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ECA/ACW/MR/MAU/98/1

MISSION REPORT  
ON  
GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN MAURITIUS

By:  
Hilda M. K. Tadia  
Regional Advisor, UNECA  
December 1998

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## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

The Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development in Mauritius requested for advisory Services in the field of gender mainstreaming, and for the formulation of a National Gender Plan of Action. The Government of Mauritius and especially the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development paid for the Regional Advisory Services. This was a practical demonstration not only of the country's commitment to establishing an effective Gender Management system for the achievement of gender equality, but also an appreciation of the technical advisory services provided by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

## **2. The specific objectives of the advisory services were to:**

- a. Help to identify training and research needs for gender mainstreaming;
- b. Advise on the networking of the Gender Bureau with grassroots organisation;
- c. Advise on the development of indicators for gender mainstreaming adapted to the Mauritius culture;
- d. Help in the preparatory work for the formulation of national plan of action for gender.

## **3. Mode of operation:**

- In an initial meeting to discuss the mode of operation, it was agreed that a participatory approach that enabled consultations with several stakeholders should be used. However, it was clear that the Ministry would have to define the exact nature of the Bureau. There was a feeling that there were too many ideas (some of them conflicting) floating, as to what the gender bureau should be and do, this posed constraints for the ministry. Some of the main constraints highlighted are:
  - The ministry did not have a total picture of what is to be done and how it is to be done,

There were no definite guidelines for collaboration with other partners.

The capacity requirements of both the ministry of women and other key ministries were not yet clearly defined.

The preparatory meeting with the Acting PS and Gender Bureau staff, it was therefore agreed that in order to set the Bureau on firm ground, the main output of the technical advisory visit would be:

- A work program for the Gender Bureau
- Terms of reference for the gender focal points, as who will be used as the inter-ministerial technical group on gender mainstreaming

- An activity plan for the program according to the agreed prioritisation.

#### 4. Discussion within the Ministry to define nature and program of the Gender Bureau:

In discussing the structure and program of the Gender Bureau, it was agreed that there are already many background documents which can be used to define the bureau's mission and goal, the objectives, the program content as well as the work plan. The first participatory meeting, which was organised for the first category of primary actors (that is, heads of all the Units) in the Ministry as well as the consultants of the Ministry, was to define all these. The report of the meeting is attached as annex I

The documents, which were used to guide the discussion, are:

- The launching brochure
- Consultant's report, "The Bureau for gender equality, Establishing a gender management system.
- The Commonwealth document on "Policy options for integrating Gender into National Budgetary policies and procedures.
- The consultants report on "Brainstorming session with Gender focal points.
- White paper on women in Development

#### Guidelines for discussion:

The following guidelines were used throughout the discussion to define the structure, objectives, roles, programs, workplans as well as the key partners of the Gender Bureau.

##### *A. Define the option for integrating a gender perspective: i.e.*

a) gender mainstreaming, which focuses on integrating women's specific concerns in mainstream programs, as well as ensuring that mainstream programs address gender concerns.

b) women only programs based on addressing existing gender inequalities e.g. advancement of women's social economic and political empowerment (through affirmative action, enhancing credit opportunities, strengthening women's leadership capacities.

##### *B. Define and agree on the structure ( use the commonwealth GMS as guideline for discussion)*

C. *What is the mission* , goal and objectives of the GB (use launching brochure, and consultants report on establishing a gender management system , to guide discussion)

D. *What role should* the gender bureau play, who else should form part of the Gender Management System (GMS)?( consultant's report on establishing a gender management system and the Commonwealth GMS)

E. *What are the key program areas*, what are the priorities? ( Use the white paper and the report on the brainstorming session)

F. *What is the Action plan i. e.* What , when , by whom (i.e. implementing partners) ?( use personal experience!)

G. Who are the *stakeholders*, and what are their roles?( Report on brainstorming).

**5. Participatory group meetings to discuss the establishment of the gender management system at a national level:**

Following the discussions within the ministry, it was agreed that the results of the discussions should be shared with the gender focal points who will be the key partners of the Ministry. The Gender Focal points, together with the Gender Bureau will form the inter-ministerial technical group on gender mainstreaming.

The Regional advisor provided the guidelines and facilitated the discussion groups. (The reports of the discussion are attached as annex II a and b.) It was agreed that the conclusions reached in these meetings would form the main guidelines for finalising the set up of the Gender Bureau as the main Gender Management System, based in the Ministry of Women, itself the lead agency for gender mainstreaming and development of gender equality.

The discussions of the gender focal points were used to develop the terms of reference for the inter-ministerial technical group meeting. (See TOR attached as annex III).

**6. The Regional Advisor, worked with the staff of the gender Bureau to produce the Action Plan for the Gender Bureau for the next three years. (See attached report , Annex IV).**

The plan of action identifies the programs in order of priority, the objectives of each of the program as well as the specific activities under each program, the main actors

and beneficiaries as well as the resources needed to implement the program and the time frame for implementation.

#### **7. Main achievements of the advisory services:**

The tasks which were identified for the mission were all, but one, fulfilled. Specifically, by the end of the advisory period the following are in place:

- The Ministry now has the program and action plan of the Gender Bureau defined, as well as an agreed structure for the Gender Management system.
- The terms of reference for the key partners (that is gender focal points) have been developed.
- The process and methodology for the development of the National Action Plan have been discussed and agreed on.

The reports resulting from all these activities are available (see all attachments ) and it is recommended to the Ministry that these should be packaged to form the main reference manual for the Ministry in tracking the implementation , by the Bureau, of the agenda for establishing gender equality.

