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*Meeting of the Committee on Women and Development  
09-12 October, 2002  
Johannesburg, South Africa*

***Gender –Related Activities  
Implemented in 2001-2002  
by ECA/SRDC-SA***

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**ECA/SRDC-SA**

## **I Introduction**

The over arching goal of the programme is to mainstream gender into national and sub-regional policies, programmes and processes with a view to advancing gender equality and gender equity as a process of transforming development planning and programming to address the needs and aspirations of both women and men. In order to fulfill this goal two issues are taken into account: (i) need to have a programme focus; and; (ii) applying a result based methodology.

### **A. Focus of the Gender programme of the UN-ECA Sub-Regional Development Centre for Southern Africa (SRDC/SA)**

The strategy for the SRDC/SA gender programme is to provide technical support to Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and member States in mainstreaming gender into their development programmes. In this case, this entails providing such support to SADC, COMESA and the respective member States that fall under these regional economic groupings in Southern Africa.

The framework of the gender programmes supported by the SRDC/SA is the SADC Gender and Development Declaration, which is anchored on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and impinges on the African Plan of Action to accelerate the implementation of the Platforms for Action.

### **B. Strategic Methodology**

The SRDC/SA forges strategic linkages, and structured partnerships and networks with related stakeholders in the implementation of gender programmes in Southern Africa. Some of the major partners include SADC Secretariat and its sector Co-ordinating Units, UNIFEM Southern Africa Regional Office, Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre and the Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness project, (SARDC/WIDSAA), national and regional NGOs and international development partners. SRDC/SA gender programme is also implemented in close collaboration with the ECA African Centre for Gender Development (ACGD) at the headquarters and with other divisions on a case-by-case basis.

## **II. Gender mainstreaming Activities Implemented in 2001-2002**

As mentioned in the introduction, gender mainstreaming constitutes the cardinal activity in the SRDC/SA programme. To that end, during the period under review, the process of gender mainstreaming is in progress in three major activities: (a) mainstreaming gender into HIV/AIDS response in Southern Africa; (b) gender and women land rights; (c) providing advisory service to Namibia in gender mainstreaming into their national development policies and programmes.

**A. Engendering the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and Programme 2000-2004**

Southern Africa, women and children in particular, is the most affected sub-region by the prevalence, impact and effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. The policy framework for responding to the pandemic is the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework adopted by the SADC Council of Ministers in April 2000. Its overarching goal is *"decreasing the number of HIV/AIDS infected and affected individuals in the SADC region so that HIV/AIDS is no longer a threat to public health and to the socio-economic development of Member States"*.

On its part, in the framework of providing technical support to Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in this case SADC, the ECA Sub-Regional Development Centre for Southern Africa (ECA-SRDC/SA) in November 2000 in Lusaka, Zambia organized an Ad-Hoc Group Meeting on Gender networking to control HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa with particular focus on women and children. The experts reviewed the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and Programme 2000-2004 and found to it **not gender responsive**, thus its implementation would ignore the imperative necessity to effectively involve women and take into Hoc Expert account the unique needs of women and the girl child in responses to the pandemic.

To that end, the Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting strongly recommended that engendering the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework is a matter of utmost necessity and urgency. In collaboration with the SADC related sectors/units; and with assistance from UNIFEM and the Commonwealth Secretariat, the SRDC/SA in May 2002 organized in Lusaka, Zambia, a Workshop on Mainstreaming Gender and Human Rights into the Response to HIV/AIDS among Migrants in the SADC Mining, Employment and Labour Sectors. The working document for the workshop was prepared by a Team of consultants who further reviewed the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework, highlighted gender and human rights gaps and gave recommendations on addressing these gaps in the Framework in general and in the two sectors under review in particular.

ECA African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) facilitated the workshop. It was attended by a skill mix of participants comprising representatives from government and private sector in the SADC Mining Sector, the SADC Employment and Labour Sector, the SADC Health Sector Co-ordinating Unit and National Gender machineries from Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A representative from People Living with AIDS (PLWA) also attended.

Collaborating partners from the following organizations attended: the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNIFEM Southern Africa, national UNDP offices in Swaziland and Zambia, the Mineral and Energy Policy Centre, ILO Focal Point for Gender and HIV/AIDS in Africa, the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, International Organization for Migration, Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), Pan African Institute for Development in Eastern and Southern Africa (PAID-ESA) and other institutions of higher learning and the media.

Building on the report prepared by the consultants, the participants further reviewed the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework and drew up and adopted a concrete action plan for engendering the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework. A copy of the report of the workshop, including the Consultants' report and the SADC HIV/AIDS Strategic Framework, is available on request.

## **B. Promoting Women's Access to, Ownership and Control of Land in Southern Africa**

The issue of women's land rights has been amply discussed, documented and several recommendations have been put forward for implementation. The remaining gap is mainly to build on related work done, work in progress and come up with concrete strategies to collectively operationalize the actionable recommendations. The following brief highlight gives rationale to why action now!

While women play an important role in agricultural production, the food sub-sector in particular, their role as producers and agents of change in the much needed rural transformation has been severely curtailed by their meager share in the means of production, such as land, capital, credit and technology, not to mention their marginalization in sharing the benefits resulting from their production inputs and efforts.

