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**Sensitisation Workshops for Members of the Government and of  
Parliament**

**A Gender Approach to Development**

**Niamey 11-13 April 2001**

**Mission Report**

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## **1. Terms of Reference, Organisation of the Mission and Calendar of Activities**

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The terms of reference of the mission were to

1. Coordinate the organisation of a gender sensitisation workshop for members of the government and parliament in Niger
2. Assist in the preparation of guidelines for a national training programme for senior public officers of Niger.
3. Finalise the report of the workshop and the guidelines for the national training programme.

### **Organisation and preparation for the Mission.**

The team members of the mission were Ms Josephine Ouedraogo, Director of the African Centre for Women, Ms Souad Abdennebi, Regional Adviser and Nalini Burn consultant and based in London.

The substantive coordination of the mission, the responsibility of Nalini Burn, based in London, was done by electronic communication. It was initiated through a briefing note sent by Ms Ouedraogo following discussions with Ms Abdennebi and a proposal based on the background preparation of Ms Burn.

On arrival in Niamey, there were working sessions

- between the team members and
- briefing sessions with the Director of SRDC , Dr Jegan Senghor and Ms Dorothy Iwugi, gender focal point and with
- Ms Ladoua , Director of the Women's Unit, Ministry of Social Development, of Population, of the Advancement of Women and Child Protection [Min SDPWC]

to finalise the preparation of the workshop .

SRDC –Niamey provided substantive support through Ms Iwugi as well as Mr Moussoulimou Karimou, interpreter, who was rapporteur for the workshop sessions and also administrative and logistic facilities

### Calendar of Activities

2-9 April		Documentation search on Niger Analysis of material Design of workshop content and approach Preparation of workshop materials
9-10 April		Arrival of team members, later than scheduled due to flight problems .  Briefing meetings
Wednesday April	11	Workshop Members of Government Meeting Min SDPWC
Thursday	12 April	Ad-hoc workshop Senior Public officers
Friday	13 April	Workshop Members of Parliament.  Ad-hoc meeting President of National Assembly. Working Session Min.SDPWC]
Saturday 14 April		Debriefing Session SRDC team Debriefing and courtesy meeting UN Resident Coordinator.  Debriefing Session Min SDPWC  Working session on Guidelines by team members
Sunday 15 April		Production of Technical Note  Departure of Ms Ouedraogo
Monday	16 April	Production of Technical Note  Departure of Ms Abdennebi Departure of Ms Burn
Tuesday April	16 – 21	Report writing and Production of Guidelines

## **2. Workshop Contents and methodology.**

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### **Context**

The information available prior to the workshop was that two one-day seminars for members of the government and of parliament were planned.

The substantive preparation was made without prior exposure to Niger by the consultant, but considerable familiarity with other West African countries at both policy, sectoral and micro, village level and in gender mainstreaming advocacy and capacity building activities.

This was certainly the first experience in organising workshops for gender sensitisation at policy levels for the entire Cabinet and for all Members of Parliament in one country for ECA, by ACW. It was a challenge and an opportunity that had to succeed.

### **Methodology for Content design and Workshop Process**

The methodology was driven by the following considerations

- The workshops are part of ECA's broad service areas of policy advocacy and policy analysis.
- ACW's mandate is to promote and build capacity for gender mainstreaming, and the mission outputs are expected to yield guidelines for capacity building in gender mainstreaming in Niger.
- Over the last three years, under the leadership of the ACW Director, ACW has been piloting a particular approach, to advocacy and capacity building based on the technical advice of the consultant, who has been developing it with a range of organisations and has used it on many occasions with a wide range of stakeholders, both at policy, management and technical levels.
- For this first pioneering workshop with all the policy makers in one country, it was important to test and validate the approach and to achieve consensus among policy makers and to mobilise them over an agenda for

capacity building for gender mainstreaming into policy and programmes in Niger.