#### **8. Follow-up action:**

The Advisor had also been requested to advise on the development of indicators for the gender mainstreaming adapted to the culture and social context for Mauritius. It was felt that the priority, of the advisory services, in the initial phase was to define the nature, program, and processes of the Gender Bureau as the main lead agency of the Gender Management System. In addition it was not possible, in a period of two weeks to perform all the tasks which had been identified. It was therefore agreed that the monitoring indicators will be developed as a follow-up activity , which will include monitoring of the establishment of an effective Gender Bureau.

#### **9. Specific Recommendation to the Ministry of WFWCD:**

There is a critical shortage of gender trainers within Mauritius. Given the need for gender training at many different levels, I recommend that the ministry consider a mechanism for establishing a pool of National gender trainers. This will be particularly important if the Gender Bureau is to carry out the gender mainstreaming activities identified at all levels. If this recommendation is acceptable, I recommend that the Ministry should consider utilising the ECA Advisory Services to support the development and implementation of a Training of Gender Trainers program.

**To: Mrs N. Nababsing, Acting Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development,  
2nd Floor, C.S.K. House, Cnr Remy Ollier & Emmanuel  
Anquetil Strs, Port Louis**

**Subject: Mission Reports**

1. Attached are the different Reports of the tasks completed during the Mission.

The Reports attached are:

1. Notes of Meeting held among the staff of the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development: 18 November 1998.
2. Notes of Meetings with the Gender Focal points: 20 November and 26 November 1998.
3. Brief discussion Notes on the process for Developing the National Gender Action Plan.
4. Action Plan for the Gender Bureau.
5. Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points. I suggest that you and the Gender Bureau staff discuss the TOR, since I have developed the main text without discussion. However, I used the discussions of the gender focal points as the main guideline for designing the TOR.
6. Guidelines for discussion on what the Gender Bureau should be and do.

7. Outline of a Model National Action Plan. This is purely a guideline. It has been designed by ACW to help member states in preparing their action plans.

II. As you are aware, the main methodology used was participatory. I hope this will make it easier for the partners at this Ministry and gender focal points from other Ministries to identify with the work programme of the Gender Bureau.

III. I recommend that these documents should be put together to form the main reference Manual for the Gender Bureau and its partners.

IV. You will notice that the Action Plan for the Gender Bureau includes a plan for establishment of an effective Gender Bureau. My view is that if you do not have at least 2 full time members of staff, and an administrative unit by end of January, you will be losing a lot of time. We have indicated that April/May should be an appropriate period for monitoring the implementation process of both the Gender Bureau and the Entrepreneurship Unit. Both the Gender Bureau and Entrepreneurship Unit agree to this, so I will allocate that period and provide support in designing the monitoring tools and initiate the monitoring exercise.

V. I am personally satisfied with progress made in carrying out the tasks you identified in the terms of reference. The only task that has not been addressed in the terms of reference is to 'advise on the development of indicators for gender mainstreaming adopted to our cultural and social context.'

As you will agree, the priority was to define and agree on the programme as well as work plan of the Bureau before working out the indicators. My suggestion, which seems to be agreeable to the Gender Bureau Staff, is that we address the tasks in April/May.

VI. Finally, I strongly recommend that the Gender Bureau staff get training, at the minimum in Gender Analysis. There are short courses available in institutions like ESAMI, PAID etc, which they can gain from, I will also be recommending a plan to develop a cadre of gender trainers in Mauritius in order to fill the critical gap that currently exists.

It was, as always, a pleasure to work with you and your staff.



*Best regards: Hilda Tadria, Regional Advisor, ECA/ACW*  
*28 November 1998*

**Notes of Meeting held of the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development in the Gender Bureau on 18 November 1998**

- Present: Mrs E. Hanoomanjee (Chairperson until 11.00 a.m when Mrs Nababsing took over)
- Mrs N. Nababsing - Ag. Permanent Secretary
  - Dr H. Tadia - ECA Regional Adviser
  - Mrs S. Hawaldar - Deputy Director, MCA
  - Dr. K. Daby - Adviser
  - Miss A. Keetaruth - Head, Entrepreneurship Unit
  - Mrs A. Hureesing - Head, Women's Unit
  - Miss S. Canakiah - Senior Organising Officer, Ag. Secretary, National Women's Council (Secretary)

Mrs E. Hanoomanjee opened the meeting and presented Dr H. Tadia, ECA Regional Adviser, and Consultant on the setting up of the Gender Bureau and moved on to the Agenda. The Chairperson requested Dr H. Tadia to present the objective of the meeting and the guidelines for discussion.

2. Dr Tadia circulated a Paper, Objective of the Advisory Services which contained the Guidelines for discussion. (Annex I). She opened the discussions.

**Agenda Item 1**

3. To define what we understand by the gender perspective?  
What will be the main approach of the Gender Bureau?

The Gender Bureau sets the Gender Perspective.

The main function of the Gender Bureau is to help in Gender Mainstreaming.

4. What is Gender Mainstreaming?

At National Level

- Gender sensitive discrimination measures for all target groups (men, women, children).
- Cutting across all sectors (Private/Public/NGOS...)
- Gender sensitive programmes, projects and policies.

At Meso (Sector)Level- (Mid Level)

We need information that reflects the reality e.g gender disaggregated data gender analysis of the situation of men and women.

At Individual Level

We look at the specific needs of men/women.

5. Mrs Hawaldar quoted as example the excellent Maternal Health Child Programme of the Ministry of Health where millions of rupees were spent without touching the women, simply because of Access, the women are away from 7 a.m to 7 p.m and the opening hours of the clinics are 9 a.m to 4 p.m.

6. We may get a big OK for Gender Mainstreaming but when we go deeper, policies may not be gender sensitive to the nuances of change in society.

