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Sub-regional Decade Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform  
for Action (Beijing +10)

Lusaka, Zambia  
26 – 29 April 2004

# **Report of the Sub-regional Decade Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Southern Africa**

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### **Introduction:**

1. The Sub-regional Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts for the Decade Review of the Beijing Platform for Action in Southern Africa was organized at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka Zambia from 26 to 28 April 2004.
2. The meeting was attended by government Experts from national gender machineries, Ministries of Finance, Economic Planning, Industry and Trade, Foreign Affairs, Health and Agriculture from the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. Representatives from the following organizations were also in attendance:
  - Intergovernmental Organizations: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC); SADC Parliamentary Forum and the Commonwealth.
  - Sub-regional Non-governmental Organizations: Southern Africa Research and Development Centre/Women in Development in Southern Africa (SADC/WIDSAA); Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (WLSA), Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa (WLWRSA), Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA).
  - National NGOs: Adult Education Association of Zambia, Coordinating Assembly of NGOs from Swaziland (Cango), Western Cape Network on Violence Against Women - South Africa, Council of Churches in Zambia, Enviro Green Care Association of Zambia, Emang Basadi of Botswana, Feminist Activist Coalition of Tanzania, Forum Mulher – Mozambique, Gender Links, Lesotho Council of Non Governmental organisations (Lecongo), Lusaka Muslim Women Trust Fund, Namibian Women's Association, National Council of Catholic Women, Rede Mulher – Angola, Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia, Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre, Women in Southern Africa Awareness Programme (SARDC-WIDSAA), Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), Women for Change – Zambia, Women in law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), Women's Action Group – Zimbabwe, Women's NGO Coalition – Botswana, Young Women's Christian Association – Zambia, Zambia Alliance of Women, Zambia Association for Research and Development, Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, Zambia National Women's Lobby Group, Zambia Non Governmental Organisations Coordinating Council, Zimbabwe Women's Coalition, Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre Network (ZWRNCN), Zambia Federation of Associations of Women in Business (ZAFWIB), Malawi - NGO Gender Coordination Network, D.R. Congo – Women's Action

Network, The D.R. Network on Women and Health, FAWE- Zambia, Reseau Action et femmes, Reseau femmes et sante.

- United Nations Sub-regional Offices: International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) from Southern and Eastern Africa.
- United Nations national offices: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Lusaka; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Lusaka; World Health Organization (WHO), Lusaka; International Labour Organization (ILO), Lusaka; United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Lusaka.

### **Agenda Item 1: Official Opening**

4. In his welcoming remarks Mr. Dickson Mzumara, the representative of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Officer-in-Charge of the ECA's Southern Africa Office cordially welcomed all the participants to the Sub-regional Meeting for the Decade Review of the Beijing Platform for Action in Southern Africa. In particular, Mr. Mzumara thanked the Government of the Republic of Zambia for hosting this important meeting. He also commended SADC for their collaboration with the ECA in the preparations and organization of the meeting.

5. In her opening statement Ms. Josephine Ouedraogo, Director of the ECA's African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) thanked the Zambian Government for the hospitality that had been extended to the ECA team.

6. Ms. Ouedraogo underscored the importance of the decade review, which is taking place after thirty years of the first Global Women's Conference, which took place in Mexico in 1975. She applauded the dynamism of the women of Southern Africa for their advocacy that influenced their member States to ratify CEDAW and to increase the number of women in decision-making. She further congratulated the African Union for voting in Honourable Getrude Mongela as the Chairperson of the Pan African Parliament.

7. Ms. Ouedraogo appealed to the meeting to focus on the most pressing challenges to women and girls, namely HIV and AIDS and poverty. She emphasized the need for the voices of women to be heard in all development frameworks including the NEPAD programme. In conclusion Ms. Ouedraogo informed the meeting about the African Gender Development Index (AGDI) being developed by ECA to qualitatively and quantitatively measure progress made in achieving gender equality. The Index will be used by NEPAD for the peer review mechanism taking into account the inequalities between women and men. She also congratulated the Southern African women NGOs for organizing their sub regional decade review meeting that would nourish the African review process.

8. Ms. Christine Warioba, the representative of the SADC-Gender Unit made an opening statement. She outlined to the meeting that SADC had made progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action over the last 10 years. Among the key achievements was the adoption by the Heads of State and Governments the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development in 1997 and its Addendum on the Prevention and

Eradication of Violence Against Women in 1998. The Gender Unit was established in 1998 to facilitate and promote the implementation of the Declaration. Ms Warioba explained that SADC was in the process of restructuring according to the provisions of the Strategic Indicative Plan and that the Gender Unit had been placed under the Department of Strategic Planning, Gender and Policy Harmonization. She felt that this was a positive move since this Department would facilitate the monitoring of all the 4 Directorates to ensure that they are mainstreaming gender in their work programmes.

9. In his keynote statement, Mr. S.L. Mbula, Secretary to Cabinet in the Office of the President in Zambia welcomed all participants to Zambia. He commended the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and their continued efforts to facilitate the review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action. He further applauded the approach of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for jointly organizing this meeting with the ECA.

10. Mr. Mbula congratulated national governments, sub-regional organizations, NGOs, UN agencies and their respective development partners for their efforts in putting together their national reports, which constitute inputs to the regional and global assessment reports. He reminded the meeting to also assess the availability, effectiveness and capacity of institutional mechanisms put in place to implement the gender policies at local, national and sub-regional levels.

11. He also alerted the experts to the following expected outcomes from the meeting: strategies and modalities for addressing the obstacles encountered during the past ten years, prioritizing approaches based on pressing needs, assessing the capacity available and defining ways and means for building critical capacity for adequately addressing the identified challenges in Southern Africa.

12. In conclusion, Mr. Mbula emphasized the need to intensify efforts in addressing emerging issues, in particular HIV and AIDS, a pandemic which in actual fact is reversing the hard gains achieved in social, economic and political development in the SADC region. The work force was being virtually eliminated. To compound the problem, women and the girl child are the most affected and impacted upon by the pandemic. They constitute the majority of the sufferers due to the fact that they are not economically empowered to opt for safe sex. Additionally, they are the caretakers of the sick and the orphans resulting from HIV and AIDS victims.

13. He wished the experts fruitful deliberations and declared the meeting open.

## **Agenda Item 2: Election of the Bureau of the Meeting**

14. The following countries were unanimously elected as members of the Bureau for the meeting:

Chairperson: Zambia

Vice Chair : Tanzania

Rapporteur : Lesotho

**Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme**

15. The Chairperson presented the draft Agenda for consideration. It was adopted with minor amendments.

**Agenda Item 4: Overview of the *achievements and challenges* in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa since Beijing**

16. The ECA Secretariat representative introduced this item by presenting a background document entitled “ *An overview of achievements and challenges in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action*”. She made a brief scan of the status of implementation of BPFA focusing on 10 critical areas of concern. Under each area, she noted the progress made as well as the challenges that remained. For example, with regard to women and poverty, she reported that the gender dimensions of poverty had been recognized as well as the imperative of gender equality in eradicating poverty. The challenge of “feminization” of poverty however remained.

17. In examining the status of women in Africa compared to the global context she noted that African women constituted the majority of the poor, living mostly in rural areas, largely confined to agricultural production for domestic consumption, and with limited access to health, education.

18. Important areas critical to gender equality and the empowerment of women remained unchanged. Gender national machineries are still weak financially, technically and politically. Under certain customs, women continue to be regarded as minors under the guardianship of males; the executive and/or judiciary sustain rulings that continue to discriminate against women while societal attitudes and behaviors towards gender equality remained largely unchanged. 585,000 women die each year as a result of pregnancy and childbirth worldwide: 99% occur in developing countries, particularly in Africa. Trafficking in women and children has grown as a relatively new problem, while the women's movement has been weakened considerably in the last 10 years. In conclusion, Ms Ouedraogo urged the meeting to reflect on strategies for strengthening the women's movement.

19. In response to the presentation, it was noted that there are issues specific to the southern Africa sub region that needed emphasis in the main report. Issues such as HIV and AIDS and gender mainstreaming as cross cutting, and this should also be reflected in the report. Further, a comparative analysis will give a clearer picture of progress, challenges and constraints. There is also statistical data that gives a country picture on certain issues with respect to progress, challenges, and constraints, and this aspect must be addressed in the main report. For example in some southern African countries there were more boys being trafficked than girls, and that destitute girls seem to cope better than destitute boys. Food insecurity in southern Africa is a key challenge, and it has had a negative impact on nutritional levels.

20. ECA Secretariat noted the importance of accurate statistical data, and indicated that UNECA was working on the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) in 13 countries in Africa, and that once published it will assist governments in developing their own statistics, thereby giving them an opportunity to take ownership of the process of statistical development.

**Agenda Item 5: Progress made in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly**

21. A member of the ECA Secretariat introduced the meeting of Experts to the guidelines that will facilitate the assessment of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and other initiatives and their impact on promoting gender equality and empowerment of women in the sub-region since 1995. The five working groups met and reviewed the progress made, the main challenges and constraints that have hampered the promotion of gender equality, and identified the most urgent issues in the sub-region and proposed actions to address them.

**Agenda Item 6: Reports from Working Groups**

**A. Overview of achievements in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment**

22. In terms of the achievements, the participants noted that with the exception of Angola Mozambique and Swaziland, most countries in the sub-region have adopted National Gender Policies and gender policy implementation plans, which they have started implementing. Institutional mechanisms in the form of Ministries, Directorates, Divisions, sections or Units to co-ordinate the implementation of the Gender issues, and in some cases complimentary institutions have been established. Some countries have successfully translated and disseminated the gender policy into local language(s). It was also reported that specific policies, strategies and action plans were developed in health, education, agriculture and labour to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

23. Some countries have ensured the success of the system of Gender Focal Points by appointing senior policy makers as GFPs, by providing gender training and making them accountable by regular reporting to their Principals and to Parliament.

24. Major government policy discussions and parliamentary debates on issues such as PRSPs, women in decision-making, reforms of discriminatory laws, land reform and HIV and AIDS have occurred.

25. Linkages between National Policies and Plans of Action and the Outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (Beijing + 5) are existent but are too weak to be effective.

26. Most countries have ratified **CEDAW** and other legal frameworks based on their specific situations. For example, some have ratified CEDAW with reservations due to traditional cultural aspects. Other countries have initiated measures aimed at domesticating provisions of CEDAW. A number of countries have also reviewed their constitutions in line with some of the Beijing Platform for Action provisions and CEDAW. In most countries, the Convention has triggered the creation of Law Reform Commissions and the review of national legislation in specific areas such as violence against women, education, land, inheritance, citizenship, employment/workers' rights, family law, rights to land, equal employment opportunities, marriage, and encouraged affirmative action. Other areas include sexual harassment, against female genital mutilation, marital rape and the willful transmission of HIV and AIDS, Child Protection, tertiary, education, economic empowerment - on immovable goods. Some countries have successfully translated CEDAW into local languages.

27. Key **legislative** and policy-making achievements include the signing of the SADC Gender Declaration by all member States of the sub-region.

