diseases, as prostitutes, disorganized and unable to help themselves. These images were far from the reality and neglected or ignored the resourceful, creative ways in which these women sought to better their lives. IOM commended the Ethiopian media for the recent series of stories on the abuse of migrant women workers, and its exposure of the larger picture of the trafficking of African women and girls.

It was pointed out that the involvement of women in media work and in information dissemination was sometimes heightened in post-conflict situations, as part of their overall involvement in reconstruction activities. In Rwanda, the genocide experience mobilized women's involvement in print, radio and television communications for peace, reconstruction and development. However, the disparity of treatment between women refugees in Kosovo and women refugees in Africa was also noted. Disapproval of such unequal, discriminatory treatment of Africans was expressed.

It was agreed that the necessary human resources were in place to carry out improved coverage, but African media especially, lack money and need support, even to travel to certain areas, or to carry out freelance work. The group felt that more allocation of resources was needed for women, including women working in the media. There was a general lack of money and means to get funding. Government funding left media representatives less free to follow their own inclinations. It was recommended that agencies and NGOs should support journalists financially, especially travel expenses, so that they can go and get the facts for themselves. Such support of the media should be seen as incentives for coverage.

Improved gender reporting and improved portrayal of women by the media in the new millennium would require gender sensitization and training targeted at both men and women media professionals. It was since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) had developed into such a powerful factor for speeding up change. They were barely mentioned in Beijing, but now should be taken seriously by women in their strategies and programmes. Access to the Internet was affecting the lives of both men and women, giving people access to information, enabling them to create information resources on the Internet, as well as to share and disseminate information. Interconnection with Internet information resources would help to upgrade coverage by national and community radios and television stations.

Real commitment to change was said to go beyond information access and information dissemination, to communication as a two-way process. However, language barriers remain still constraints, as many women, especially rural women, do not speak and read European languages. There was also the factor of dozens of local languages in one nation.

It was felt that more radio and TV for women was needed, with a national and local focus, and in local languages. It was also recommended that NGOs and the private sector become more involved in radio and TV for women and about women and their relationships to men and to social institutions.

The meeting was closed after the main points were summarized and participants were urged to come up with more collective strategies and practical ways of moving forward, "selling" and "packaging" gender stories, often in a hostile, unsensitized and unsympathetic environment.

Annex VII

African Women's Concern for Peace

Background

African Women's concerns on the issue of peace are the outcome of a process that started with the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace (1993), the African Platform of Action on Women, Dakar (1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (1995), and the Women's Leadership Forum on Peace Johannesburg (1996). It was in this context that the OAU and the ECA jointly established and launched in November 1998, the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) which is a major cornerstone of women's inclusion in peace processes and empowerment endeavours in the region since Beijing.

Since then, several other regional meetings and deliberations have taken place in search of a common platform on the issue of women and peace. The Pan-African Women's Conference on a Culture of Peace, co-organised by UNESCO, OAU and AWCPD in Zanzibar in May 1999 resulted in the unanimous adoption of the Zanzibar Declaration and Agenda for Peace. The Pan-African Women's Organisation Peace Forum held in Algiers concluded its deliberations by launching the Algiers Appeal. The Special Forum on Peace of the Sixth Regional Conference gathered great momentum and resulted in the official endorsement of the Declarations and Resolutions adopted by women's associations and NGOs meeting in the Peace Tent.

Thus, the Sixth Regional Conference on Women concluded deliberations on the issue of peace by reiterating its commitment to the *Zanzibar Declaration and Agenda for Peace* and by endorsing the *Algiers Appeal and the Declarations of the Peace Tent* during the Sixth Regional Conference on Women.

The following highlights the key concerns of African women that emerged from the various meetings and deliberations on the issue of peace, in the region:

1. ***Promoting the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building in Africa***
 - ◆ Lobbying for the increase of women's participation in the areas of reconciliation, negotiation and mediation of conflicts and undertaking capacity building of women's organisations in the field;
 - ◆ Initiating peace missions led by women to war-torn societies ;
 - ◆ Advocating for the inclusion of women refugees and displaced persons in peace negotiations and conflict resolution;
2. ***Integrating women in decision-making and changing the mainstream perspective of***

security issues to include a gender perspective

- ◆ Analysing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mechanisms for defence and security from a gender perspective to assess the level of support given to women in their policy and institutional frameworks and their impact on the peace networks ;
- ◆ Advocating for an affirmative action policy that guarantees at least 30% representation of women in decision-making mechanisms at all levels ;
- ◆ Establishing an observatory for peace and democratic governance ;

3. Demilitarisation and disarmament of Africa

- ◆ Lobbying African governments to put in place mechanisms for the reduction and control of the arms trade that fuels conflicts and wars and jeopardises the development of Africa ;
- ◆ Supporting the subregional initiatives on demilitarisation, disarmament and drug control, such as the ECOWAS moratorium on the Importation, Export and Manufacture of Light Weapons and its Programme of Co-ordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED);
- ◆ Pressurising African governments to apply similar initiatives in other subregions, and to reduce military expenditures and re-channel these resources to people's basic development needs;

4. The prohibition of the use of children as soldiers

- ◆ Advocating for prohibition of the use of ***children as soldiers*** in conflicts;
- ◆ Helping release, demobilise, re-socialise, protect and actively integrate African children used as soldiers into constructive development processes Advocate for the prohibition of the use of ***children as soldiers*** in conflicts;
- ◆ Appealing vigorously to governments to implement national, regional and international laws and statutes that combat all forms of violence against women and children, notably the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and strengthening legal systems to ensure that perpetrators of such violence are brought to justice;
- ◆ Advocating for the adoption of the Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women;