7. For example, mainstreaming may look acceptable as far as figures/statistics are concerned but statistics can lie. We must know whether the client/consumer has been touched and the objective( i.e to change the quality of life of the mother and child) has been met.

## Agenda Item 2

### **Define and agree on the structure**

(a) At Level of Ministry of Women:

8. It was agreed that the Bureau Head must have clear cut duties and functions and should not intervene with the day-to-day running of the mainstream Ministry. But the Bureau Head will have direct access to the PS. and will work through the PS. Everything should be directed to the Permanent Secretary while having working relations with the different units.

DIRECTOR

A Technical Officer, providing expert advice, support the PS on Gender issues and gender mainstreaming

ASSISTANT  
DIRECTOR/  
SECRETARY

Assist CTO

RESEARCH  
AND  
DOCUMENTATION  
OFFICER

The existing Library to incorporate Gender documentation, it could at a later date be linked up to SADC Documentation Centre...

The Gender Bureau should follow all cabinet memos and advise the Minister on pertinent Gender Issues, before major decisions are taken.

(b) At sectoral level

**Gender focal points**

8. **The Gender focal points** should be people with technical expertise in the Ministry, and form part of the General Management Structure.

Linkage with sectoral programmes will be through focal points

The Research Officer should support and update research through multi-sectoral dialogue directing support to all the heads of units of the Ministry. (Lateral dialogue between research officer and different units of the Ministry is essential).

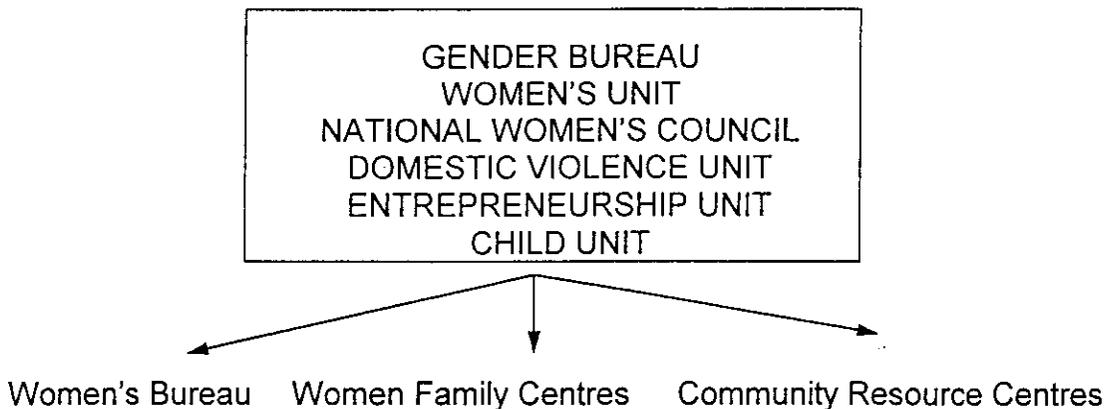
9. There should be Commissions which are adhoc support groups for various sectors (NGOs, experts available in the Country, Academics, Grassroot expertise ...etc. ) are platforms that the Director may use as and when required e.g when we want to rewrite a plan of action.

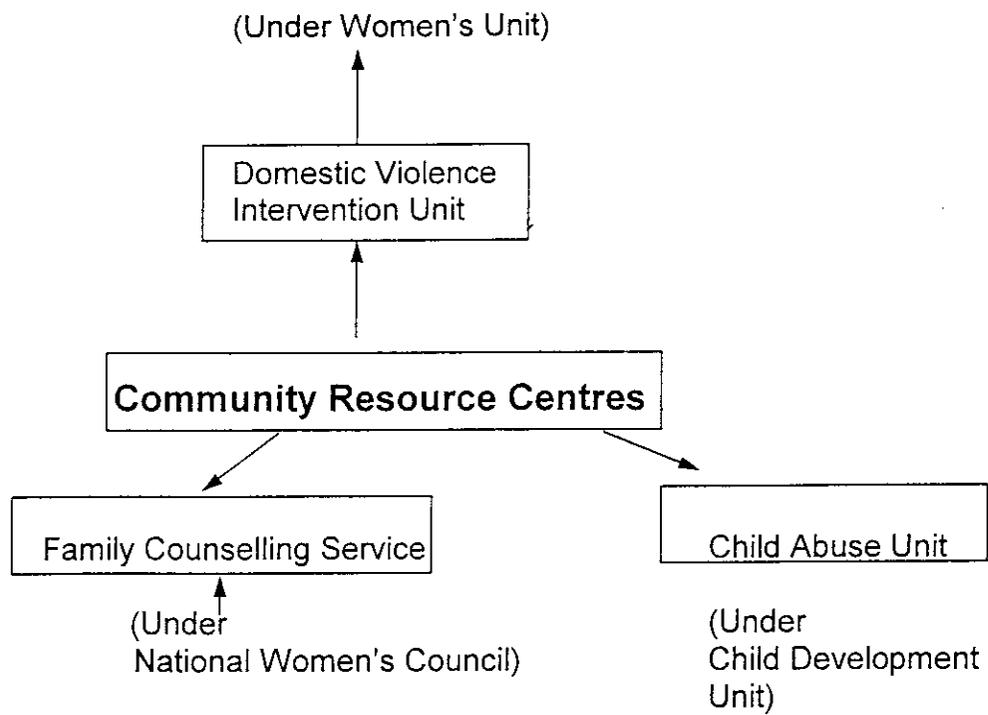
(c) At grassroot level

10. The Gender Bureau may use the platforms of the Women's Associations and Regional Committees to get information. The main objective is to ensure that the Grassroot Level organisations are working towards the main mission statement of the Ministry i.e empowering women,.... etc.

