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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

**ABUJA DECLARATION ON
PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT:
THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AFRICA
IN THE 1990s**

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
A. PREFACE	1
B. EXTRACTS FROM THE OPENING SPEECHES	3
C. THE ABUJA DECLARATION ON PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AFRICA IN THE 1990s	9
ANNEXES	
1. RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE	31
2. LIST OF CONFERENCE PAPERS	33
3. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	34

A. PREFACE

The Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in the 1990s is the outcome of the fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development and on the Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa, held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, from 6 to 10 November 1989. The Conference was jointly sponsored by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development, which is a subsidiary organ of the Commission.

The objectives of the Conference were:

- (a) To provide a forum for a thorough review and assessment of the extent of implementation of the Arusha Strategies by governments, United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations, etc.;
- (b) To consider emerging socio-economic problems that are affecting the lives of African women; and
- (c) To reassess the priorities stated in the Arusha Strategies and make appropriate recommendations for the future.

The Conference, considered to be one of the largest African women's conferences to be held on the continent, was attended by over 41 African Governments, observers from United Nations and international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The participants ranged from rural women to professional cadres to wives of Heads of State. The total number of participants was 1,187.

The Abuja Declaration was adopted by consensus. It is distinguishable from similar recommendations of the past in that the objectives aimed at are clearly defined targets to be achieved in various sectors by the year 2000. The roles to be played by national, regional and international organizations in achieving these objectives and targets are spelt out.

B. EXTRACTS FROM THE OPENING SPEECHES

**General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida,
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

There are compelling reasons why African women must be integrated in the development process. Let us quickly and briefly examine some of the important characteristics of this target group called women. First is their numerical strength. In most African countries, women constitute a greater percentage of the population. Secondly, they are the principal primary socialization agents in the society. Consequently, they are heavily involved in the transmission of societal values, culture, norms and beliefs from one generation to another. Thirdly, they are very industrious and enterprising. They are the "hewers of wood and fetchers of water"; they are the farm hands and astute traders. Fourthly, they are wonderful managers. They care for their children, husbands, relations and still have the time to do house chores and carry out their professional duties.

It is very clear that no national development will be meaningful and thorough if women are not fully involved. In this regard, one has to mention the aptness of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women which are equality, development and peace. The continent has all along under-utilized the potential of its women. The development of a nation should be carried out in partnership with the women and no one gender should be seen as either the senior or junior partner in the relationship.

I want you to arrive at a Declaration through what I would like to call the Abuja Scale. You are to weigh the Arusha Strategies and subject them to in-depth scrutiny. Put the strategies into a scale and see how they perform within the continuum ranging from very well implemented to very badly implemented.

**Suzanne Mubarak,
First Lady of the Arab Republic of Egypt**

Education is the foundation for the promotion and improvement of the status of women. It is the basic tool which equips women to fulfill their duties as wives, mothers and partners in development. Education mobilizes the untapped resourcefulness of women in order for them to contribute most effectively to their surrounding society. Schooling imparts knowledge, skills and brings about new positive attitudes towards the welfare of the society.

To solve the serious problems of today, we need to focus our attention on the future. There is an urgent need for vision, creativity and almost revolutionary ideas in order to have confidence in facing our futures. We must join hands and pool our

resources, all of us whether rich or poor, strong or weak. We have to live, all of us, in harmony and solidarity.

I have faith and confidence in the people of Africa, in the intelligence of mankind and, above all, in the wisdom and integrity of African women. I genuinely believe that the problems of our continent, be they social, economic or political, can be solved by Africans alone. Africa is blessed by its human resources, its natural resources and by the economic and social potential yet untapped. Let us, therefore, combine our efforts and stand united in spite of the problems confronting us.

**Ajaratou Lady Chilei Jawara,
First Lady of the Republic of the Gambia**

Women, fellow delegates, have undoubtedly taken an active part in shaping the course of history and more particularly so in developing our countries' economies and maintaining our social and cultural values. In their triple role of reproducers, producers and managers, the significant contributions that women (both urban and rural) have made to national development through their active participation in economic, social and political activities cannot be overemphasized.

As we reflect on the past and look forward to the future, it may be fitting, at this juncture, to remind ourselves and our respective Governments and decision-makers that women in development is a development strategy not a social issue or movement for women's emancipation. In this vein, recognition should be given to the functional role of women in development and it is crucial that women participate in the process in a manner that is consistent with their importance in the production process.