28. Various government policies incorporate the **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** as the national development framework, but in most cases, the stated gender objectives have not been translated into specific gender strategies for implementation. The Millennium Development Goals are reflected in poverty reduction strategies and education and gender policies.

29. There have been successful attempts to involve men and boys as advocates for gender equality. These include reproductive health and HIV and AIDS programmes, Men for gender equality movement and violence against women. Most countries reported deliberate efforts to train boys and men in gender equality for combating rape and Gender Based Violence (GBV) and traditional leaders are targeted for cultural change.

30. The working groups identified successful actions taken with regard to priority areas of the Beijing platform for action. Notable successes in the area of **poverty** include, the formation of micro financing and credit projects, to assist women through loans including business training; engendering of national budgets, mainstreaming of gender in the PRSP and within the framework of PRSPs, allocation of resources to provide titled land to women. In an effort to eradicate poverty, local governments have also allocated a specific amount of their revenues towards women's initiatives, and income creation programmes for women. It was noted that developments in multilateral trade negotiations processes (including World Trade Organisation) have adverse impacts in many countries in the Sub-region. This in turn has negative impacts on women's lives, especially the poorer women and small scale producers in agriculture/rural areas and the informal sector.

31. In terms of **education and training of women**, most countries have registered a significant rise in the enrolment rates of girls and other achievements. This is due to various policies such as the 50/50 enrolment policy at primary level, removal of stereotyping in school curriculums, revision of national education policies to allow re-entry for school dropouts due to pregnancy and free primary education for girls and boys. Other developments include establishment of day-care centers for women of low and middle income to support women to go to school; training and gender mainstreaming at middle

management in ministries, removing gender stereotypes in careers; affirmative action at tertiary level in fields of medicine, law and accounting and revision of the agricultural curricula and bursaries given to girls.

32. In general most countries reported that **health** standards have deteriorated. Due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, maternal and reproductive health is now a priority for all countries, and almost all countries have developed HIV and AIDS Policies. Some countries have produced a draft Reproductive Health Policy. Other key policies include the creation of entry sites through the national programme for the fight against AIDS; voluntary tracking of HIV and AIDS, reproductive health and adolescent health programmes to prevent mother to child transmission universal access to ARV for all expectant mother; and free AIDS testing centers for young and adults. Other countries have introduced an AIDS levy and trained traditional midwives to work in rural areas where health facilities do not exist.

33. **Violence** is recognized as a human rights issue and national action plans are being developed, bills are being passed or drafted, support units and refuge shelters set up. Notable achievements in this area are the Domestic Violence Bills/ Acts and Sexual Offence Acts that included criminalizing of marital rape and the willful transmission of HIV and AIDS. Reform process have also been initiate to reform the justice sector including the review of Justice delivery to respond to the needs of victims. The reform also addresses issues of delays and sensitivity of service provision to victims. An NGO network comprising of men and Police support units for Gender Based Violence have been established in some countries, while others have established national programmes to support victims of sexual violence. Some NGOs such as the Youth Organization and Men Sex and AIDS working on gender-based violence have been instrumental in lobbying for review of rape law. All countries have programmes addressing this issue and most sectors are addressing issues of HIV and AIDS.

34. Many SADC countries have become victims of **armed conflicts** through hosting refugees. Various training programmes are in place to strengthen the culture of peace, and women have played an important role in consolidating the peace process. They have also participated in reconstruction efforts at various levels in the 1990s. However, men have continued to benefit more than women in the allocation of resources for resettlement. The media has played a key role in reuniting displaced families. This exercise has proved costly and, the majority of those affected are women and children.

35. With regard to women in **power and decision-making**, progress registered in the public service sector has been due to an increase in women's representation in political decision-making. Swaziland has elected a woman as Deputy Speaker in the House of Assembly and a woman as Deputy President in the House of Senate. D. R. Congo and Zimbabwe have also elected women as Deputy Speakers. In some countries women have been appointed as Clerk of the National Assembly, Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), and Auditor General and State Counsel. Some countries in the sub-region reported to have achieved 31% and 22.5 % in Parliament. Electoral Reforms currently under way in some countries in the sub-region, may provide an opportunity to increase female representation in politics to 30%. For the first time in the sub-region, a woman was appointed Prime Minister.

36. Efforts to improve the **human rights of women** in the sub-region includes the formation of the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Gender equality



establishment of the Constitutional Review Commission. There are countries that are reviewing their Family Law and repealed laws that consider women as dependents of their husbands.

37. Although countries reported that women are not represented in the advisory boards of the media and that the media still depicts women from a degrading and humiliating perspective which reinforces women's negative traditional roles, some developments have been registered in the **media**. Professional Women in Media organizations have also been formed in the sub-region to deal with gender issues in the media. Some NGOs have spearheaded training in gender sensitive reporting and coverage for media practitioners and have facilitated the mapping of media reporting on gender.

38. Regarding ICT, a few countries have drafted and approved ICT policies while others have reduced or removed tax on computers. Some countries have established committees for science and technology that are headed by a woman and others have created telecenters in rural areas which facilitates women's access to the Internet.

39. Most countries are reporting that women are not adequately involved in the critical area on **environment**. Not all countries have integrated gender into their environment plans even though gender is part of Agenda 21 Earth Summit. A few countries have engendered their policy on environment and produced policy guidelines. This has resulted in 50% representation of women on environment national resources management Committees. More still needs to be done in this area. Environmental management committees at village level have also been established with equal numbers of women and men.

40. The sub-region has registered notable achievements in relation to the **economy**. Key among them are women's entrepreneurship programs, revision of the trade policy to include women's access to capital, the establishment of women's banks and women development funds and land reform programs which enable women to obtain their own land rights. Most countries have policies or mechanisms that benefit small and medium sized enterprises for women. Notable among these is the creation of a Ministry of SME's in one country. Countries have also developed institutional mechanisms targeting women's economic empowerment through easy access to credit. Others have started gender budgeting processes and the production of gender planning and budgeting checklists which are being supported by UNIFEM.

41. Some programmes in the health and education sectors address the issues of the **Girl-child** focusing on enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence. Girl-child networks have also been established to provide a broad needs base for the girl-child, while full department's concerned with children's issues have also been created in various ministries. UN Agencies, through the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI), the Girls' Education Movement (GEM) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) have also supported the promotion of girls' education.

## **B. Institutional mechanisms and arrangements**

42. Participants reviewed the state of the institutional mechanisms 10 years since the Beijing Conference. At the national level, most countries in the sub-region have established varying gender structures. These include the national gender machineries (ministries and departments that coordinate gender activities), Gender Commissions; Gender Councils/Committees; Gender Forums/Women's NGO coalitions; Parliamentary Portfolio Committees on gender; Gender desks and Gender Focal Points in most sectoral ministries.

43. At the sub-regional level various mechanisms exist to facilitate information sharing among national machineries. The Gender Regional Advisory Committee which is comprised of governments and NGOs is part of the SADC mechanism and provides overall guidance to the SADC Secretariat on gender issues. The SADC Parliamentary Forum has also created the SADC Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus to facilitate the empowerment of women in politics and decision-making. SARDC-WIDSAA has its own network and is strong in information exchange and other initiatives in the sub-region. It collaborates with the SADC Parliamentary Forum to strengthen parliamentary capacity to be more gender responsive and with the SADC Secretariat to monitor the implementation of the SADC Declaration.

44. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, most countries reported the existence of limited monitoring and evaluation, coordination and/or accountability mechanisms. However, the SADC Gender Unit annually requests member States to submit progress/ status reports on the implementation of the SADC Gender and Development Declaration and its Addendum. It produces the Gender Monitor which reflects the outcome of the assessment. UNECA has also developed monitoring and evaluation tools and trained some countries to use them.

45. Partnerships to promote gender equality have been forged with international, regional and national development institutions through gender mainstreaming, capacity building and economic empowerment programmes. Some NGOs have organized themselves into coalitions and partnered with governments thus becoming important players in the implementation of the Platform for Action. Government experts reported that they work closely with NGOs and civil society who compliment their efforts in identifying issues that need policy formulation, monitoring implementation of policies, income generating activities and civic education. In some cases, they provide technical assistance in policy analysis and capacity building e.g. participating in government reviews as experts. They provide inputs in integrating gender concerns at the macro-economic policy level. Some governments collaborate with NGOs in resources mobilization. NGOs have been given leeway to deal with donors directly without passing through government. All agreed that there is a gap in forging partnership with the private sector.

46. While many multilateral and bilateral agencies are working at the national level and have disbursed considerable sums to support specific programmes, some participants noted that certain conditionalities by these agencies were tying aid programmes to politics and withdrawing resources abruptly at the expense of on-going projects. Donors should advocate for gender mainstreaming as part of their country programmes. There should be better coordination mechanisms among donor gender groups to reduce duplication and enhance synergies.

47. The working group identified several **constraints** in relation to institutional mechanisms. Implementation of the BPFA had been slow and minimal impact had been registered in the last 10 years.

48. Although countries have developed and adopted gender policies, there are no mechanisms in place to ensure policy implementation. In some cases there has been delay in developing structures, strategic plans and programmes. Moreover, gender policies are not adequately disseminated, nor are there adequate linkages between policies at the sub-regional level and actions at national and grassroots levels.

49. In some countries, gender machineries are given broad mandates that require them to be “jacks of all trade” while they lack the requisite capacity. The machineries are generally understaffed, inadequately funded, and not strategically positioned within the government structures. This obstructs them from adequately coordinating, monitoring and evaluating progress in gender mainstreaming in line ministries. Other challenges include lack of monitoring and evaluation and accountability mechanisms e.g. reporting to parliaments, assessing gender budgeting and carrying out gender impact assessment. National machineries may need to be re-examined in terms of restructuring, clearer mandates/goals or strategic interventions and results-based activities.

50. The work of Gender Focal Points in sectoral ministries is hindered by lack of gender specific job descriptions, lack or inadequate knowledge of gender issues and low morale. They are usually overburdened by other responsibilities, lack training in gender mainstreaming thereby rendering them unable to influence policy changes in their respective sectors. These problems are compounded by the high turnover of gender specialists.

51. Only a few experts in the ministries have the requisite gender competencies and awareness on gender equality instruments to implement policies and assist in mainstreaming of gender. Some participants acknowledged the presence of some capability to collect and analyse sex disaggregated data. The education and health sectors were reported to be better equipped with data than other sectors. However, overall, Statistics Offices may still not be aware of the specific gender requirements for data collection and analysis. Most countries lacked standard sex-disaggregated data or proper databases at national statistical offices. Moreover, many still have not developed gender indicators and/or are not fully utilising them.

52. In terms of sub-regional mechanisms, the experts noted that the SADC Gender Unit is currently under-staffed. The SADC Council of the Ministers of Gender and the Regional Gender Advisory Group need to be supported/strengthened with human and financial resources.

**C. Constraints and Challenges in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and further initiatives**

53. The working groups identified several challenges and constraints in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and further initiatives such as the MDGs.

54. In the **social environment**, some African traditions lead to deep-rooted cultural perceptions and practices that adversely affect women. Moreover, some customary laws are in conflict with statutory laws and run at variance with the gender agenda.