**Organisation set up at grassroot level**

11. We have the services through which we can incorporate men, women and children.





12. These are collaborating units, rather than units under direct supervision.

At Individual Level

13. Each unit must work with the Gender Bureau to identify and address specific needs of individual women and men.

14. Coordination between the Gender Bureau and the different units is important. There has to be a mechanism for the units to meet with the Gender Bureau (meeting once a week/monthly). The lateral communication system is vital for the performance of the Gender Bureau.

### Agenda Item 3

#### **MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF GENDER BUREAU**

15. The Gender Bureau supplements and complements the work of the Ministry for mainstreaming.

- The mission of the Bureau is to provide support to the Ministry to ensure the integration of the principle of gender equality and promotion of gender concerns in the development of a more equal society.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

##### ***Overall objective:***

16. To support the formulation & implementation of all policies and programmes in order to ensure that all policies are gender sensitive.

#### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

17. Promote, monitor and evaluate policies programmes and projects in this Ministry and other Ministries to ensure that they are gender sensitive.

- Promote and monitor the gender mainstreaming process in the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development.
- Support the establishment of networks and linkages among key stakeholders at local, national and international levels.
- Evolve research and training programmes through its network with grassroot level organisations, as well as Ministries and private sector, for furthering the gender equality agenda.
- Support the Ministry in setting up a gender sensitive documentation centre.
- Work within the Ministry's programme to enhance the Gender Sensitivity of information and data for advocacy and policy formulation and monitoring purposes.

#### **Agenda Item 4**

**Key roles of the gender bureau are:-**

- Coordination and Gender Policy formulation
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Research, training and information dissemination
- Advocacy
- Advisory

#### **19. Role of the bureau**

- Role of monitoring and evaluating existing policies, programmes and projects and advising the Ministry on future policies.
- It has got a lateral relationship with the other units for policy advice, policy support, monitoring and evaluation. Issues for research should come through following these lateral linkages and dialogue between the different units.

20. Gender Bureau advises the PS directly on the implementation of gender policies as well as formulation of future policies. Accountability of the Gender Bureau is to the PS. Anything emanating from the Gender Bureau should go to the PS and from the PS to the different units. The organisation must reflect a clear cut hierarchy. If there are cross currents it will destroy the homogeneity of the Ministry and it will give the wrong signals.

#### **Agenda Item 5**

#### **21. Key programme areas**

- DEVELOP A NATIONAL GENDER ACTION PLAN.
- ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE GMS AND STRUCTURE.
- REVIEW, DESIGN, IMPLEMENT GENDER FOCUSED RESEARCH PROGRAMMES.
- ESTABLISH A COMPUTERISED DATA SYSTEM WITHIN THE MINISTRY TO FACILITATE IEC AND INFORMED POLICY DECISION-MAKING.
- IDENTIFY TRAINING NEEDS OF ALL KEY PARTNERS, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE TRAINING PROGRAMMES.

## Agenda Item 7

### Who are the stake holders?

21. The Stakeholders are:

- MINISTRY OF WOMEN, FAMILY WELFARE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT(UNITS OF THE MINISTRY)
- OTHER MINISTRIES/INSTITUTIONS
- PARLIAMENTARIANS
- MEDIA
- PRIVATE SECTOR
- NGOS
- GRASSROOTS (CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS)
- ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS
- TRADE UNIONS
- TRAINING INSTITUTIONS
- DONOR AGENCIES

23. It was agreed at the meeting that Agenda Item 6 the Action Plan for the Bureau would be discussed seperately during the week of Monday 23 November 1998. The programme for Designing the National Gender Action Plan will be completed by the end of the week.

**Gender Bureau**  
**18 November 1998**

**Notes of Meeting held on 20 November 1998 in the  
Conference of the Ministry with Gender focal points.**

Present: Mrs E. Hanoomanjee - (Chairperson) until the arrival of  
Mrs N. Nababsing - (Mrs N. Nababsing)  
Mrs N. Nababsing - (Ag. Permanent Secretary)  
Dr H. Tadia - (ECA Regional Adviser)  
S. Canakiah - (Senior Organising Officer) & Ag  
Secretary National Women Council)

Gender Focal Points:

Name	Organisation	Tel No/Fax No
1. R. Hooloomann Acting Principal Youth Officer	Ministry of Youth and Sports	201-2840 Fax 2112986
2. S. Rathacharen Scientific Officer	Mins of Fisheries and Cooperatives	Tel 238-4829 Fax 238-4184
3. N. Poonye Assistant Secretary	Min/Civil Service Affairs & A.R	Tel 201-3634 Fax 2129528
4. C.R. Seewoorutum (Re. Mr Gukhool (AS)	M/Industry	210-7100
5.T. Choony (Mrs) AS	Min Pub Utilities	210 -0409
6. S. Mahedea (Miss) Executive Officer	M/Tourism	2113844
7. Mrs M. Mudaliar AS	Min of Agriculture, NR and FT	2122335
8. Mrs P. Neewoor Senior Personal Officer	Min of Land Transport, Shipping and Port Development	2012248
9. Miss M. Ramborun HEO	M/Rodrigues	208 8472

1. The Chairperson opened the meeting and apologised for the short notice the meeting was called. She explained that this Ministry would like to take opportunity of the visit of Dr H. Tadia to advise on the setting up of the Gender Bureau. She made the following remarks:

2. The Gender Bureau was launched in August 1998 and is still in the planning/formulation stage.

3. Despite progress made, women still face specific difficulties and at international level, it is a fact that there is feminisation of poverty. According to the 1995 Human Development Report, women are still being marginalised in certain fields/sectors: She gave examples where women are marginalised and need gender sensitive indicators.

(I) More and more women are getting into the labour Market but women by large are moving to the lowest paid jobs. The feminisation of the labour market automatically gives rise to low wage levels.