**Nana Agyeman Rawlings,
First Lady of the Republic of Ghana**

Indeed, if I may be allowed to say so, the issue is not "integrating women in development". It is rather how to achieve integrated development through women, or, to put it another way, "rooting development in women"!

There is often, unfortunately, a gap between policy statements and their implementation, which gap can be closed as we women ourselves also make our voices heard in connection with these policy discussions and the formulation of the way forward to achieve real development.

Women know that with fewer children, we could bring them up better, both physically, educationally and spiritually, to be better and more constructive citizens of our countries. But all too often, the choice is not ours to make with our partners.

Women know that human life is precious. It is therefore the duty of every woman and especially every African woman, to assert herself on the issue of family planning.

As Africans we need to realize that only through increased co-ordination in economic, cultural, financial, political and other areas can we really be effective in claiming a greater share from the international economic order. The issues of African unity, increased intra-African trade, higher levels of technical, scientific and cultural exchanges between Africans, these are all very crucial for our survival, not just idealistic intentions that we keep stating at gatherings like these.

**Maryam Babangida,
First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

While their contribution (women's) are well known and evident in many societies, very little is done to enhance the role of women in the development of our countries.

I would hope we will move away from coming up with more strategies but rather focus on programmes and projects that address the problems identified in the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. This will enable women to utilize their full potential.

In the meanwhile, let us forthwith never forget that a woman is the gentle partner of the complement of man. We wish to assure our African men that our quest for full integration in the African development process must not be construed as advocating a replacement of our men in the various fields. Both men and women should strive to contribute their best to the continent's progress and that women should continue to play their role as educators vis-a-vis the men.

**Adebayo Adedeji,
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
and Executive Secretary of ECA**

No one can deny the fact that African women have played a great role in our history as actors in economic, social, political and ideological processes. Women have exercised real power in government, have been great queens or otherwise great women. African women in pre-colonial Africa played a role in public life which was unknown and undreamt of by their Western counterparts. Throughout our history, our women have always enjoyed economic and political rights and have never been regarded as chattels as their counterparts in the West. And, during the struggle for political independence African women made vital contributions to independence movements in many of our countries.

The central question before this historic Conference is what should be the situation of women by the year 2000? In our view, there are two basic elements in the search for an answer to that question: (a) the condition, and (b) the position of women. By condition, I mean the material state in which women should find themselves, while by position, I refer to women's social and economic standing relative to men. There is no doubt that if these four key priority areas are vigorously implemented we will succeed in alleviating very significantly and substantially both the condition and the position of women.

The four areas are: Development of an adequate scientific and technological base; the informal sector, employment and population and health.

Salim Ahmed Salim,
Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity

We believe that African woman must be restored to the centre of our development. The Lagos Plan of Action and the Arusha Strategies do emphasize the imperative need to move the African woman from the periphery of our decision-making process to the mainstream of our socio-economic planning. We have to reverse past trends in which she has remained over the last thirty years of our independence as an oppressed spectator and more obviously a victim of our own development process.

The world cannot continue to be an exclusive domain of men. The women of the world have, through national legislations, to be given the requisite opportunity to extract themselves from the periphery of national development plans. The African woman is still sometimes denied basic rights and marginalized in social and economic planning. Most unfortunately, she is at a level where more efforts will have to be made to bring her to a proper level in our development process and thus the challenge of this Conference.

Above all, we must launch a co-ordinated attack on the social attitudes which have combined with our own thinking on economic development to produce a syndrome of ineffectual platitudes about women's role in our development process. The time has come when we must together, men and women, transcend the so-called niceties of the old order which has subjected women into the mainstream of underdogs in both national and international politics and which has socially established norms which work against the process of women's integration.

Margaret J. Anstee,
Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna

According to United Nations estimates, there will be nearly 650 million inhabitants in Africa in 1990; tomorrow, in the year 2000, the total population of

the continent is projected to reach over 870 million. However, UNESCO's most recent estimates show that, in 1984, there were only half a million women in third-level education. What does this mean? For example, although we are all familiar with the fact that African women feed the continent through back-breaking labour, only a handful are studying agricultural sciences: less than 2 per cent of the students in higher education are women in this field. Until this changes, we have to rely on the men to change the status of rural women! The situation is just as bad in natural sciences including engineering: 3.3 per cent of students in this field are women. Such figures speak for themselves and unless such discrepancies change radically, how will most women be in a position to contribute credibly and effectively to their advancement and that of the continent?