55. In the **Political environment**, even though member States have ratified CEDAW, there is a perceived lack of political will from sectoral ministries to appreciate and commit themselves to gender issues. Some aspects addressed by provisions of CEDAW such as trafficking of women and children, education, media, and land are not addressed by most countries. Most countries do not have Gender Equality Acts to legalise implementation of gender mainstreaming, and some national constitutions still contain discriminatory elements that hamper the implementation of gender policies and frameworks.

56. Low representation of women in most countries of the sub-region in areas of decision-making including parliament, judiciary, political party structures and the executive remains a challenge. Women's access to decision-making is hindered by gender insensitive policies, lack of funds and human resources, lack of confidence in women leadership among voters and the difficulty to penetrate political systems. Low levels of representation have also been attributed to the absence of a common gender agenda that transcends political divides. The absence of a critical mass of women in decision-making and support from men in decision-making is also a stumbling block.

57. The challenges identified in the **economic environment** include globalisation which has impacted negatively on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Women do not have access to productive resources such as credit facilities and land especially in rural areas. In some countries the financial resources targeted for women are inadequate and men tend to exploit the situation, particularly where husbands have to be consulted by women in order to gain access to credit. This is exacerbated by the negative cultural attitudes banks have towards women borrowers. Women's productive, reproductive and community management roles are often unrecognized, and they are unable to take advantage of trade liberalization due to their weak economic capacity and undemocratic economic institutions. This perpetuates women's cycle of poverty.

58. In some cases women's rights such as increased maternity leave leads to loss of jobs. Some women prefer to forfeit these rights in order to protect their jobs in view of their economic situation.

59. Structural adjustments programmes introduced sharing of tuition costs and user fees. This has resulted in girls dropping out of school for lack of financial resources. Economic reforms have affected women mostly through redundancy, especially those who find themselves at the lower echelons of government structures. Privatisation of essential

commodities and basic services such as water and health facilities has increased the cost of goods and services thereby making them inaccessible to women.

60. Due to resource constraints such as lack of electricity and limited telephone connections access to and knowledge of ICT is still out of reach in most rural areas. This has marginalized women in areas such as market competition and has restricted their access to economic information.

61. Trade liberalization presents opportunities for economic growth and poverty reduction for small businesses that are able to adjust and take advantage. For e.g. AGOA, provides limited opportunities for women to bargain on trade rules and protocols and to use them effectively to their advantage. However, small businesses owned by women may not be able to realise a quick turn around and may therefore face insurmountable challenges.

62. Budgetary allocations for gender programmes are ad hoc and unsustainable. In addition, gender planning and budgeting is understood differently by different sectors and the data used in this connection are not gender disaggregated. As a result, leadership in most sectors is not gender-sensitive, and therefore cannot contribute to the planning of gender responsive budgets.

63. The **women movement** has weakened over the decade largely due to apathy and absence of a sustainable resource base.

64. The HIV and AIDS pandemic and sexual violence against women are among the main **challenges and constraints in the sub-region**. The high prevalence rates of HIV and AIDS and its associated effects has had a greater impact on women than men. Systemic traditions and armed conflict has exacerbated sexual violence and perpetuated the spread of HIV and AIDS.

#### **D Urgent issues and Actions needed to address them**

65. The experts proposed the most urgent issues and actions that needed to be addressed in the sub-region. International frameworks such as CEDAW should be domesticated and aligned with national laws. Countries need to ratify some of the protocols including the Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. There is need to harmonize customary and common laws. Gaps in the constitution should be dealt with so as to harmonize them with national gender policies. Moreover, national gender policies should be legally backed to enforce implementation of the Plans of Action. There should be concerted efforts to eliminate harmful cultural and traditional practices. After domestication, there should be activities and governments should be held accountable for non-action.

66. Gender sensitive budgeting initiatives should be strengthened and systematically implemented in all sectoral ministries. Macroeconomic frameworks, sectoral programmes and budgets should be engendered to ensure the targeted groups as beneficiaries. Tools for budgetary monitoring should be developed and gender disaggregated data utilized.

67. It is necessary to unpack gender mainstreaming as a concept and adopt both a gender mainstreaming and a women rights based approach in policy development and implementation.

68. Better coherence of policies and programmes, enhanced coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, sector specific gender mainstreaming capacity in key development areas are required. Gender machineries should be institutionalized in strategic positions and their role redefined and strengthened.

69. It is critical to develop a mechanism to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into line ministries with a budget for gender mainstreaming. Gender focal points should be institutionalized. There is a need for creating a critical mass by retraining directors and their deputies in gender analysis and mainstreaming. Job descriptions for GFPs should have gender as a key result area. Special posts on gender should be created in sectoral ministries. It was noted that the Commonwealth Gender Management system (GMS) for gender mainstreaming may provide an appropriate framework to enable countries to realign national gender structures to make them more effective.

70. Mechanisms to hold parliament accountable should be developed and adhered to. Networks for gender mainstreaming should be established at community level. Mechanisms to build capacity within different sectors, and to hold those trained accountable should also be established. There is need for gender research, training and provision of continuous support base for women parliamentarians. Member States should be helped to acquire capacity for gender planning and budgeting. Parliaments should be targeted for training to utilise gender equality instruments which should be translated into local languages.

71. All sectoral ministries should report on their achievements on gender to ECA and to parliaments through their national gender machineries. There is a need to harmonise reporting tools particularly among ECA, SADC, DAW and the Commonwealth Secretariat. Governments should establish benchmarks for monitoring implementation of the sub-regional, regional and global gender frameworks. Key gender outcome indicators in strategic performance management should be formulated and incorporated in national development plans. The coordination role between National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and sectoral ministries as well as national gender machineries should be strengthened. There is a need to empower statistical offices to disaggregate data through training in gender research and data analysis.

72. National gender machineries should be strategically positioned to have the right legal instruments to monitor, coordinate and evaluate other ministries. There is need for negotiation of clear mandate and structures. National gender machineries should concentrate on coordination, collaboration, providing backstopping services and networking with other sectors to assist them mainstream gender into their macro and sectoral policies. Governments should play the dual role of monitoring and partnering with NGOs. There should be a strategic partnership between NGOs and governments to develop and strengthen gender competencies. NGOs should continue to bring their expertise to bear on government policies.

73. Governments should be challenged to ensure adequate resource allocation to the national gender machineries. Governments should reformulate policies for the benefit of the

people rather than wholesomely adopt policies of cooperating partners. Countries need to translate gender policies into local languages and facilitate wide dissemination. There is a need to find strategies for poverty alleviation that are appropriate for Africa. It is critical to engender national poverty reduction/alleviation programmes, to provide better access to productive resources and ensure rights to education and training. Micro-credit may not be enough to pull women out of the poverty cycle and as such women should be encouraged to enter other non-traditional productive sectors with high-value products such as tourism, horticulture and herbal medicines.

74. Strong political commitment at all levels of policy making is necessary to assess income-generating projects. Governments should pursue debt cancellation, invest in infrastructure improvement and foster a conducive environment for investment. Safety nets and social services programmes as well as monitoring mechanisms are needed for targeted beneficiaries.

75. STIs, HIV and AIDS should be recognized as a gender issue and should be taken as a priority concern in the sub-region. Regional solidarity to define strategies to access the global funds for HIV and AIDS should be harnessed. Governments should demonstrate the highest political will, involvement and commitment to address STIs, HIV and AIDS. National STIs, HIV and AIDS programmes should specially focus on gender issues in the context of women/young girls high rates of infection. Access to ARVs should be universally provided to end-users without monetary conditionalities, and post exposure prophylaxis should be readily available. Male involvement in addressing STIs, HIV and AIDS and Family Health should be highly intensified. The media should be systematically targeted to raise awareness about STIs, HIV and AIDS. Countries which have no sexual offences legislation should enact them by 2005.

76. Women's movement should be invigorated by enhancing their resource base. Training of women in general to be assertive and gender sensitization of the media and government officials is necessary. There is need to address the gap in women's access and use of ICT. Gender activists should be trained in lobbying and advocacy skills. Education and training in the family, youth programmes, leadership, and mentoring programmes for girls and boys should be enhanced.

77. Government must adopt affirmative action to protect women and enshrine it in national constitutions. Electoral reform to legislate proportional representation in political decision making positions should be accompanied by operational guidelines. SADC should revisit the 30% to harmonize it with the African Union's target of 50%. This issue should be tabled as an agenda item at the upcoming SADC Summit. It is critical to review Constitutions to include domestication of international instruments on human rights and other issues. Political parties and the media should be sensitive to gender issues, mentor women candidates through effective training and provision of financial support.

78. Governments should continue to collaborate with donors on programmes aimed at achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. On their part, donors should coordinate their activities and establish gender caucuses taking into account national priorities in the spirit of partnership and mutual trust.

**Agenda Item 7: Reports from Sub-regional Inter-governmental Organizations**

79. The representative from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), presented a report on the progress made by SADC in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The achievements of SADC were a result of collective efforts by the Ministries Responsible for Women and Gender Affairs; Gender/Women's NGOs which are members of the Regional Advisory Committee of SADC; Regional Networks and NGOs and International Cooperating partner organizations. The key achievements include: the adoption of a Policy and Institutional Framework for mainstreaming gender and a Gender Plan of Action in SADC by the Council of Ministers in 1997. The Framework consists of a Standing Committee of Ministers Responsible for Women and Gender Affairs, a Regional Advisory Committee consisting of NGO Representative and Senior Gender Focal points, and a Gender Unit. Concerning Gender-equality instruments, the Heads of State and Governments signed the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development in 1997; and the Addendum on Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children in 1998.

80. The recent restructuring of SADC has clustered the sector coordinating Units into 4 directorates all of which are expected to mainstream gender into their respective policies, programmes, projects and activities. The Gender Unit has been positioned in the Department of Strategic Planning, Gender and Policy Harmonization, under which all Directorates report. Thus, the Department will ensure that gender issues are addressed by each Directorate.

81. Other achievements included the review of the SADC HIV and AIDS Framework and Programme of Action 2003-2007 in 2003 to make it more gender responsive. There were also programmes to develop competence for mainstreaming gender in SADC policies, Programme of Action, projects and activities. SADC also conducted a gender audit study of the SADC Programme of Action.

82. SADC coordinates women's empowerment programmes i.e. women in politics and decision-making, promotion of human rights of women and women's access to economic structures and productive resources. It also monitors the implementation of the SADC Declaration on GAD and its Addendum on Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women through Reports submitted by member States to the Secretariat.

83. Among the challenges identified is the need to refocus the mandates, roles and responsibilities of national gender machineries to enable them to work on engendering macro policy and sector policy frameworks; the need to develop gender competence, coordinate and monitor implementation of gender equality policies and the importance of enhancing strategic alliances between NGOs and National Gender Machineries.

84. The representative from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Ms. Catherine Ichoya briefed the meeting on the institution's activities. COMESA recognizes that sustainable economic and social development of the region requires full and equal participation of women, men and youth as exemplified by the COMESA Treaty and the COMESA Vision and Strategy. COMESA had a "Women in Business" Unit which was established in 1991 to promote Gender equality and Economic empowerment of Women.