(ii) Although absolute Poverty in Mauritius does not reach the same level as in certain countries but certain sections are not enjoying the full benefits of Economic Development. Mauritian women are more poverty stricken than men.

(iii) Although Mauritian women are faring well in some sectors, women are still handicapped in some respects.

4. She then explained the role of the Gender Bureau, she emphasised that Gender Bureau is not an executing agency but will rather operate through the inputs of the focal points who will act as a catalyst of change at policy level.

5. Dr H. Tatria then presented the objectives of the meeting which are as follows:

- (i) To share the agreed role and objectives of the Gender Bureau
- (ii) To agree on the terms of reference and the process of collaboration between the focal points and the Gender Bureau

The issue of representation of the Gender focal points was further discussed in order to ensure consistency in the whole process of the Gender Bureau.

It was agreed to nominate by name preferably a Senior Technical Officer with an alternate.

7. Dr H. Tatria then brainstormed on the mechanisms that can be used between Gender Bureau and each Ministry. The role of the focal point is to indicate to the Gender Bureau the area needs/support from each Ministry. The focal point deals with a number of files and in the process can identify the gender issues and make recommendations to the PS of the respective Ministry. In case the recommendations are not taken care of, the issues

then need to be brought to the Gender Bureau. The focal points will be provided with training/skills/tools to identify the gender issues.

(b) Mrs Nababsing noted that right now many Ministries send bills/Reports to this Ministry for views and this process can be done through the focal points.

(c) Therefore the Gender Bureau and focal points should work together.

(d) Focal Points will have vertical linkages within their respective Ministries and horizontal links with the Gender Bureau.

8. Gender focal points can form sub committees to work on specific issues.

9. The focal points will meet in a Technical Committee and will develop the mechanisms for monitoring. The Gender Bureau will not address the mainstreaming issue but will rather be carried by the respective Ministries.

10. The Technical Committee will meet once monthly, last Thursday of the month at 2 p.m.

11. In large Ministries, it was suggested that the representation of Gender Focal Points may be two senior officers (1 Technical , 1 Administrative).

12. MIPAM should be informed to include a module as for training of Assistant Secretaries.

*Group I*

13. NEED FOR GENDER FOCAL POINT

- INDEED THERE IS A NEED FOR A GENDER FOCAL POINT IN OUR MINISTRY
- EXTENT TO WHICH APPLICABLE VARIES

EG - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC UTILITIES  
APPLIES IN REGARD TO HOW FAR WOMEN ARE GIVEN MANAGERIAL POSITION

- MINISTRY FOR CIVIL SERVICE AFFAIRS  
MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE RECRUITED IN TOP POSITIONS  
SITUATION WILL FURTHER IMPROVE AFTER "PHASING OUT" OF PREVIOUS INTAKES
- MINISTRY OF RODRIGUES/MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY  
VERY APPROPRIATE WITH REGARD TO
  - SMALL & MEDIUM INDUSTRIES/ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT
  - HANDICRAFT PROMOTION
  - DEVELOPMENT OF FISHING/AGRO INDUSTRIES

14. WHAT GENDER FOCAL POINT SHOULD DO TO TAKE GENDER EQUALITY FORWARD

MORE OBJECTIVE SELECTION EXERCISES

ENSURE THAT WOMEN GET ACCESS MORE EASILY TO:-

- ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
- FINANCE/SEED CAPITAL

ORGANISE SENSITISATIONAL CAMPAIGNS ON VARIOUS ISSUES PERTAINING TO DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

15. WHAT GENDER FOCAL POINTS CAN DO

GENDER FOCAL POINTS WILL ENSURE THAT

- NEW POLICIES TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SPECIFICITIES/REQUIREMENTS OF WOMEN
- REGULAR LIAISON IS MAINTAINED WITH GENDER BUREAU AS REGARDS POLICIES WHICH CUT ACROSS DIFFERENT SECTORS

**Group II**  
**Report**

16. There is need for a focal point in the different Ministries.
  1. to influence management to be more sensitive.
  2. Policies to address specific needs of working mothers  
breastfeeding time - flexitime - to consider favourable requests for transfers  
for posting near to residence.
  3. There are specific areas where we need to have more women -  
positive discrimination.

17. Should be aware of all policies/major decisions taken in the Ministry.

Should be aware of all publications/active plans of the Ministry

Should have regular meetings with the head of the Ministry regarding gender issues.

Should act as a link between the Ministry and the bureau  
Should be able to influence policy making.

There is need to have the same person attending meetings for follow up tec.

#### 18. Group I

##### Rapporteur's Note:

1. There is lack of consistency in the work of the Gender Bureau, the last meeting dates back to more than 3 months.
2. For each meeting of Gender focal points there are new faces and it creates difficulty as newcomers are not properly aware of their role.
3. Meetings are convened at too short notice.

#### 19. Group II

1. There is a need for Gender Bureau.
2. Specific issues have been pointed out e.g flexitime, breastfeeding time .. etc.

20. Mrs E. Hanoomanjee's concluding note:

The Gender Bureau will work in line with the objectives of the Government.

The key call of Mauritius is to line up with International competitions.

In the EPZ sector, 80% of the employees are women, working in very difficult conditions. Regarding compulsory overtime, are they being productively used?

The Issues are very complicated what can be done at factory level?  
Office level?

(b) 60,000 Civil Servants work in Port-Louis. What facilities are there for women who constitute 40% of the Civil Servants. Many women have children less than 5 yrs old. What are we doing for more worker friendly/productive approach.

While Trade Unions are fighting for increase in wages, instead they could look into say for e.g for Free Transport facilities to go to work and back.