### **The rationale for developing the ACW policy approach to gender mainstreaming**

The approach has evolved to get away from other advocacy approaches which are polemical and adversarial in stance and which do not facilitate a move beyond advocacy to actual gender mainstreaming practice in substantive policy and programme areas. Such a stance can result in negative attitudes and work against the motivation to acquire and use tools and knowledge.

In most African countries, there are policy, legislative and institutional responses to the Beijing Platforms for Action and other UN Conferences. The climate generated by such important initiatives in many countries is a highly politicised context of debate over gender equality and women's empowerment actions. This is important for bringing gender concerns in the public arena, but there is an emerging tendency to identify and label such mobilisation as those of particular interest and pressure groups and lobbies. The risk, especially when gender mainstreaming know-how is so weakly developed and little applied, is that effective gender mainstreaming initiatives are not taken as it is felt that much has already been done to satisfy women's agenda, even in symbolic terms. Too much visibility without much real delivery can be counterproductive.

### **Elements of the approach**

- Identify the mainstream development priorities of the target group, whether policy makers, advisers and experts - .
- use the development information available and generated through dialogue and
- communicate in the language (intellectual, technical, cultural) which is pertinent to the context ,
- facilitate a process of dialogue which brings the target group to
- focus on how a gender perspective provides key entry points to addressing a range of opportunities and constraints in their areas of concerns.

## **The content design.**

Based on the above elements the situation analysis was as follows

As one of the Least Developed Countries Niger must be

- Preparing for the forthcoming LLDC Conference in Brussels and have developed a Country paper.
- Preparing or have prepared a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.[PRSP]

As this will mobilise the attention of the entire government and go through parliament, the focus would be on the two events, the priority areas identified by Niger for the PRSP.

A documentation search on the IMF and World Bank websites, as well as the Niger site produced the relevant information for preparing the workshop contents [ *See Annex A on Workshop Materials in French*].

Niger had already produced a draft PRSP and a final one must be produced by end 2001 and gaps in the integration of gender had been highlighted as well as the process and mechanisms for finalising it.

The workshop used this as focus and used as entry point the major gap in the analysis of and policy options regarding poverty: the time and energy poverty of women and children especially in rural areas.

## **Workshop process: a open flexible space for interactive dialogue.**

The specific approach to sensitisation and capacity building also extends to facilitation.

This method is to set the scene [the PRSP]and engage participants to produce their own information, in the form of reflections, attitudes, perceptions, hard facts and based on this, and through dialogue, analyse the situation through gender analysis.

On the basis of the concrete setting generated by the participants during the event, what the concept of gender and what a gender approach is

developed. It is an inductive method, building on and validating participant's knowledge and giving them responsibility, as well as pace and control over the process of sensitisation [ see *Report of two Workshops, Annex B, in French*]

The Workshop materials merely sets the scene and asks questions. The facilitation skill is to have some target of what core results to achieve, in this case the awareness of gaps in the PRSP and how this is linked to an inadequate understanding of how gender is central to poverty analysis and policy options and use this to focus, clarify, structure and bring to some conclusions the dialogue

This requires considerable prior preparation of the relevant content [technical knowledge and gender analysis] and to use it to insert it in the dialogue in response to participants' feedback. It is in fact a process of negotiation.

It means that there is a need to be flexible at all times and to be able to monitor at the same time how to keep a balance between pursuing a line of thought or debate to clarify and the need to keep focus. The approach is quite unlike the training mode with its rigid planning of sequences and time allocation..



### 3.1 Workshops for Members of the Government

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#### Process.

The workshop was attended by almost the entire cabinet, with the Prime Minister as chairperson. It was at the very beginning announced that the ministers could only spare half an hour given their busy schedule.

had been organised very soon after the adoption of a law for a  
is and for nominations to posts, as well as the  
er to the President of the Republic.

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aterials as planned could not be used but that to  
ention of the cabinet would have to be captured

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ed was that the workshop was a forum for critical  
ient thinking and practice, particularly in revising  
a gender perspective. The facilitator invited the  
ectations and concerns for the workshop and this  
ess the climate regarding gender politics in Niger.

state of gender dynamics in Niger as highly

The familiar position about how the gender issue is a concern of mainly  
articulate, powerful, educated and urban women and apprehensions  
about the social problems that it might give rise to, emerged. There were  
many expectation that the workshop would generate a change of attitudes  
not least from policy makers, indicating that the sensitisation exercise was  
timely.