85. The following policy and institutional frameworks were noted as some of COMESA's achievements: the adoption of the Gender Policy and Declaration in May 2002; and the formulation of the Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan to be presented at the COMESA Ministers of Gender Meeting scheduled for September 2004. The Action Plan aims to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into all policies, structures, systems and programmes; establishment of the Technical Committee on Gender in February 2003; and the establishment of Gender Task Forces at the COMESA Secretariat and Member State levels.

86. COMESA's activities included provision of technical advisory services, training of women entrepreneurs (cross border traders) on regional and global markets such as COMESA Free Trade Area, African Growth and Opportunity Act and WTO issues, information sharing and policy advocacy on trade related issues, establishment of linkages and partnerships with the Women in Business Associations etc.

87. The following constraints were noted: inadequate representation of women in COMESA structures as well as in power and decision making fora; inadequate human and financial resources; absence of gender analytical skills/ techniques; lack of gender disaggregated data; low position of the Gender Affairs Unit; weak institutional linkages and poor communication; lack of commitment to and support to the gender programme. The representative also noted some of the challenges that negatively affected COMESA's work, i.e. absence of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of implementation; lack of harmonization and coordination of gender mainstreaming activities in the subregion; uncoordinated gender advocacy strategies; and weak institutional linkages.

88. SADC Parliamentary Forum's representative Ms. Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu briefed the meeting on the Forum's activities on engendering SADC Parliaments. Since the adoption and implementation of the Plan of Action on Engendering SADC Parliaments in March 2001, there have been several crucial developments in the process of advancing gender equality which have expanded SADC MPs' understanding of gender mainstreaming in legislation, policies and programmes. Steps have been undertaken to raise awareness and strengthen Parliamentarians' capacity to debate, enact and monitor the implementation of laws, policies and programmes from a gender perspective. Parliamentary Committees responsible for Gender, Budgets/ Finance, Public Accounts, Education, HIV and AIDS, Law Reform and Constitutional matters, Poverty Reduction, Human Rights and Democracy have been involved in engendering parliaments initiatives.

89. Institutional mechanisms such as the SADC Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus (RWPC) have been the driving force towards the achievement of at least 30 percent representation of women in politics and decision making. Lobbying and advocacy by the RWPC has focused on representation of women in Parliaments, with particular focus on countries holding elections in 2004. Special focus has been put on gender mainstreaming in Elections Observation and in institutionalising the Norms and Standards for Elections in the SADC Region. The Forum's constitution provides for 50-50 representation of male and female MPs in the Plenary Assembly, which is the policy making body of the Forum as well as the Executive Committee which has at least 30 percent female MPs.

**Agenda Item 8: Report from Sub-regional Non-governmental Organizations**

90. Representatives of women's human rights, women's empowerment and gender and development non-governmental organisations from 11 countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) met in Lusaka, Zambia on 25 April 2004, at a special session devoted specifically to review progress towards achieving the commitments in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
91. The meeting recognized and commended the efforts by respective national governments and parliaments, regional and continental organisations and national, regional international NGOs, particularly women's rights organisations and gender and development organisations which have over the last ten years remained consistently committed to improving the status and condition of women in the region.
92. With regard to the **priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action**, the NGO representatives discussed each item and concluded as follows:
93. In order to effectively reduce the prevalence of **HIV and AIDS**, governments must make gender equality central to all strategies, policies, and programmes.
94. To clear the current misunderstanding of the concept of **gender mainstreaming**, a strong review of 'gender mainstreaming' must be undertaken to develop approaches that result in transformation, rather than mere reform of patriarchal structures.
95. It is essential to address the lack of adequate **sex-disaggregated data** in all sectors in order to facilitate effective and responsive policies and programmes.
96. Declining **economies and poverty** remain big challenges for the region. It is recommended that: by December 2006, all countries in the SADC region should conduct a time-use study and develop indicators to account for the work performed by women as unpaid care work in national accounts; that women form no less than 50% of all bodies that make decision on economic policy; and enact laws that guarantee that women form no less than 50% of the beneficiaries of land redistribution schemes and have access to, control over and ownership of land in their own right.
97. Recognizing the high maternal mortality rate in the sub-region, provision of quality reproductive health services is paramount. It is recommended that: user fees for all women including pregnant women seeking health services be removed; that a broad range of female controlled protective devices such as microbicides and condoms be provided as contraception and protection from STIs and HIV and, legislative reform permitting access to safe and affordable delivery and abortion be effected.
98. On **gender violence**, it is recommend that: all SADC countries provide post sexual violence medical therapies for women and girls and especially those therapies that prevent and reduce the transmission of HIV and STIs; all countries enact legislation that makes

marital rape a criminal offence; and all SADC countries ensure that they make and protect budgetary provisions for implementing measures to protect women and girls from violence.

99. The NGOs recognized the growing acceptance of women's participation in **decision-making**, but recommend that governments make a concerted effort to: meet the African Union's target of 50% women in managerial and decision making positions in all parastatals, public institutions, regional bodies, media institutions, the judiciary, the public service and trade unions; and enact special measures to increase women's participation in structures and policy making processes at all levels.

100. Concerning **national machineries** responsible for gender it is recommended that governments: rebuild the institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality to well-resourced and well-staffed offices placed at the level of full ministries or in the President's Office by 2006. Progress in this regard should be checked at the SADC Annual Heads of States Meeting; and provide a certain fixed percentage of the national budgetary allocations for the institutional mechanisms, and this percentage should be protected and guaranteed by an act of Parliament.

101. It is recommended that governments: adopt far reaching measures within the framework of the elections unfolding in the region over the next 18 months, to fulfill the commitment of reaching the target of a minimum of 30% women in strategic political and decision making positions by December 2005; domesticate all regional and international instruments that are legally binding, and transform declarations entered into by SADC countries into Protocols; and amend all constitutions urgently to eliminate the provisions that currently exist for the discrimination of women and girls through customary and personal law.

102. Governments and the **media** must set targets for the advancement of women in the media; and set up independent regulatory media authority to monitor the implementation of these targets. NGOs also recommend that the media: develops editorial and employment policies which prohibit discrimination against women in the workplace, ensure their promotion to key positions and develop policies which mitigate against sexist stereotypes, negative portrayal and the absence of women's voices and perspectives in the media. The media should give a fair and balanced portrayal of women in the media in all of their diverse roles.

103. It is recommended that: governments make financial and human resources available for the involvement of women in environmental and natural resources management, and establish official channels to give women a voice in environmental decision-making.

104. NGOs recommend that governments enact stiffer penalties for all forms of sexual violence against the girl-child including trafficking, and protect girls from child labour. (A detailed NGO report is attached to the Annex of the full report).

**Agenda Item 9: Reports from Sub-regional Offices of UN Agencies**

105. The representative from the **Sub-regional Office of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**, Ms Cecilia Ncube explained that the agency was a Fund that provided financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM had been implementing the following programmes in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: strengthening women's economic security and rights; empowering women to enjoy secure livelihoods; engendering governance and peace building to increase women's participation in decision making processes; promoting women's human rights and eliminating all forms of violence against women.

106. In view of the challenges of HIV and AIDS and the feminization of poverty, UNIFEM's main activities have included supporting institutions and gender machineries to develop laws and policies that promote women's equal ownership of and access to resources; strengthening countries' capacity to manage globalisation and access international market through use of ICTS, and strengthening women's economic capacity as entrepreneurs, producers and home-based workers. UNIFEM is also active in the area of HIV and AIDS. It has assisted women NGOs in various countries to support women living with HIV and AIDS. It has collaborated with seven countries in the subregion around the elimination of violence against women through awareness creation and media workshops and developed women's capacity to access economic resources such as land and water. It has also developed women's capacity to work within non-traditional productive areas such as mining and construction. (A detailed report is attached in the Annex)

107. The representative of the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, Ms. Judica Amri-Makhetha, reported progress in the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action within the context of the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda (DWA). The DWA connotes quality and quantity of employment which embraces rights, productive employment, social protection and social dialogue. She outlined the progress made in the ratification of gender equality international labour Conventions C100, Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 and C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958 that have been ratified by twelve countries in the sub region due to concerted campaign by the ILO. However, Conventions C156 Workers with Family Responsibility, 1981 and C183 Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 have received little or no ratification. This was a major challenge. Other major achievements include a Gender, Poverty and Employment (GPE) Capacity Building Package that has been used in Southern Africa. Projects that target women micro and small entrepreneurs include: Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), Local Economic Development (LED), Business Development Services (BDS) as well as Crisis Response Programs. Moreover the ILO Code of Conduct on HIV and AIDS comprehensively mainstreams gender issues.

108. In the ensuing discussion it was observed that ratification of Conventions was not enough and that member States needed to domesticate them. Participants also observed that labour legislations in the region were weak in addressing sexual harassment. In this context, the meeting was informed about the ECA's African Gender and Development Index with a scoreboard to track ratification of Conventions based on 15 indicators. The meeting observed

that the region should ensure follow up action on the ratified Conventions especially because SADC Constitution did not require automatic domestication of ratified Conventions. More lobbying was needed to ascertain that countries ratified important conventions. Participants also noted that the SADC Strategic Development Indicative Plan has identified ratification and domestication of international instruments as part of its work programme.

**Agenda item 10: The Challenge of HIV and AIDS on the strive for gender equality and empowerment of women**

109. The Secretariat Representative introduced agenda item 10 by presenting a synopsis of a background document entitled "*The Challenge of HIV and AIDS on the strive for gender equality and the empowerment of women,*" She observed that Sub-Saharan Africa harbored 70% of the HIV-infected population of the world. HIV and AIDS infection rates among women were rising faster than among men. In the Southern Africa sub region, 54% of the deaths related to HIV and AIDS were women and girls. Girls were also infected at a much earlier age than boys because of socio-economic, political and biological reasons. The presentation noted that poverty increased the likelihood of engaging in risk prone activities in both men and women in relation to HIV and AIDS. Some cultural norms and practices continued to perpetuate transmission of infection e.g. wife inheritance, polygamy, power imbalance and patriarchal practices that violated women's rights to make choices and to negotiate safe sex, alcohol, drugs and sexual abuse. Various measures had been taken to address HIV and AIDS in Africa. These included: Resolutions and declarations such as The Durban Declaration; legislations, where some African countries had amended their laws to guide their responses to the epidemic; policies, programmes and systems which focus on HIV and AIDS; establishment of specialized organisations working on prevention, mitigation, treatment and care at national and grassroots level; establishment of funding for HIV and AIDS such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, Women and AIDS Global Coalition, The Commission on HIV and AIDS and Governance in Africa housed in ECA and WHO's initiative to ensure that 3 million people have access to ARVs by 2005.