We have to be productive and innovative. Mauritius is among few countries having a Gender Bureau, we are very fortunate to have a Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development with a separate budget. So we have to make use of the resources available to us.

**Gender Bureau**  
**20 November 1998**

**Notes of Meeting held with Gender Focal Points on Thursday 26 November 1998 in the Conference Room of the Ministry.**

Present:

Ms. S. Canakiah (Senior Organising Officer and Ag. Secretary, NWC(Chairperson)  
Dr. H. Tadria, ECA Regional Adviser, (Facilitator)

Gender Focal Points

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Tel/Fax no.</b>	<b>Grade of Officer</b>
1.	S. Alikum	PMO	201 1187 212 9393	HEO
2.	U. Ramdoo	MEDPRD	201 1599 212 4124	Economist
3.	R.T. Pawan	Min. of Labour & IR	212 9813 212 3070	Senior Labour Officer
4.	T.M. Puryag	Min. Social Security	212 9813 212 0326	Assistant Commissioner
5.	M. Soonarane	Ministry of Education	211 6017	Senior education Officer
6.	J. Sunkur	Ministry of Health	201 1895 208 7222	P. Demographer
7.	Mrs.I. Kandhai	Min. of Urban and Rural Devp.	210 2264	Principal Regional Devp. Officer
8.	Ms.S.Ramdoyal	Min. of Foreign Affairs	201 1631 201 2924	First Secretary
9.	Mrs. N. Tiroumalechetty	Ministry of Telecommunications & IT	210 3205	Assistant Secretary
10.	V. Luximon	Min. of Arts and Culture	211 6065	Executive Officer
11.	D. Dorza	Min. of Environment	212 4385	HEO
12.	M. Nathoo	Ministry of Finance	201 1259 201 1308	Assistant Secretary
13.	Dr. Amita Pathak NCD Unit	Ministry of Health	201 1731 212 3770	Community Physician

1. The Chairperson opened the meeting and explained that this Second meeting was convened as many focal points were not represented at the meeting held on 20 November 1998. She then informed that we are taking opportunity of the visit of Dr H. Tadria, ECA Adviser who is here to advise on the setting up of the Gender Bureau.

2. Dr H. Tatria then explained that:

(i) this meeting with focal points was convened because the Ministry would not like to define the terms of reference of the focal points in the absence of the latter, the participatory approach was found to be more appropriate.

(ii) the representation of the focal point is important in order to ensure consistency in the work.

3. Dr H. Tatria then presented:

(i) the objectives of the meeting which are as follows:

(a) To share the agreed role and objectives of the Gender Bureau

(b) To agree on the terms of reference and the process of collaboration between the focal points and the Gender Bureau

(ii) The task, structure, mission, goals, objectives, roles, programme areas, stakeholders of the Gender Bureau.

4. The members were divided into two groups and each group was asked to discuss the following:

(I) What is the need for a Gender Focal Point in your Ministry?

(ii) What is it that the Gender Focal Points can/should do to assist the Gender Bureau to take the agenda of gender equality forward?

## 5. Group I Report

### I. Need for a gender focal point

To ensure gender mainstreaming in all policies as there are still several problems/disparities , for example:

#### Education:

- access to subjects at schools (There is access for boys and girls but there are still some disparities as far as subjects chosen at schools).
- differential teaching approaches
- curriculum (stereotypes in textbooks)
- unbalanced representation of girls and boys in primary, secondary and tertiary
- harassment and abuse(girls are more prone to harassment).

### Health/Social/financial issues

- discriminatory social policies
- engendering the budget
- personal/physical development.

### **II. Role of gender focal point**

- given proper training/skills the gender focal point can act as a facilitator between the Gender Bureau and the ministry concerned
- They should inform the Ministry about policies that are gender-biased
- They can bring to the attention of the Gender Bureau the policies that are not gender sensitive
- They should establish a bank of disaggregated data

### **III. Role of the Gender Bureau is to:**

- follow-up action taken at the Gender Bureau
- give training to different levels, as needed
- ensure constant exchange of information
- 

### **6. Group II Report**

#### **I. Need for a Gender Focal Point in Ministry.**

- Labour Legislation( To sensitise the Ministry whether it is gender sensitive - the focal point will help the Minister in matters relating to gender issue e.g female worker's wage to be at par with male worker's wage).
- Information-Education-Communication(Ministry of Labour is involved with worker's and trade unionists' education on Rights, facilities available to women, development in legislation, opportunities for women to be trade unionists...etc. in order to build a society where women and men are treated equally).
- Ensure Gender Balanced Training Courses/Seminars local and abroad (focal points may help staff members to think in terms of removing gender biases in respective Ministries and to have a gender integrated approach from top to bottom).
- Ensure Gender Concept integrated at the levels (at all levels) of Ministry
- Decision-Making process to be Gender Sensitive( Gender issue to be taken care in all projects and to involve female staff in decision-making process).
- Policy Formulation (Gender issue to be included in policy formulation).

- Foreign Affairs (Gender Bureau should involve staff at Management level).
- Arts and Culture will report to the Ministry and will liaise with Gender Bureau

## II. Formal/Informal Talks with Colleagues

- To sensitise on functions, roles and objectives of the Gender Bureau
- Ensure that opportunities for Training/Promotion etc are Gender Balanced.
- 

6. The following points were raised by the members present:

(a) There is regular movement of staff at each Ministry and this is the reason why the representation at each Meeting is not consistent. It was therefore agreed to have, in preference, a technical staff at Senior Management Level nominated as gender focal point with an alternate.

(b) Focal points may sit for a maximum of two years.

(c) The GMS should include highest level officers (PS/Directors/Commissioners) hence there is a need for Minister/PS of the lead Ministry to have regular liaison ( say on a quarterly basis) with the PS/Directors/Commissioners of other Ministries in order to ensure that decisions and work of the Inter-Ministerial technical committee are given due consideration.