5. Pursuing strategies and initiatives that facilitate the changing of attitudes and gender stereotypes, particularly through the media

- ◆ Initiating the establishment of a Pan-African women's radio to present objective information, to build awareness, to mobilise widespread support in favour of peace and to launch special programs on women and a culture of peace;
- ◆ Documenting and disseminating women's success stories in peace- building, development and responsible leadership including through the awarding of prizes to outstanding women and women's groups;
- ◆ Preparing a women's "Who's Who ?" and a history of African women leaders to serve as role models for future generations;

6. Establishing a culture of peace in Africa

- ◆ Developing a consensus of moral and cultural values that should be transmitted to younger generations;
- ◆ Integrating in civic education programs , values and principles of democracy and *responsible citizenship*;
- ◆ Working towards the inclusion of peace education in school curricula and in all learning institutions;

8. Increase of African women's capacities to further sustain peace in Africa.

- ◆ Strengthening of women's peace networks in general and the African Women Committee on Peace and Development in particular as the lead organisation ;
- ◆ Setting up Regional Sub-committees of the African women's movements for peace to meet regularly also on a regional level ;
- ◆ Establishing national committees of the African women's movements for peace where they do not exist;
- ◆ Ensuring the recruitment of qualified African women to high-level regional and international positions, including at the OAU ;

**Declaration on the West African Initiative for
a Moratorium on Light Arms in Africa**

We, women's associations and NGOs, meeting in Addis Ababa during the NGO Consultative Meeting for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women:

- **Considering** the Resolutions, Decisions and Declarations adopted by the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, the European Union, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, CEDEAO and NGOs working for peace;
- **Considering** the impact of the uncontrolled circulation of light arms of low calibre on civilian populations in general, and on women and children in particular;
- **Salute** the announcement of an initiative of the Republic of Mali for a West African moratorium on the manufacture, export and import of light arms ;
- **Exhort** Governments of other African countries to adopt similar moratoriums on light arms;
- **Give** our support for the convening of an international conference on all forms of illegal trade in arms;
- **Subscribe** without reserve to the initiative seeking the elaboration and adoption of a United Nations Convention to combat the manufacture, export and import of illegal arms, as part of the struggle against organised, transitional crime ;
- **Exhort** Heads of State and Government, Chairpersons, Secretary-Generals and Executive Secretaries of international, regional and subregional organisations to follow up on their efforts in the struggle against the proliferation of light arms and anti personnel mines by associating with women's associations and NGOs working for peace.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21 November 1999

Declaration on Conflict and Violence in Africa

We, as women's associations and NGOs, meeting at the African Peace Tent during the NGO Consultative Meeting on 19 and 20 November 1999, before the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women:

- **Considering** the violent nature of internal and inter-state conflicts, which affect certain African countries, and their impact on civilian populations in general and on women and children in particular ;
- **Taking** into account the Geneva Conventions, the efforts of the United Nations and of international, regional and subregional organisations, and the initiatives of NGOs in the prevention and resolution of conflict and the maintenance of peace ;
- **Express** our deep preoccupation with the multiplication and intensification of conflict as well as with the security of civilian populations ;
- **Express** our solidarity with the civilian populations who are victims of conflict, and particularly with women and children ;
- **Demand** of the parties to conflict the immediate cessation of hostilities and the effective protection of civilian populations ;
- **Urgently** call for the implementation of strategies based on reconciliation, the support of relations of peaceful co-existence, the respect of international conventions and the elaboration of new norms allowing for the security of civilian populations, the promotion of democratic culture and peace education that takes into account our positive social values ;
- **Exhort** the parties to conflict and the international community to include women in processes of negotiation, conflict resolution and the consolidation of peace at all levels ;

- **Congratulate** the restoration of peace in Algeria with the implementation of a civil accord, in which women's associations and NGOs have been among the principal movers ;
- **Launch** an appeal to all parties to conflict that they invest in a process of peace and reconciliation, which is indispensable for sustainable development, assure the protection and defence of displaced civilian populations , and allow them to return to their place of origin ;
- **Demand** the constitution of a delegation of women's personalities who are competent and active in the area of peace and who represent women's associations and regional and sub-regional NGOs, to undertake a peace and solidarity mission to the Chair of the OAU.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21 November, 1999

Declaration on Child Soldiers in Africa

We, women's associations and NGOs, meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the NGO Consultative Meeting for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women, refer to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Resolutions, Decisions and Declarations of the Organisation of African Unity and the International Organisation of the Francophonie concerning the recruitment and involvement of children in armed conflicts:

- **Call** for respect of the international conventions relating to children 's rights ;
- **Demand** that Governments ratify the African Charter for the Rights and Well Being of the Child ;
- **Reaffirm** our support for all national, regional and international initiatives seeking to end the recruitment and the involvement of children in armed conflicts ;
- **Demand** more involvement of women's associations and NGOs working for peace in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in reconstruction and the maintenance of peace of post-conflict situations, particularly concerning the phenomena of children enrolled in combatant armies ;
- **Urge** Governments and international organisations to support women's initiatives in the struggle against this phenomena, which is tied to poverty and the exclusion of women

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 21, 1999