This feedback, reinforced the need to avoid engaging in polemics and debate  
straight away but to invite the ministers to shift the terrain on other issues and to  
a different frame of mind.

The facilitator immediately introduced the issue of the finalisation of the PSRP and of integrating gender concerns within it and to invite reflection on the analysis of poverty, though an intellectual exercise.

This was to introduce the concept of energy and time poverty through an intellectual exercise on what constitutes the dividing between productive and non-productive activities and how this is linked to the understanding of poverty, in particular rural poverty:

The discussion then moved on to the policy and institutional issues this raises such as

- the inadequacy of data collection and of policy formulation, monitoring and impact evaluation
- the lack of fit between the actual workings of the rural economy, the lives of rural women and men on the one hand and the information base on them as well as the policy measures regarding them on the other hand.
- Specifically, the particular policy areas to which discussion was steered were population policy and energy policy as they relate to the situation of rural poverty.

One of the standard prescriptions for longer term poverty reduction is to achieve a reduction in population growth, while energy and time poverty leads rural women particularly and men to rationally seek to have large families. The appropriateness of policy measures for addressing poverty is thus questioned.

- It is after having shown the relevance of a gender approach to the concrete life situations of women and men, that the concept of gender and the tools of gender analysis were presented. This was done by engaging with the apprehensions raised by the ministers as well as by inviting them to share their own experiences and knowledge.

## **Outcomes**

Indicators of the interest generated by the workshop:

1. The workshop lasted 2 ½ hours and remained lively and was actively chaired by the prime minister, who at times called on senior advisers to attend.

2. The conclusions were that energy policy and the priorities of PRSP would be revisited and that gender would be mainstreamed in the final PSRP.
3. The workshop process and format had clearly captured the interest of the ministers.
4. The Minister of Social Development, Population, Advancement of Women and Child Protection, Ms Foumakoye Nana Aïcha, then decided to convene senior public officers and advisers to a workshop (the day after), based on the same process and in anticipation of the follow-up for gender mainstreaming.
5. This workshop (held on thursday, 12 April 2001) was well attended even at short notice and a more detailed and technical approach of the gaps in data and policy analysis was made with the participants, using a question and answer format. It enabled the sensitisation of the officers who articulated their need for support to build capacity for mainstreaming across sectors.
6. On the basis of the first workshop, further work sessions on follow-up by Min. SDPWCP were organised to plan the follow-up.

## 3.2 Workshop for Members of Parliament

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### **Process.**

The sensitisation took place in the National Assembly as part of the information sessions which are organised regularly. The President of the National Assembly chaired the session. The session was quite different in terms of organisation and group dynamics. It was much larger and members were used to the presentation format followed by debate and statements of opinion. The President effectively chaired by invoking the fact that the session was an information session and the format could be quite different.

The proceedings were televised and taped.

The same theme was adhered to but the approach was different.

It started with an anecdote about how an American statistician was puzzled by the scrutiny of income and consumption data in Africa and came to the conclusion that Africans must live on thin air, as it was impossible to live on \$ 1 a day. The facilitator then invited the participants to respond. Again this set the scene and provided valuable contextual information as well as feedback on participants' approaches to development. It is from this that the gaps in knowledge and data collection relevant for policy formulation, implementation and evaluation was built. The substantive contributions of the President, a distinguished statistician, were very valuable in the intellectual and technical validation of the analysis and for adding moral authority to the exercise.

After having produced as a group the conclusion that the existing system is not adequate for addressing the poverty of rural women in particular and men, the question of what is gender came up from the participants. Again, it is only then and building on the concrete knowledge of the context generated by the participants that the key elements of the concept of gender and the tools of gender analysis presented.