110. In the discussion that followed, there was consensus to make all possible efforts to address HIV and AIDS which had critically affected the Southern Africa sub region. Several issues were raised that have a direct bearing in the fight against HIV and AIDS namely: cultural and traditional values; inadequate education to children and families; individual and family responsibilities in the fight against the pandemic; involving men, women and the young in the prevention and control of HIV and AIDS; the multidimensional nature of the pandemic and the importance of a multidimensional approach to its control. The meeting noted that although the paper had made reference to issues of cultural and traditional values as obstacles in the fight against HIV and AIDS, there was need to sufficiently address these as they were among the root causes that made it difficult to make significant progress in reducing the prevalence of the pandemic. Educational awareness of the pandemic among the young, men and women was underscored as an important tool in the fight HIV and AIDS. As dealing with HIV and AIDS is a sensitive issue where individuals, couples and families are concerned, the meeting underlined the need for self-reflection, faithfulness among individuals and the need to be role models to children and the community. The meeting highlighted that most often, HIV and AIDS programmes concentrated on addressing women

and girls and giving little attention to men and boys and thus suggested that the issue be addressed. The meeting also suggested that since HIV and AIDS issues are multidimensional, multidisciplinary approaches are required to find solutions.

111. The participants also noted that the Heads of State and Governments at their extraordinary Summit in Maseru, Lesotho in 2003, signed the Maseru Declaration on HIV and AIDS to intensify implementation of the various initiatives on the prevention and eradication of the pandemic. At the national level, member States have adopted policies and plans of Actions on HIV and AIDS. They are also implementing a number of programmes which range from campaigns on awareness raising, programmes and projects on prevention, treatment, care and support.

**Agenda Item 11: Presentation and Adoption of the Report of the Experts Meeting**

112. The draft report was presented and adopted by the Experts with amendments.

**Agenda Item 12: Closing of the Meeting**

113. The meeting was closed by Sr. Auxilia Ponga, Permanent Secretary in the Gender in Development Division in the Cabinet Office in the Office of the President of the Government of the Republic of Zambia.

**Adoption of the Report by the Ministers responsible for Women and Gender Affairs  
29 April 2004**

The report of the *Sub-regional intergovernmental Meeting of Experts for the Decade Review of the Beijing Platform for Action in Southern Africa* was also presented to the Ministers responsible for Gender and Women Affairs at their meeting on the 29 April 2004. The Ministers adopted the report with amendments.

## ANNEX I

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**ANNEX II****COMMUNIQUE FROM THE SADC GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT  
NGOS TO THE SUB-REGIONAL DECADE REVIEW MEETING  
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN THE SADC,  
LUSAKA 26-29 APRIL 2004****PRESENTED ON APRIL 27, 2004****INTRODUCTION**

At the invitation of the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness programme SARDC- WIDSAA, we, the representatives of women's human rights, women's empowerment and gender and development non-governmental organisations from eleven countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) met in Lusaka, Zambia on 25 April 2004, at a special session devoted specifically to reviewing the achievements, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by our states in September 1995.

We gathered in Lusaka to undertake a critical review and assessment of the situation and status of African women and girls and to reflect further on new challenges and opportunities that the leaders of our region can take to further add to those strategies that have thus far been moderately successful in advancing women's empowerment and equality.

We recognize and commend the efforts by our respective national governments and parliaments, our regional and continental organisations and national, regional international NGOs, particularly women's rights organisations and gender and development organisations who have over the last ten years remained consistently committed to improving the status and condition of women in the region.

We acknowledge the support that the international women's rights movement, the United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies, the private sector and other communities and stakeholders have provided in raising awareness about the importance of striving towards gender equality and equity.

We further acknowledge that, to successfully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Dakar Africa Platform for Action, the SADC Gender and Development Declaration, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and our respective national commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment that there is need to provide stronger and more committed political will.

There is further need to provide and determinedly protect financial and human resources at national and international levels.

We are deeply concerned about the rapid spread of HIV infection in our countries and the millions of deaths caused by AIDS, which is testimony to the continued unequal power relations between women and men in our societies. The June 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS established a clear link between women's inability to exercise their human rights and their vulnerability to HIV infection. As the majority of the continent's care givers women and girls experience first hand the devastating and severe impact of the diseases.

We recognize that given women's subordinate position and lack of power special measures will be required to protect Africa's women and girls from all forms of public and private sexual and gender based violations.

We note with grave concern the misconceptions that have arisen around 'gender mainstreaming' as the identified approach to give women equal access to opportunities in all sectors. Some governments have interpreted the approach to mean mainstreaming 'traditional gender roles' whereby women are still unable to break through the 'glass ceilings' into decision-making positions.

Gender mainstreaming also has been simplistically defined as the social roles of women and men without any analysis of the unequal power relations within structures which hinder women's effective participation. This interpretation of the approach has led to situations where gender mainstreaming is viewed as the sole responsibility of women, and it is seen as a 'favor', rather than as a strategic means to bring about gender justice and equality.

A strong review of 'gender mainstreaming' at the continental, regional, national and civil society levels within countries must be undertaken to develop approaches that result in transformation, rather than mere reform, of the patriarchal structures.

Information is a key resource for development, yet the advancement of women has been hampered by the lack of adequate sex- disaggregated data in all sectors to monitor and evaluate women's progress in relation to men. This is a gap in measuring the real gains and setbacks since the 1995 Beijing Conference, and is essential for developing effective and responsive policies and programmes that bridge the inequalities between women and men.

In this regard, we recall and reaffirm our commitment to all relevant decisions, declarations and resolutions in the area women's empowerment and equality, gender and development and human rights.

**A. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; and, (B) Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources**



We acknowledge the commitments made by SADC governments to eradicate poverty. We make note that despite the concerted efforts of the leadership of the region, there has been a huge increase of poverty among the region's populations and that women and girls form a startling 70% of those living in extreme poverty. It has resulted in a massive growth in cross border trading activities by women informal traders, who often endure dehumanizing conditions as they strive to supplement their family incomes.

Poverty also is a result of high levels of corruption and the non-strategic allocation of resources in country's national budgets (e.g. more spending on defence than health or education).

As AIDS increases the numbers of the infirm in our populations women and girls have been over burdened with the twin responsibilities of home based care giving and economic production at the household and community level, all this in an environment of globalization and economic neo liberalism.

Women's growing food and nutrition insecurity, the increased number of households and especially poor households that are led by women provide overwhelming evidence of the feminization of poverty in our region.

Debt servicing and economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have disproportionately harmed women, in many cases forcing them to adopt additional mechanisms for economic survival. This has in many cases included transactional sex. Given the regions phenomenal burden of HIV and AIDS, it is critical to provide lasting, rooted solutions that eliminate the economic impoverishment and oppression of women.

Research carried out in the SADC region shows that women and girls did not benefit from economic structural adjustment programmes. In fact SAPs have seriously affected the direction of expenditure to the social services of health and education, sectors that women and girls derive great benefit from.

Women are the majority of the population in the SADC region yet they are minority actors in so far as making critical economic decisions is concerned. Women do not have access to and control over resources and have remained locked into micro-credit, small-scale loans and income generating projects. These have broadly failed to uplift women from poverty permanently.

While economic reforms had the aim of improving the region's economic performance and benefit women who form the bulk of economic contributors in the informal and communal sector, economic reforms have in fact continued to sideline women.

Recognizing these concerns the following actions should be taken:-

### **Governments**

1. Adopt macro-economic and monetary policy frameworks that promote pro-poor growth that has a trickle down effect.

2. By December 2006, all SADC countries adopt pro-poor gender responsive budgeting as the approach for allocating resources at the national and local government levels.
3. By December 2006, all countries in the SADC region should conduct a time-use study and develop indicators to account for the work performed by women as unpaid care work in national accounts.
4. That there be a concerted effort to invest in infrastructure so as to bring resources closer to homes and reduce the burden of women's care work.
5. That women form no less than 50% of all bodies that make decision on economic policy.
6. That to democratize the economic decision making process all Parliamentary Committees responsible for Finance, Industry, Commerce and Trade have no less than 50% of its members as women and ensure that 50 % of all economic resources are targeted towards directly benefiting women and further that 50% of all macro economic, substantive trade and industry business opportunities are made available to women.
7. In force laws that guarantee that women form no less than 50% of the beneficiaries of land redistribution schemes and have access to, control over and ownership of land in their own right.
8. That countries develop monitoring mechanisms to measure the impact of economic policies.

### **NGOs**

1. Develop parallel processes to monitor the implementation and impact of macro-economic policies on women and girls.
2. Provide expertise on gender responsive budgeting to all stakeholders for effective implementation.
3. Lobby governments to include unpaid care work in the national accounts; provide with statistics and indicators illustrating the methodology that may be used to account for unremunerated labour.
3. Raise public awareness and provide fora for public debate on the impact of macro-economic policies on women and girls.

### **C. Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to education and training**

We acknowledge the gains some countries have made in advancing towards the target of education for all by providing universal free primary and secondary education to girls, especially those in vulnerable positions and/or living in the rural areas.

The following actions should be implemented to slow the rollback in educational gains in many countries:

### **Governments**

1. Establish commissions to review the quality and content of education with a view to improving declining standards.
2. Revise and rewrite all curricula in a gender responsive manner.
3. Remove school fees and other indirect fees and levies that limit girls access to education.
4. Put in place scholarship programmes, specifically for girls.
5. Put in place special provisions to enable girls to enter tertiary education institutions, especially in areas where there is a deficit of girls, such as the sciences.
6. Put in place stiffer penalties to punish teachers who sexually abuse their pupils.
7. Allow pregnant girls to return to school after delivery in all countries. This procedure should be backed with a conducive, non-discriminatory policy framework.
8. Make special provisions for girls in difficult circumstances, especially those in households that have been affected by HIV and AIDS, to receive education.
9. Ensure that the curriculum at tertiary institutions includes mandatory modules in women's, gender and feminist studies.

### **NGOs:**

1. Develop public campaigns to build public understanding and attitudinal changes towards allowing the return of pregnant girls to school.
2. Develop public campaigns to raise awareness about the sexual abuse of girls in schools.
3. Monitor the extent of implementation and enforcement of Affirmative Action programmes for girls to enter tertiary education institutions, and report on any gaps in policy implementation.

### **D. Inequalities and inadequacies in and unequal access to health care and related services**

The 1997 SADC Gender Declaration's commitment to making "quality and reproductive health service more accessible to women", reinforces the Beijing Platform for Action's commitment to providing equal access to quality health care to ensure the full rights of

women. The socio-economic context of most SADC countries provides a challenge to securing this right as most economies are depressed, and macro economic policies have impacted negatively on socio-economic rights, including provision of quality health care, particularly reproductive and maternal health care for women.

Very few countries still provide free access to health care for expectant mothers, and post maternity support. Few countries have reviewed primary health care services, and no serious inroads have been made to reduce maternal and infant mortality. There are few campaigns to provide women with more information on their reproductive rights, as well as those aimed at tackling the socio-cultural issues impacting on women's ability to negotiate both their reproductive and sexual rights.