(d) Training of focal points is important to empower them with necessary tools/skills and methodologies on gender issues.

(e) The gender focal points can meet once monthly. It was agreed to keep last Thursday of the month. The meeting may be used for part-training also to contribute to the gender skills.

(f) Members agreed for a working lunch on Wednesday 23 December 1998 from 1200 to 1400 hrs.

**Gender Bureau**  
**26.11.98**

**Terms of Reference for Gender Focal Points:**

1. **Introduction**

a. Establishment of Gender Focal Points was identified as an important process in establishing a Gender Management system in Mauritius. The Gender Focal Point will be the main interministerial technical advisory and operational structure for gender mainstreaming in national and sector policies and programmes. The gender focal point together with the Gender Bureau will be referred to as "The Interministerial Technical Committee"

b. The terms of reference have been designed in a participatory process with Gender Focal Points who were respective Ministries. (See Reports of the Meetings for detailed reference).

2. **The Gender Focal Point:**

(a) One Gender focal point and one alternative will be established in all Ministries.

(b) The GFP and alternate will be from the Technical Cadre, and they will serve as G.F.P for at least 2 years.

3. **The objectives of establishing a gender focal point in every Ministry is to ensure that:**

(a) Management in different Ministries will be more gender sensitive and responsive in their decisions and procedures.

(b) A gender perspective is integrated in all policies of the Ministries, effectively.

(c) Ministries liaise with Gender Bureau at the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development to ensure that the Ministry is kept up to-date on new developments and needs of respective Ministry, regarding mainstreaming gender and achievement of gender equality.

4.. **The role of the gender focal point is to:**

- a. Act as a facilitator between the Gender Bureau and the Ministry concerned.
- b. Inform the respective Ministry of the existing gender biases in the Ministries policies, procedures and practices.
- c. Initiate action to redress the existing gender biases in the Ministry.
- d. Follow-up on decisions taken during the meetings of the Gender Bureau.
- e. Provide, on a regular basis, gender data and information to the Gender Bureau.
- f. Bring to the attention of the Gender Bureau the policies that are not gender sensitive.
- g. Ensure that the opportunities for training and promotion, in the respective Ministries, are gender balanced.

5. **Meetings:**

(a) The Gender Focal Points and Gender Bureau will meet as the Interministerial Technical Committee every last Thursday of the month. The Gender Bureau will summon and facilitate the meeting.

(b) If there is need, a meeting can be called any other time. Any gender focal point can initiate a meeting through the Gender.

(c) Seven days before the regular meeting takes place, the agenda should be circulated to all the gender focal points, by the Gender Bureau.

(d) Any member of the Technical Committee can propose items to be included on the agenda.

(e) Should it be necessary the technical committee can invite outsiders to provide technical guidance on a selected topic. This person does not become a regular member of the committee.

6. In order to ensure that the work and decisions of the "interministerial technical committee" are given due attention, there will be regular briefings, at high level management by the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development will be responsible for this briefing on a quarterly basis.

**Action Plan for the Gender Bureau (Reference)**  
**N.B The Gender Action Plan covers the Islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega**

Priority List of actions/ programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
1. Establish an effective GMS and STRUCTURE	To support the attainment of the objective of the Ministry as stated in the mission of the Ministry					
<b>Activities</b> a. To review and Refine the mission of the Ministry to make it relevant		Revised of Ministry statement ) ) ) ) )	1. Permanent Secretary 2. Gender-Bureau 3. Heads of Other Unit	National	Staff	Jan-Feb 1999
b. Building institutional framework structure i.e recruitment of staff of the Gender Bureau		A functioning Gender Bureau)	PS, PSC		Staff salaries Other Charges for the Gender Bureau e.g Advertisement, ..... etc.	Feb 1999
c. To establish the network of the Gender Bureau		Inter-ministerial Technical group formed	The PS's of different Ministries	The targetted group of different Ministries	Allowance for focal points and cost for holding meetings	1998 Dec/Jan 1999

Priority List of actions programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
2. Develop a National Gender and Development Action Plan	To have integrated plan for the achievement of the agreements made at Beijing for the advancement of women in Mauritius for ensuring gender equality	National Gender Action Plan	PS Focal Points Gender Bureau Consultants who were involved in the White Paper for Women and Development NWC Cabinet	Women and families	Funding of workshops, field visits, report preparation, and publication and dissemination	Setting of coordination and field teams Jan-Feb 1999
<b>Activities</b> a. Set up a Coordination team at the Ministry						
			Grassroot level Occupational levels, Public Sector Level			

Priority List of actions programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
b. Set up and train a team of focal points/field workers to collect data at different levels (grassroot, occupational .. etc for the preparation of the General Action Plan)						March - May 1999
c. Field visits for collection/ compilation of data through field workers						June 1999
d. Liaising with the different Ministries to obtain the point of view/feed back of different Ministries on Gender Mainstreaming						

Priority List of actions programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
e. Preparation of Report of the National Gender Action Plan						July 1999
f. Cabinet Approval and dissemination of Report						August 1999