The session generated a great deal of lively participation and was brought to an end because of the time constraints before Friday prayers.

### **Outcomes.**

1. The proceedings were widely disseminated on television.
2. The emphasis on data collection gaps generated the information that the Population and Housing Census Questionnaire was being prepared. At the suggestion of the Minister of Social Development, Population, the Advancement of Women and Child Protection, the Director of the African Centre for Women and the consultant met with

the President of the National Assembly. The object of the meeting was to discuss Parliament's possible role in ensuring that the opportunity is not missed to make whatever amendment to the Census questionnaire possible to ensure a more accurate representation of women and children's unpaid work. The President agreed to work to that effect.

3. A copy of the Census questionnaire was then obtained and analysed by the consultant.
4. On the basis of this, a meeting was arranged with the Director of Statistics to examine the feasibility of amending the questionnaire at this stage. The answer was that it was already too late. The consultant agreed to write a Technical Note [ *Annex C* ] detailing options of what needs and could be done at this stage. The importance of the Census is that it would generate poverty relevant information and would be the main data base on which to monitor the implementation of the PRSP.
5. At a meeting with UNFPA, who are assisting the government of Niger with the Census, the main issues concerning the integration of poverty-focused and sex-disaggregated data from the Census were covered and it was agreed that the consultant would forward urgently the Technical Note for follow-up by UNFPA, with a copy to SRDC Niamey.

#### 4.1 Recommendations for ECA

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1. The workshop approach in both content and process needs to be adopted for ACW's policy advocacy. Piloted for a while now, it has been validated by the successful outcomes of the Niamey workshop
2. The entry point chosen, gender mainstreaming within the PRSP, on the basis of identifying gaps in the approach to poverty is particularly pertinent given ACW's core activities.
3. PRSP content and methodology is now standard for a LLDCs, 49 of which is in Sub-Saharan Africa. ACW's focus on policy advocacy for gender mainstreaming and for building capacity making macro-meso-micro linkages for addressing energy and time poverty is widely relevant and it should invest in developing and delivering technical assistance for such core policy areas.
4. To be able to do this it needs to build its own internal capacity as well as that of the SRDCs with which it would work in partnership. The results of Niamey show that this partnership is feasible and necessary.
5. The capacity needs to be built on two fronts: technical skills in gender analysis and knowledge of the PRSP priority areas and advocacy skills.
6. The priority areas for ACW to provide intellectual and policy leadership is in integrating gender-aware energy and time poverty data into national accounts and advocating for its use in policy processes.
7. This assessment of the Niamey experience validates and reinforces the recommendations of the Capacity Building for Gender Mainstreaming Mission Reports to have core generic modules for gender analysis, a data module as well as a process module. The recommendations of the missions could not be implemented through lack of resources and support for the programme. It is vital that ACW devotes resources to the production and use of these modules, which should include the Niamey experience as a learning scenario.
8. Much of the success of the Niamey mission is not only due to the approach but also to the demonstrated political will and the receptivity of the government. Such high-level interest offers a real opportunity for developing a programme to make micro-meso-macro linkages over the area of energy and time poverty and promoting policy and sectoral coordination. It would be more effective to concentrate on Niger as a pilot country from which to learn and draw lessons for replication.
9. For future policy advocacy, the team modality is the best option, because it is too demanding and not effective for one person to facilitate, but on condition that there is team building and maintenance on the substantive and process levels and the rapport between the facilitators is good.

10. Such exercises can be highly risky under poor facilitation and it would be more prudent to adopt a mentoring and /or.coaching strategy following the initial capacity building workshops on the basis of the core modules.
11. ACW in conjunction with SRDC Niamey could build on the initiatives taken with UNFPA to develop partnerships and mobilise resources for the supporting the development and implementation of the gender mainstreaming capacity building programme

## **4.2 Recommendations for Niger: Guidelines for A National Capacity Building Programme for Gender Mainstreaming.**

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The sensitisation workshops have pointed to the main elements of the capacity building programme. During working sessions, the Ministry indicated that a comprehensive programme would have to be developed and that as a priority a national gender policy would need to be elaborated.