We recommend that:

### **Governments**

1. Remove user fees for all women seeking health care services.
2. Reduce maternal mortality in line with the Millennium Development Goal No. 5 ( i.e. reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio).
3. Provide expectant mothers with ARVs to reduce parent to child transmission of HIV and ensure that once HIV positive women have given birth, they are placed on comprehensive ARV treatment programmes for their own health.
4. Reduce infant mortality or underweight births.
5. Provide access to a broad range of female controlled protective devices such as microbicides and condoms as contraception and protection from HIV and STIs.
6. Revising macro-economic policies to ensure that they are pro-poor; and national budgets are gender sensitive to take into account women's health care needs .
7. Conduct medical research in the field of women's health care needs and ensure health care service provision responds to women's specific health care needs.
8. Widen rights through legislative reform that permits access to safe and affordable abortion

### **NGOs**

1. Undertake massive campaigns to raise awareness of and advocate for health care services in the areas of cervical and breast cancers
2. Advocate for the pro-poor gender responsive national budgets
2. Lobby for legislative reforms so as to permit widespread access to safe and affordable abortion

3. Advocate for the provision of high quality, gender friendly public health care institutions and services

### **E. Violence Against Women**

The 1998 SADC Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children is a significant accomplishment of the region. It makes provision for law amendment, review, enactment, legal services and legal literacy as strategies to eliminate violence against women.

We acknowledge that there has been progress in legislating against gender violence, in particular domestic violence and sexual offences. A number of countries in SADC have now widened the concept of rape, to include the rape of men and boys; recognized marital rape as a criminal offence; provided for stiffer penalties, including higher minimum penalties for perpetrators of crimes against women; provided a broad definition of domestic violence, including the concept of family to protect the rights of men, women and children. Some countries now provide supportive structures for counseling crime survivors, have instituted victim friendly support units and courts. There is now provision for in some countries in the region post sexual violence medical therapies and counseling including anti -retro viral drugs to reduce the risk of contracting HIV. Penalties are now in place for perpetrators of incest, particularly to protect the rights of the girl child.

Despite these provisions we note with grave concern that violence against women and girls is reported to have increased to endemic proportions right across the SADC region.

To ensure that the region takes very seriously the matter of protecting its female citizens from all forms of violence, we recommend that:

#### **Governments**

1. Implement judicial reforms by putting in place gender sensitive structures to provide legal services and counseling for women and girls seeking protection from violence
2. All SADC countries provide post sexual violence medical therapies for women and girls and especially those therapies that prevent and reduce the transmission of HIV and STIs.
3. All countries enact legislation that makes marital rape a criminal offence.  
That all countries enact legislation that criminalizes domestic violence and sexual offences committed in both the public and private spheres
4. All SADC countries report at the annual meeting of ministers substantively on the extent of violence against women, measures that have been taken to eradicate violence against women and targets for the following year of reducing further violence against women

5. All SADC countries ensure that they make and protect budgetary provisions for implementing measures to protect women and girls from violence

### **NGOs**

1. Lobby for judicial reforms that put in place gender sensitive structures to provide legal services and counseling for women and girls seeking protection from violence

2. Lobby for the provision of post sexual violence medical therapies and services for women and girls who have survived violence.

### **F. The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation**

While the equal participation of women and men in peace processes is important to the attainment of sustainable peace and democracy, the involvement of women in the preparations and implementation of peace agreements in the southern African region remains minimal. Peace negotiations and agreements as well as the formal and informal process leading up to them are not engendered.

The heightened increase and vulnerability of women and girls to all forms of gender-based violence during armed conflict is unacceptable and violates their right to human security and life.

In light of the adoption of the Protocol which identifies rape as a war crime, governments, humanitarians aid organisations, UN agencies working in conflict areas must give more public attention to the issue of gender violence in armed conflict and view gender violence during armed conflict as punishable offences.

We therefore recommend that:

### **Governments**

1. Put in place mechanisms to strengthen women's participation in national and regional peace-building and reconstruction initiative and processes

2. Work with international humanitarian agencies to map out strategies and put in place mechanisms to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation and violence during conflict situations.

3. Establish tools to integrate gender at every stage of a peace process such as guidelines on the role of women in peace processes and reconstruction. A gender checklist must be provided for all those involved at every stage of the peace process to strengthen their capacity to promote gender equality and ensure that women participate effectively must be designed.

4. Ensure that peace agreements lay the foundation for women's equal rights to participate in and benefit fully from measures directed at the economic restructuring

5. In collaboration with UNCHR and other key agencies establish safe spaces in refugee camps where abuses and violations of women and human rights in the camps can be reported

### **NGOs**

1. Organisations working in armed conflict areas must be provided with a regular forum to present gender concerns that must be brought to the attention of the intergovernmental organs working on the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements.

2. Increase the monitoring, documenting and dissemination of reports on women's and girls experiences during conflict situations in their countries in timely fashions to the governments, international and national media, church organisations, among others to speed up the response time to violence and abuse in conflict situations.

### **G. Inequality between men and women in sharing of power and decision-making at all levels**

We recognize the growing acceptance of the importance of women's participation in decision-making. Affirmative action policies in place in some SADC countries have contributed to women's advancement in decision making.

However, women's participation in decision-making continues to be low. For example, as of January 2004, only Seychelles, South Africa and Mozambique had reached the SADC target of at least 30 percent women in their Parliaments. The majority countries have not and will not meet the SADC target due to various political, economic, social and cultural factors that impede women's progress.

The following actions should be taken:-

### **Governments**

1. Meet the African Union's target of 50% women in managerial and decision making positions in all parastatals, public institutions, regional bodies, media institutions, the judiciary, the public service and trade unions.

2. All public and private institutions should use gender and organizational development models to review institutional structures and values in order to restructure them to operate in a gender responsive manner, and to permit the fair and full participation of women.

3. Enact special measures to increase women's participation in structures and policy making processes at all levels from the village, to the national and regional levels.
4. Redefine political priorities, the political playing field that ensure good leadership, national democracy and governance reflects women's specific concerns, values and experiences and needs.
- 1
5. Work with civil society to mount civic education which aims to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and practices that discourage women from holding decision making positions, especially in the public sector.

## **NGOs**

1. Raise awareness about the importance of ensuring that women are part of the decision making structures and processes.
2. Monitor elections so as to ensure that they are conducted in a manner that permit the full and equal participation of women as voters and as candidates.
3. Build capacity of and provide support for women so that they can be strong, empowered candidates for public office.
4. Conduct campaigns to overcome the public's attitudinal barriers with respect to supporting and voting for effective women candidates.
5. Monitor and hold governments accountable for the implementation of the commitments and report on the gaps in reaching the targets to gender equality.
6. Conduct studies that illustrate qualitatively and quantitatively the differential impacts women bring to decision making and power sharing.
7. Lobby for a conceptual and structural redefinition of the patriarchal structures of governance and decision making that present blocks to women's effective participation.

## **H. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women**

Almost all SADC countries have some form of national machinery responsible for gender, as well as gender focal points within various ministries.

However, in the 10 years since Beijing, these units, departments or ministries have become weak and unable to be responsive to the challenges presented by the struggle for gender justice. Poor resource bases, few staff and no power or authority within governments to advance equality and justice for women are just a few of the constraints, among others, national machineries face.



Political will to gender equality is demonstrated through strong, well-resourced (financial and human) structures with power and authority from the highest level to act. Without such structures, Southern African governments will continue to experience a rollback in important gender justice gains which are intrinsic to meeting the Millennium Development Goals and stemming the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The UN General Assembly 2001 Special Session on HIV/AIDS made a clear link between women and girl's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS with the unequal power relations between women and men, girls and boys, and to women and girls inability to exercise their human rights.

Recognizing the above the following steps are needed to move forward:

### **Governments**

1. Rebuild the institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality to well-resourced and well-staffed offices placed at the level of full ministries or in the President's Office by 2006. Progress in this regard should be checked at the SADC Annual Heads of States Meeting.
2. Provide a certain fixed percentage of the national budgetary allocations for the institutional mechanisms, and this percentage should be protected and guaranteed by an act of Parliament.
3. Starting in 2004, institutional mechanisms should not be downgraded further in any country as a sign of SADC government's commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and other instruments they have signed.
4. Governments should set up and enshrine in law commissions on gender equality or an equal opportunity commission, with the mandate to oversee the legislative framework and to keep government and all institutions accountable to gender justice and equality. These entities also should develop areas of research and study for the generation of gender disaggregated data and introduce consistently policy papers on the status of women within their countries; and interface with all sectors of society to ensure accountability and the incorporation of gender justice into the public, private and civil society sectors.

### **NGOs**

1. Civil society groups working in the areas of gender and human rights should form by 2005 an umbrella body or coalition in countries, where such an entity does not exist, to serve as a focal point on gender justice activism in the country.
2. Women's coalitions or umbrella organizations should set up a task force within to be responsible for the regular monitoring of governments' attainment or non-attainment of targets set by national, regional and international commitments on gender equality. Reports from these monitoring exercises should be distributed at all levels in the public, private and civil society spheres, and form the basis for continued lobbying.
3. NGOs should make a concerted effort to be key players in providing gender expertise, knowledge, and information to the development of policies and laws in all sectors of society.

## **I. Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women**

We acknowledge that SADC governments have adopted, ratified or acceded to important frameworks for promoting women's human rights. As of March this year, all SADC countries had ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, only four countries in the region have either signed or ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol.

Recognizing that gender equality is a fundamental human right, SADC adopted its Gender and Development Declaration in 1997. In 1998 SADC signed an addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children, recognizing that gender-based violence is a gross human rights violation.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted by the African Union. Only six countries in SADC have signed the Protocol; none have ratified or acceded to the Protocol.

The SADC Charter on Fundamental Social Rights, adopted in August 2003 which seeks to reaffirm the social rights of SADC nationals. The Maseru Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted in July 2003 which, amongst other things, recognizes that the pandemic is a development issue, and it also recognizes the fundamental rights and freedoms of people living with HIV/AIDS and the specific connection between HIV and AIDS and gender inequality.

Whilst the adoption, ratification and accession records of SADC countries are relatively good, we are concerned that SADC state parties to CEDAW have failed to report regularly and periodically on progress. Most CEDAW reports are extremely late, some by more than four (4) years; this signifies little commitment to the implementation of the Convention. Failure by SADC countries to ratify or accede to the Option Protocol to CEDAW curtails the full range of rights that would be available to groups or individual women to present issues of gross human rights violations to the relevant UN body.

Commendable efforts have been made in enacting empowering gender sensitive laws. These important inroads in the area of legislation have included women's equality in marriage including protection from marital rape; women's equality in the acquisition of movable and immovable property rights; women's labour rights with respect to equal pay for work of equal value, maternity benefits, as well as protection from sexual harassment in the work place and affirmative action.

The non-binding nature of all the Declarations adopted by SADC and their non-domestication at country level, places limitations on the extent to which the region's female citizens can formally claim protection for their rights.

SADC governments have failed to provide easily accessible legal facilities; the responsibility has largely been carried by NGOs.

There are weak *pro bono* or *pro deo* systems, and there is a narrow conceptualization of service provision for indigent persons in these systems. Review documents languish on shelves for some time before action is taken. The complexity of legal processes in most formal courts persist, mostly based on colonial precepts of meting out justice. Context oriented solutions to justice delivery must be put in place – procedures have to be simple and accessible to women.