Priority List of actions/ programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
<p>3. Identify Training needs of all key partners, design and implement appropriate Training Programmes</p>	<p>To develop national and institutional capacity (skills for analysing, assessing, designing gender-responsive programmes) for Gender Mainstreaming</p>	<p>PS(24) Focal points(24) NWC (5) Regional Committees) Women Grassroot level (850) Women Associations) Farmers Fisherwomen EPZ workers Public Officers (Police women, teachers etc NGO's -Ministry's staff (5)</p>	<p>MIPAM University of Mauritius MCA Ministry Gender Bureau</p>	<p>Ministries, grassroot organisation Agricultural Workers Public institutions EPZ workers staff of the Ministry</p>	<p>Funding for Consultant/ Training needs identification exercise</p>	<p>Feb-April 1999</p>
<p><b>Activities</b> a. Training need assessment at different levels (Review of existing report on training needs)</p>		<p>Report on Gender Training needs.</p>	<p>Gender Bureau/ Consultant</p>	<p>Ministries</p>	<p>Funding for Consultant/ Training needs identification exercise</p>	<p>Feb-April 1999</p>

Priority List of actions/ programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
b. Establishing a Training Team		Gender Training Team	Gender Bureau University MIPAM	Ministries officer levels		Feb/March 1999
c. Designing the training programme according to the assessment		One Training Manual		Different targets of Trainees	Training Fund	May/June 1999
d. Training at the different levels						July 1999 - July 2000



Priority List of actions/ programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
c. Assess gender impact of national Budgets		A Report on gender sensitivity of the Budget	Ministry of Finance Ministries Gender Bureau			August 1999 - Feb 2000
d. Assess the gender impact of social security programmes			Social Security Officers			Nov 1999- February 2001
e. Study the gender gaps in employment and promotion of opportunities for women in EPZ	Closing gender information gaps	A Report		Consultant GB ILO/Min of Labour MRC GB MEF MEPZA Trade Unions	Budgeting officers (Min of Finance)	Oct. 1999- Dec. 2000
f. Study the gender gaps in Educational attainment				M.O.E MRC GB		Jan 2000- August 2001

\* The research cycle will be approximately 18 months, but data analysis and dissemination may be carried out at regular intervals during the research cycle.

Priority List of actions/ programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
5. Establishing a computerised data system within the Ministry to facilitate and inform policy Decision-making	To develop comprehensive data base. To develop assessment capacity (i) to establish a high level computerised documentation centre (Internet facilities .etc (ii) to establish linkages with other Regional Centres		PS An Adviser Documentation and research High Commissions/ officer Doner Agencies IEC Unit	The Ministries NGOs	Funding to purchase computers, books and space Additional Documentation staff Librarians Fund	Mid March 1999 ongoing

Priority List of actions/ programme	Objective	Output	Actors	Beneficiaries	Resources	Time Frame
6. Monitoring and Evaluation <u>Activities</u> a. Designing and monitoring tools. b. Monitoring the progress made in establishing the Gender Bureau. c. Progress made by the Gender Bureau in implementing its plan of action.. d. Monitoring of International commitments to achieving Gender equality (e.g CEDAW, Beijing, SADC)	To facilitate the monitoring progress made in achieving gender equality and the plan of action at all levels.	a. Regular Monitoring Reports/Guidelines/Tools b. Redesigned more gender focused programmes	Gender Bureau ECA	Ministries Men and Women in general	Staff time Consultant ECA Regional Adviser	May 1999  Half yearly starting in May/June 1999  Once a year, starting May/June 1999.

**Discussion on the process for Developing the  
National Gender Action Plan**

**Meeting held on Saturday 21 November 1998**

Venue: Caudan Waterfront  
Present: Mrs N. Nababsing, Ag. Permanent Secretary  
Dr Mrs H. Tadia , ECA Regional Adviser  
Mrs E. Hanoomanjee, Principal Economist, Gender Bureau  
Miss S. Canakiah, Senior Organising Officer & Ag. Secretary  
National Women's Council

**The following points were agreed on at the meeting:**

1. The mission and objectives of the Gender Bureau were reviewed and the structure as well as work programme defined, therefore There is a need for updating the Brochure which was published on the Launching Day of the Gender Bureau.
2. The representation of the gender focal points at monthly meetings are important and a seating allowance may be considered.
3. The gender focal points and the Gender Bureau may be named the Inter-Ministerial Technical Group or committee.
4. The Gender Bureau should for the first two years concentrate on gender mainstreaming public sectors.
5. As far as updating the Beijing Platform of Action, the Gender Bureau should use participatory group discussions; Priority areas can then be selected and under each area, a Plan of specific programmes/activities should be developed.

**The following process and steps were agreed on:**

- (a) Establishment of a coordinating Committee at the Ministry of Women, Family Welfare and Child Development. This could be composed of the Permanent Secretary, the Gender Bureau staff and 2-3 Consultants outside the Ministry.
- (b) Formation and training of the group to carry out the exercise at the grassroots: This group should include gender focal points.
- (c) Field visits for prioritization of key issues to be incorporated in the National Action Plan.
- (d) The Coordination Committee will finalise the action plan.
- (e) The action plan will be presented to the Cabinet. Wide dissemination should follow immediately after Cabinet approval.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE ADVISORY SERVICES

1. Help to identify training and research needs for gender mainstreaming;
2. Advise on the networking of the Gender Bureau with grassroots organisation;
3. Advise on the development of indicators for gender mainstreaming adapted to the Mauritius culture;
4. Help in the preparatory work for the formulation of national plan of action for gender.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE MEETING

In a preparatory meeting with the Acting PS and Gender Bureau staff, it was agreed that the Ministry and Gender Bureau staff should first define and agree as to what the gender Bureau should do. There are already many background documents which can be used to define the bureau's mission and goal, the objectives, the program content as well as the work plan, and the key partners and stakeholders. The first participatory meeting, of the key actors is to define all these. The documents which should guide the discussion are:

- The launching brochure
- Consultant's report, "The Bureau for gender equality, Establishing a gender management system.
- The Commonwealth document on "Policy options for integrating Gender into National Budgetary policies and procedures.
- The consultants report on "Brainstorming session with Gender focal points.
- White paper on women in Development