### **Programme Methodology**

As initiated in the sensitisation exercises, the programme should be results-oriented and adopt and on the job learning an learning by doing approach. This applies to the elaboration of a gender policy.

### **Gender Policy**

It would be ideal to have some capacity building before launching on the elaboration of a gender policy, as this would lead to a more focussed and informed and gender -responsive policy. However, a policy should not be seen as cast in stone and rigid.

An **iterative** approach with a built-in review mechanism needs to be adopted.

Gender Mainstreaming is a strategy for achieving gender equality, in terms of equality of opportunity and equity in terms of outcomes.

An overarching framework could be a rights-based approach to development, in which the achievement of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural are the goal. More specifically CEDAW among the human rights instruments, and the Beijing POA would provide the underpinning for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Within that overarching framework poverty reduction as well as the elimination of inequalities is the overriding priority.

### **Process issues**

- Given the nature of the views, perceptions and attitudes expressed during the sensitisation workshop, it would be advisable to facilitate a process of dialogue and consensus building on what should be a gender policy, what should be the outcomes, the goals of the policy.
- This dialogue should build on the momentum of the sensitisation workshop, which had wide coverage, because of its innovative and participatory approach.

### **PRSP Focus**

The key focus would be the formulation, then the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP both in terms of process and content.

### **Thematic areas**

The key gender mainstreaming areas would be the priority areas of intervention of the PRSP,

- Education
- Health
- Rural development
- Rural infrastructure, roads but and also include
- Gender-aware macroeconomic policy
- decentralised energy policy for rural areas
- As well as addressing the gaps in data, indicators and knowledge for gender-aware poverty reduction highlighted in the sensitisation workshops

Within the PRSP process, there is a need not only to mainstream gender but to formulate a gender action plan.

The gender action plan linked to the PRSP would be part of the National Gender policy but the latter and the issues of gender equality and equity should not be subsumed under the poverty reduction agenda. These objectives are an end in themselves as well as a means for poverty reduction and development.

### **Target Groups**

If the focus of the capacity building programme is the PRSP and its implementation, then that would indicate who should be the targets of the programme at all levels.

The programme should be addressed to the various institutional mechanisms at macro-meso and micro levels set up under the process,

- The Steering Groups, Comité Directeur
- The Intersectoral Technical Committee
- Sectoral Committees
- Local decentralised committees



- Community Initiatives as well as
- Members of Parliament who have the responsibility to scrutinise and endorse policy and programme options.

### Capacity Building for Integrating gender in national data collection systems.

The programme needs to be on the job and be initiated and focussed on the collection, analysis and dissemination of Census data, as well any other data collection instruments scheduled under the PRSP and targeted to a nexus of the key producers and users of the statistics.

It needs to be geared to the identification, production, interpretation and use of indicators for gender-aware poverty monitoring and for gender equality results under the national gender policy.

### Capacity Building for the gender mainstreaming focal points at Min SDPWCP.

As the ministry plays a lead focal point role for mainstreaming gender and has a mandate to promote the advancement of women, its capacity should be considerably strengthened through additional human resources with gender expertise. This could take the shape of a short term attachment of gender specialist expertise to the ministry.

The ministry should be strengthened in technical substantive, advocacy and process skills to enable public officers to perform the coordination function as gender focal point.

It would need on behalf of the public sector, to be able to draw on a roster of national gender expertise – from universities, research agencies, observatories, NGOs, private consultancies, to assist in the gender mainstreaming process. The members of this roster would have to be identified and its capacity built using various modalities such as training of trainer's workshops, coaching, attachment and mentoring with a gender specialist

### Next steps.

If these guidelines are accepted, a needs assessment exercise to develop the programme in greater detail would have to be undertaken, following which a comprehensive capacity building programme would be developed.

The activities would need to be phased with the timetable for the finalisation of the PRSP for the first round of capacity building, which will then yield the second phase capacity building for the implementation of a gender-responsive PDRP.