Few Law Review Commission structures in SADC countries have prioritized the mandate to address gender and law concerns. Few Attorney General's Chambers and Offices are proactive in providing technical assistance to governments *vis a vis* gender sensitive legislation; increasingly this responsibility is being carried by civil society experts.

There is a lack of gender parity in most judicial structures in SADC and a lack of proactive approach in interpretation in most judicial structures – international human rights law instruments such as CEDAW are just 'paper rights'.

Despite these significant improvements in the law, gaps remain.

We recommend that:

### **Governments**

1. Adopt far reaching measures within the framework of the elections unfolding in the region over the next 18 months, to fulfill the commitment of reaching the target of a minimum of 30% women in strategic political and decision making positions by December 2005.
2. All policies and programmes mainstream a rights based approach so that all persons in SADC acquire full citizenship rights.
3. Enact legislation that domesticates all regional and international instruments that are legally binding – the role of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the SADC Secretariat must be recognized.
4. Enforce the effective and gender sensitive administration of the law.
5. Transform declarations entered into by SADC countries into Protocols.
6. Strengthen a peer review mechanism on gender at the highest level in SADC, which must also include experts from the civil society sector.
7. Amend all constitutions urgently to eliminate the provisions that currently exist for the discrimination of women and girls through customary and personal law.

## NGOs

1. Lobby and advocate for the target to fulfill the commitment of a minimum of 30% women in strategic political and decision making positions by December 2005 to be met.
2. Lobby for the enactment of legislation that domesticates all regional and international instruments that are legally binding.
3. Monitor the extent to which the administration of law is conducted in a gender sensitive manner and report oversight.
4. Lobby that the SADC Gender and Development Declaration becomes a protocol.

## **J. Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media**

Recognizing that every citizen should be guaranteed the right to freedom of expression, and that this right should be protected against sexist, racist and other forms of biases which are forms of censorship; and

Acknowledging the research findings of the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline Study of women and men in the news in Southern Africa which revealed that in over 300 media in the region women comprised only 17% of the known sources.

The following actions must be part of concerted planning and action to achieve democracy in and through the media:

### **Governments**

1. Create the space and regulatory environments that are conducive to the development of a free, independent and pluralistic media in all Southern African countries;
2. Set the example for all sectors in society by adopting and implementing policies that advance gender justice; and by eradicating all laws that promote all forms of sexism in the public and private sphere.
3. Make the findings of the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline (GMBS) Study, both regional and country – level reports known to all policymakers, ministers, parliamentarians, judiciary, commissioners, etc. to create awareness at the level of decision-makers on sexism in the media.
4. Set targets for the advancement of women in the media; and set up independent regulatory media authority to monitor the implementation of these target, and which ensures all media houses have instituted editorial and employment policies which eradicate sexism in the media.

4. Enshrine and guarantee within national constitutions the right to access to information for all individuals.

## **Media**

1. Develop editorial and employment policies which prohibit discrimination against women in the workplace, ensure their promotion to key positions and develop policies which mitigate against sexist stereotypes, negative portrayal and the absence of women's voices and perspectives in the media. The media should give a fair and balance portrayal of women in the media in all of their diverse roles.

2. Revisit outdated style manuals and editorial policies, where they exist to ensure that these documents are not gender blind and promote the highest professional standards.

3. Gender justice should be covered in the media from a rights-based approach and should not be relegated to only a few columns or placed on special pages periodically; gender justice should rather form part of the regular coverage in the media of political, economic, reproductive, health, social, civil rights for all citizens.

4. Women's voices and perspectives in the media should move from 17%(2003) to at least 30% of sources by (2006) through a concerted effort by the media to access women as sources on all issues within countries' media. Each country should use the national GMBS report as a starting point to set internal target on women as sources, to contribute to the 30% regional goal.

## **NGOs**

1. Incorporate media literacy into their programmes to build awareness on how to read the media for gender.

2. Gender and media activism centered on campaigns for women's right to freedom of expression should be developed within women's coalitions in the SADC countries.

3. Conduct regular monitoring of the media for gender bias, stereotypes and women's absence of voice should form the basis of regular 'complaint' reports to the Ombudsperson, independent media or human rights commissions within countries who make public reports.

4. Use May 3 –World Press Freedom Day to present independent analyses of gender in the media and/or wage campaigns in and through the media on women's right to communicate.

5. Gender activism should become more pronounced at the national and regional level to influence Media and ICT Policies;

6. Ensure that the country's National Gender Policies include a well-developed section on media in the context of freedom of expression and gender bias as a form of censorship against women; and gender should be integrated into countries Information and ICT Policies.

## **K. Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment**

Women have the responsibility for managing household resources, but they typically do not have managerial control. Given the variety of women's daily interactions with the environment, they are the most keenly affected by its degradation. In Southern Africa environment issues include deforestation, decreasing availability of water and desertification. Increased deforestation leads to soil erosion and flooding, reducing agricultural productivity, contributes to decrease water availability and contributes to the burden of women.

Deforestation makes it more difficult for women to collect wild herbs, fruits and natural medicines, or fuel wood for cooking and boiling water. When women must travel further distances and take more time to collect fuel wood and water, girls are often taken out of school to assist. In areas where water is in particularly short supply, women use even more energy, putting them at risk of malnutrition and reducing their economic productivity.

The participation of women in environmental protection and management has continued to be inadequate, and hampered by limited access to technical skills, resources and gender insensitive environmental policies.

We recommend the following action:

### **Governments**

1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, including as managers, designers and planners, and as implementers and evaluators of environmental projects;
2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development;
3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environment policies on women.
4. Governments must make financial and human resources available for the involvement of women in environmental and natural resources management.
5. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, including as managers, designers and planners, and as implementers and evaluators of environmental projects; Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development; Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environment policies on women.

6. Take urgent measures to avert on-going rapid environmental and economic degradation in their countries that generally affect women and children in rural areas suffering drought, desertification, and deforestation, natural disasters and aftermath of the use of unsuitable agrochemical products.
7. Implement measures to protect farm workers, the majority of whom are women from exposure to certain agricultural and industrial chemicals which, increase women's vulnerability in pregnancy and childbirth.
8. Establish official channels to give women a voice in environmental decision-making. More often than not, women are not associated with discussions on the environment and very often the decision about location of water sources, types of water sources, and who will maintain the operation of the facilities are made without consulting women resulting in no-one taking responsibility.

## **NGOs**

1. Raise public awareness on the importance of women's involvement and demand that space be created for the effective participation of women as decision makers in matters of environmental and resource management.
2. Undertake research and publish findings on women's roles and responsibilities in protecting the environment so as to build credible knowledge in the field of gender, environment and development .
3. Monitor the enforcement and administration of environmental legislation to ensure that its provisions protect women's environmental rights.
4. Ensure that all research in the field of plants and medicines is gender responsive and has clear benefits to women who are the guardians of knowledge about natural herbs, fruits and medicines.
5. Take steps to develop new technologies that eliminate women's dependence on fuel wood for cooking and boiling water so that there is less pressure on natural resources.

## **L. Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child**

We note that SADC governments have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We commend states for the efforts made especially in the areas of education and providing legislative measures for the protection of children from abuse, particularly through such practices as child labour.

Yet the development indicators across the region reveal that the status and condition of the girl child remains extremely low in our societies. There has been limited progress in ensuring

that African girls in the SADC region do not top the statistics of children living in poverty, without adequate education, nutrition, shelter and in conditions of violence and conflict.

Over the last 10 years, girls have become increasingly subject to the growing unscrupulous trade in trafficking and are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse by men who believe in the myth of virgin cleansing as a cure for HIV. Deteriorating public health care facilities have meant that girls are also increasingly carrying the burden associated with caring for people living with HIV and AIDS.

We recommend that the following measures be taken:

### **Governments**

1. Stiffer penalties for perpetrators of incest to protect the rights of the girl child.
2. Enact legislation to protect girl children from abduction.
3. Enforcement of the rights of girl children against labour, including labour related to HIV and AIDS home-based care.
4. Enact new legislative measures to protect welfare rights of child-headed households, particularly girl headed household.
5. Implement effective legal interventions to protect teenage mothers' rights to education.
6. Adopt victim friendly measures that ensure effective reporting on violence against girls.
7. Introduce reproductive health education as a compulsory subject in the school curricula from primary school.

### **NGOs**

1. Raise public awareness about the need to penalize perpetrators of incest.
2. Lobby for the adoption of legislation that protects girl children against abduction.
3. Lobby for the protection of girls from labour abuses, especially those related to performing work related to HIV and AIDS home based care.
4. Lobby for the revision of macro-economic policies to ensure that they protect the rights of girls.
5. Lobby for the gender responsive allocation of national budget resources so that they are pro-girls.
6. Monitor the administration of legislation to ensure that provisions that protect the rights of teenage mothers to education are implemented.



**Organisations represented at the working session**

1. Adult Education Association of Zambia
2. Coordinating Assembly of NGOs from Swaziland (Cango)
3. Centre for Violence Against Women – South Africa
4. Council of Churches in Zambia
5. Environ Green Care Association of Zambia
6. Emang Basadi of Botswana
7. Feminist Activist Coalition of Tanzania
8. Forum Mulher - Mozambique
9. Gender Links
10. Lesotho Council of Non Governmental organisations (Lecongo)
11. Namibian Women's Association
12. National Council of Catholic Women
13. Rede Mulher - Angola
14. Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia
15. Southern Africa Research and Documentation centre Women in Southern Africa Awareness Programme (SARDC-WIDSAA)
16. Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
17. Women for Change - Zambia
18. Women in Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa
19. Women in law and development in Africa (WILDAF)
20. Women in Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (WLSA)
21. Women's Action Group - Zimbabwe
22. Women's NGO Coalition – Botswana
23. Young Women's Christian Association - Zambia
24. Zambia Alliance of Women
25. Zambia Association of research and Development
26. Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
27. Zambia National Women's Lobby Group
28. Zambia Non Governmental Organisation Coordinating Council
29. Zimbabwe Women's Coalition
30. Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network

### ANNEX III

A PRESENTATION BY UNIFEM AT THE SUB-REGIONAL DECADE REVIEW  
MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION  
**LUSAKA, ZAMBIA**  
**26 – 29 APRIL 2004**  
**BY**  
**CECILIA NCUBE**  
**NATIONAL PROGRAMME OFFICER**

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is the Women's Fund at the United Nations that provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. UNIFEM works in 14 countries in southern Africa namely: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

UNIFEM has been implementing the following programmes in order to achieve the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:

- Strengthening women's economic security and rights and empowering women to enjoy secure livelihoods.
- Engendering governance and peace building to increase women's participation in decision making processes.
- Promoting women's human rights and eliminating all forms of violence against women.