Additional emphasis is the fact that the majority of people in Africa live in rural areas where agrarian economy constitutes the main source of livelihood. It is also evident that in these economies, arable land is automatically the most valuable form of property. Land is a strong linkage to productive visible wealth and a livelihood-sustaining asset. For many, land provides a sense of identity and rooted-ness within the village; and people's minds perceive land to have a durability and permanence, which no other asset possesses in rural areas.<sup>1</sup>

In this context, women play a crucial role in agriculture as producers and providers of food. They work on land more than any other category in society, providing 80 to 90 percent of the labour in subsistence production and over 70 percent in cash crop production. In this scenario, therefore, discrimination related to women's land ownership must be addressed because it has great bearing on food security, national economies, human rights and family ties resulting from gross gender imbalances.

The above situation represents just a few cases in the sub-region. It will however be noted that none of the ongoing policies are favourable to women's land rights. Review of the policies and practices in most countries of the sub-region would reveal similar inadequacies with varying degrees, magnitude and gravity of problems women face in the land rights issue. **The major prohibitive factor in women's land rights is**

**land tenure systems:** (i) based on traditional practices unfavourable to women; (ii) perpetuation of the colonial land distribution practices;(iii) resistance to, and/or slow pace of reforming constitutions and legal frameworks to accommodate women's land rights.

At the national level and sub-regional levels, the Women and Land Lobby Group in Zimbabwe and in Southern Africa, respectively, have carried out several lobbying and advocacy activities in particular, on women and land rights. The Eastern African sub-region also carried out in 2001 a research study on Women Access to and Ownership of Land in Eastern Africa.

With a view to building on existing initiatives and work in progress in the sub-region and sharing of best practices from outside the region, on 15-16 April 2002, in Harare, Zimbabwe, the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre in Harare and the Zimbabwe Women and Land Lobby Group co-organized a Round Table Meeting on Women Access to and Ownership of Land in Southern Africa in which ECA/SRDC/SA participated and made inputs. The research conducted in Eastern Africa constituted one of the inputs for the Round Table meeting.

Sharing related experiences in the Round Table meeting revealed major similarities in Eastern and Southern Africa with regard to women's land rights, The meeting therefore recommended that, related follow-up actions should be implemented jointly with Eastern and Southern Africa. Essentially this would entail, Eastern and Southern Africa would:

1. Build Platforms for Action on Women's Land Rights at National and Sub-Regional levels;
2. Operationalize proposed related implementable actions at National and Sub-Regional levels;
3. Conduct a Study on strategies for Gender and Land Tenure Systems in Eastern and Southern Africa.

In order to collectively implement the above the major action proposed in the report is to **establish a Platform for Action on Women Land Rights in Eastern and Southern Africa at two levels: (i) The National Task Force on Women Land Rights; and, (ii) The Sub-Regional Task Force on Women Land Rights.** This would be at the SADC regional level.

The report will be submitted to the Ninth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for Southern Africa planned for March 2003 for possible support to the implementation of the follow-up actions.

### **C. Advisory Services to member States**

Following a request from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Children Welfare (MWACW) of the government of the Republic of Namibia for ECA to assist them in gender mainstreaming into the national policies and programmes, a mission composed of ECA-ACGD Regional Advisor and the Gender Focal Point, Sub-Regional Development Centre for Southern Africa, was undertaken in November 2001. This first mission undertook an institutional analysis on gender mainstreaming capacity of the key sectors in Namibia.

The ECA team consolidated the findings into a report sent to the Namibia authorities in March 2002. The same team undertook a follow up mission to Namibia in April 2002 and presented and discussed the report with a working group convened by the Ministry and adopted the report. Additionally, the workshop (a) selected and ranked the most critical priority areas on issues to be addressed in the short, medium and long-term; (b) agreed on the process of drawing up the gender mainstreaming programme including capacity building to implement the selected critical areas of priority.

The participants also proposed a Gender Management System for Namibia National Gender Mainstreaming Programme. The team conducted its reporting process carrying on board the Namibia key gender players, their development partners, and Regional Gender Machineries from outside Windhoek. This instilled a sense of ownership and internalization of: (i) the report; (ii) the prioritization process of areas of concern; (iii) proposals for a Gender Management System; and, (iv) anxiety to participate in drawing up a capacity building programme for gender mainstreaming in Namibia.

The team finalized the report on the basis of which the National Gender Programme will be drawn up with the Namibia authorities. This entailed consolidating the findings and the proposed actions into a report sent to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare.

In September 2002 the ECA team will undertake a two-week mission to work with the Namibia counterparts to develop a gender-mainstreaming programme. At the time of finalizing this paper, the mission had not yet taken place therefore the action taken in drawing up the National Gender programme could not be included.

### **III. Collaboration in Other Gender Related Activities**

In addition to the above activities SRDC/SA has provided direct support to IGOs, RECs NGOs and international organizations in gender related activities. This collaboration has contributed to (i) enhancing ECA's outreach; (ii) widening operational networks and partnerships; and, (iii) sharing of best practices. A few examples during the period under review would include:

- Participation and presenting a paper in a Feasibility/Design Workshop for a Proposed International Institute on Gender and HIV/AIDS, Halifax Canada January 2002;

- Extracted and adapted from UNECA-ACGD Monitoring and Evaluation Tool and **popularized** it through the Meeting of SADC Gender Ministers (Swakopmund, Namibia May 2002) and the Round Table on Co-ordinating Gender Support in the Sub-Region, Hararae, Zimbabwe June 2002)
- Participation and presenting a paper on "Sharing Lessons from Southern Africa" to the Technical Meeting on Policy Development on Gender Mainstreaming to ECOWAS, Abuja, Nigeria, March 2002;
- Participating and highlighting the role of ECA in a Round Table Meeting on Co-ordinating Support to Gender Activities in the Sub-Region, Harare, Zimbabwe, June 2002.