#### **1. Women and Poverty**

The objectives of the economic and security and rights programme are being achieved through the following:

- *Supporting institutions, laws and policies that promote women's equal ownership of and access to resources.*
- *Building the capacity of countries to manage globalisation and economic transition from the perspective of poor women.*
- *Strengthening women's economic capacity and rights as entrepreneurs, producers and home-based workers.*

UNIFEM has been expanding its support for gender responsive budgeting analysis as a tool to strengthen mechanisms and procedures for holding global actors accountable to the impact of policies on women's lives, particularly in Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Activities implemented include capacity building and sensitization workshops for policymakers and women NGOs on gender responsive budgets, research, policy advocacy, knowledge networks and development of indicators. UNIFEM partners in this area are the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network, Women's Action Group in Zimbabwe, Women NGO Coalition in Botswana, Forum Mhuler and Mozambique Debt Group in

Mozambique and the Coordinating Assembly of Non Governmental Organisations in Swaziland.

UNIFEM is a member of the southern Africa Gender Budgets Core Group, which was formed in February 2002, with the aim of supporting and consolidating the ongoing efforts related to the gender analysis of budgets initiative in southern Africa. The core group includes the SADC Gender Unit, UNDP and the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre among others. Furthermore, UNIFEM will facilitate the launch of a southern African Women Economists Network to support the ongoing work on gender responsive budgets and PRSPs in the region in June 2004.

In 2003 UNIFEM commissioned and published a guidebook “*Why should we care about unpaid care work?*”. The objective of the guidebook was to move beyond statements about the importance of unpaid care work and to initiate research which will be used as the basis of advocacy around ways of lessening the burden of unpaid care work particularly on women and girls. Research studies on care work are being conducted in Botswana, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The project is looking at the time, money and opportunity costs of home based care in the context of HIV and AIDS. The results will be used to lobby for the accounting of unpaid care work in the system of national accounts and to engender macroeconomic frameworks.

UNIFEM has been supporting national and regional institutions that generate gender sensitive data to inform macroeconomic policies and programmes. Currently, most statistical agencies have inadequate capacity to analyse gender statistics on economic variables. The booklet “*Budgeting to fulfill International Gender Commitments*” was developed for the region as a tool to link gender responsive budgets to commitments laid out in the BPFA and CEDAW. Practical questions and steps to integrate gender into budget allocation and revenue collection are provided. A checklist for each of the twelve areas of concern of the BPFA with regards to Gender Responsive Budgeting is also provided as an annex to the booklet. The booklet, together with the training manual on gender responsive budgets developed by UNIFEM in collaboration with the Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) and the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) in South Africa will be used as key resource to build the capacity of various partners.

UNIFEM has continued to support women to participate in non-traditional activities including the mining and construction sectors by providing funding and technical expertise to women in these industries.

UNIFEM facilitated the establishment and launching of national mining associations in Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. At the same time a regional body, namely the southern African Women in Mining Trust was launched in 1997 in Kadoma, Zimbabwe. The members of the Trust are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In Plumtree, Zimbabwe, UNIFEM trained women to mould bricks and to construct houses. Women’s lives have changed significantly because women are now earning sustainable

incomes through the sale of bricks as well as living in comfortably since they succeeded in constructing own houses.

UNIFEM continues to strengthen women's capacity as entrepreneurs, producers and informal workers through pilot projects. Women in food processing in Zimbabwe were supported to produce and sell their products both on the domestic and external markets. As part of the programme “ **Promoting Women's Human Rights to Economic Security and Sustainable Livelihoods in Southern Africa**” UNIFEM implemented the project “ Enterprise Training for Women in Rural Areas” in Malawi through the National Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME). Women are now engaged in economically viable businesses, which not only provide them with income for survival, but also provide them needed services and goods for the communities

Recognizing that women continue to be marginalized in terms of accessing economic resources such as land, UNIFEM supported the launch of the **Regional Platform of Women's Land and Water Rights** in 2002. The Platform was established to advocate for land and water policy changes.

In the area of trade and globalization, UNIFEM has been supporting women to participate at trade fairs as well as engendering trade policies and agreements. Advocacy materials have been developed for the region and will be disseminated before the end of the year. UNFEM launched a regional SADC Expo for women entrepreneurs mainly from rural communities to exhibit their products. The initial assessments of the Forum have been very positive and they indicate that the women have strengthened their trade links with other women entrepreneurs in the region. The WINNER project succeeded in having the following ICT instruments in place:

- The WINNER website: <http://winner.mailcom.net>
- The WINNER Help Desk within the premises of selected women beneficiary associations.
- Electronic Market Space for WINNER participants for access to business opportunities on-line and WINNER .
- Business meetings for introduction of women entrepreneurs and subsequent negotiations leading to commercial deals.

## **2. Education and Training for Women**

Cadres of women trainers have been created in the region on various aspects and gender mainstreaming skills enhanced. Country specific training manuals have been developed and are now being utilized to support step down training.

## **3. Women and HIV and AIDS**

UNIFEM is executing a two year regional programme on HIV and AIDS, gender and human rights and it includes the implementation of programmes and activities that seek to strengthen

gender equality and women's rights dimensions in response to the region's HIV and AIDS epidemic

One of the proposed strategies in addressing HIV and AIDS is the “**Gender Empowerment Zone**” (GEZ). The project is implemented in Mutoko district – Nyahunure Ward in Zimbabwe as a pilot. This is a rural community, where UNIFEM conducted the community-based research on HIV and AIDS and supported a group of women on an agricultural related project in Nyahunure.

UNIFEM will demonstrate through a holistic approach that once legal mechanisms and gender sensitive policies are in place, and give rise to community-based gender sensitive initiatives, it will then be possible to change gender relations and ultimately curb the spread of HIV .

The following achievements have been noted: meetings were held with selected donors, UN and potential implementing agencies to sensitize them on the GEZ, several field visits and meetings were conducted to ensure participation of the community from project inception, planning meeting with the Mutoko leadership.

UNIFEM supported Selibeng – Lesotho to support survivors, especially women and children of various forms of violence. The project created awareness on violence against women and children and HIV and AIDS and the negative implications on women. It also trained peer educators in order to build their capacity to provide counseling and referral services.

UNIFEM is supporting Botswana, South Africa and Zambia to support women living with HIV and AIDS.

#### 4. **Violence against women**

In 1996, under its Human Rights Programme, UNIFEM established a Trust Fund which supported innovative projects aimed specifically at preventing and eliminating violence against women. UNIFEM has been providing ongoing support and training to women's human rights networks and organizations to facilitate activities for monitoring and implementation of CEDAW at national and regional levels.

UNIFEM strategies around elimination of violence against women have been awareness workshops, schools competitions, 16 days of activism, media and the performing arts in Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. As part of the UN's efforts to mark the Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence Against Women, UNIFEM launched a regional campaign on the elimination of violence against women in Harare, on Pan African Women's day on 31 July 1998. In Swaziland, the campaign was launched on 24 September 1998. On 22 October, Botswana joined other countries in the region and launched a campaign on “ **A life free from violence**”. In Mozambique, UNIFEM provided funding to enable Forum Mhluer to undertake a media outreach programme. Similarly in Seychelles and Mauritius, the campaign was well received.

In support of the BPFA +5 initiatives UNIFEM successfully launched the '**Progress of the World's Women 2000**' in Madagascar, in collaboration with UNDP. A major realization of this process was that gender analysis skills in Madagascar are still relatively weak. Poverty levels are very high and are poignantly evident especially in rural communities.

#### **5. Women in conflict situations**

A new partnership with Rede Mulher (literally means Network of Women) in Angola has led to the strengthening of the National Network of women in Politics. The Network brings together women from different political dimensions and parties with a view to creating an environment around which women can have some consensus.

UNIFEM was key partner and facilitator of the process that recently led to the adoption by the African Heads of State and Government of the Maputo Declaration on Gender Mainstreaming and the Effective participation of women in the Africa Union

#### **6. Human rights of women**

Women's human rights are central to all UNIFEM programmes and are mainstreamed into all programmes and projects. A number of programmes focus on capacity building, networking, awareness and compliance with globally agreed norms and standards to advance women's human rights. UNIFEM expanded capacity to eliminate violence against women and girls by investing in prevention, protection and advocacy strategies, increased capacity towards the effective implementation of CEDAW, enhanced understanding of governments, advocates and UN partners about the gender and human rights dimensions on HIV and AIDS.

Building on the Trust Fund Jurisprudence Equality Project implemented by the International Association of Women Judges, UNIFEM assisted the Zimbabwe Women Judges Association (ZWJA) to convene a meeting of women judges where the **Southern Women Judges Network (SAWJN)** was created. The participants agreed to establish national associations where these do not exist. It was also apparent from the deliberations that the ZWJA is the most developed of the few associations that have been formed.

UNIFEM supported assessment studies in Lesotho and Swaziland on the current status of the CEDAW. The result were used to lobby for the lifting of the reservations on CEDAW by the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho and to advocate for the ratification of CEDAW the Government of Swaziland.

UNIFEM in partnership with Women organizations has been raising awareness and understanding of CEDAW among women and society to foster attitudes and programmes that support the implementation of CEDAW and therefore the advancement of women. Sister Namibia, a gender and human rights training organization in Namibia as well as the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare were supported to conduct training workshops on CEDAW and hold consultations on the preparations of the CEDAW report for 2002. Women's knowledge on the convention was enhanced.

## 6. Women in the Media

In March 2001 UNIFEM facilitated the participation of representatives from Zimbabwe (Media) and Zambia (NGO) to the CSW while in June 2001, three participants from Zimbabwe (NGO), Tanzania (Media) and South Africa (media) attended the UN special Session in New York. UNIFEM also disseminated information throughout the region, via UNIFEM's networks within the UN Gender Focal Points, Government, National Machineries and UNIFEM NGO networks.

In July 2001, UNIFEM held a follow up of the Beijing Review Process by organizing a regional launch of the UNIFEM Biennial Report "**Progress of the World's Women 2000**" in partnership with the Gender Forum in Zimbabwe and Gender Links in South Africa.

## 7. Women in decision making

Gender justice by supporting women candidates and voters, strengthening the capacity of women and lawyers and engendering legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms is crucial.

In April 2002, UNIFEM contributed to the launching of the Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus the "**voice of women parliamentarians in SADC**". As a follow up in May 2003 the SADC Parliamentary Forum hosted a regional meeting to build the skills of the Women's Caucus in leadership, gender and human rights and lobbying and advocacy. The meeting also agreed on a strategy for the Caucus Executive Committee to undertake lobbying and advocacy missions to the various countries that will be having elections between 2004 and 2005 to realize the 30% target as stipulated in the SADC Gender and Development Declaration.

UNIFEM is currently working with the SADC PF to support electoral processes in Namibia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe in order to promote women in politics

### Next steps

- Developing alternative gender macroeconomic frameworks for policy makers.
- Formulation of gender-aware and pro-poor fiscal policies which ensure that public resources are allocated in gender-equitable and pro-poor ways, which requires a democratisation of fiscal policy making
- To train women organisations to monitor gender differentiated impacts of policies in the context of MDGs, PRSPs and development plans
- To lobby for more women in decision making
- Domestication of international human rights instruments
- To lobby for change in legislation with a view to promote women's rights.

- To positively affect ICT policies and policy forums through systematic monitoring that highlights gender gaps, women's potential contributions and participation.