C. THE ABUJA DECLARATION ON PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AFRICA IN THE 1990s

I. INTRODUCTION

1. ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 365 (XIV) adopted on 27 March 1979 in Rabat, Morocco, stipulates that a regional conference on women and development of all member States should be convened periodically in order to review progress and make proposals in respect of the integration of women in development in general. The first, second and third regional conferences were held in Nouakchott, Mauritania in 1977, Lusaka, Zambia in 1979, and Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania in 1984 respectively.
2. The Regional Conference held in Arusha, which was also the African Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference (Nairobi, 1985) to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, adopted strategies entitled the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of African Women beyond the United Nations Decade for Women. On the occasion of the adoption of the Arusha Strategies, a resolution was adopted which called for the convening of a regional conference to review and appraise the implementation of the Arusha Strategies, not later than 1990.
3. The fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development on the Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa, held in Abuja, Nigeria from 6 to 10 November 1989, had as its primary objectives:
 - (a) To review and appraise what has been achieved by governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other organizations concerned with the integration of women in development (WID);
 - (b) To analyze the new challenges since the Arusha Strategies were adopted; and
 - (c) To make recommendations for the readjustment of the Strategies for the continued advancement of women.
4. The Conference was organized by ECA in collaboration with the host Government, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which had given its full support and commitment to the success of the Conference.

II. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARUSHA STRATEGIES

5. The general framework and basic obstacles described in the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of African Women beyond the United Nations Decade for Women are still as valid today as they were in 1984 when the Strategies were adopted by African Governments in the United Republic of Tanzania. The comprehensive strategies were based on a careful analysis of the obstacles encountered by African women in trying to realize the goals of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

6. Sustainable development can only be achieved with the full participation of women who constitute approximately 50 per cent of the population. And yet, their role in development has only gained serious attention in the last few years. National governments, international and non-governmental organizations, national, subregional and regional institutions have increasingly begun to emphasize the need to involve women in the design and implementation of development programmes so as to make them more active and effective participants in economic, social, political and cultural change.

7. In general, the present situation of women is characterized by lack of education and training, particularly at the higher level and in science and technology, lack of access to modern technology, excessive work burdens and lack of work-related skills, among others. In fact, several studies on women in development suggest that the condition of women has worsened: they are poorer, live in increasingly hazardous environments and have lost the supportive mechanisms of the past. This view has also been expressed in several of the papers presented during the Conference.

A. Areas of substantial progress

1. Education

8. There has been a substantial increase in the number of girls and women in the school and student population, and women are climbing higher up the diploma ladder. However, there are still very few women in those areas of activity to which access is, in most cases, restricted to precisely those candidates who hold academic qualifications. For example, it is still very difficult for women to gain a foothold in those professions which bestow recognition and influence, especially those which are highly rewarding financially.

9. Despite an increase in the proportion of female enrolment, this review shows that in many countries of the region, the number of female students decreases at the higher secondary level and hence at the university level because of their drop-out rate. There are certain social and cultural factors that negatively affect female participation at higher levels of the school system. These factors include the increasing rate of teenage pregnancies in secondary schools, marriage at an early age which continues to contribute significantly to the high female drop-out rate and the current economic crisis. It has been reported in some cases that males (sons) are still preferred over females (daughters) when purse strings are tight and there is a

choice to make between sending girls or boys to school, particularly beyond the first level.

2. Agriculture and food production

10. A growing body of research and information has established that women play a crucial role in African agriculture. They constitute the backbone of agricultural and food production in small farm areas and provide a substantial proportion of family labour resources in cash crop production. These facts are now well established.

11. The recognition that African women provide from 60 to 80 per cent of food in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa has encouraged many governments to embark on measures to increase the productivity of women in the agricultural field. Considerable resources have been made available by bilateral and multilateral donors for research, training, credit and technology acquisition programmes to assist rural women to meet the many demands of their condition.

12. Rural women have been mobilized through such programmes as the "Better life for rural dwellers programme" in Nigeria. These programmes are aimed at self-reliance in food production as well as improving the quality of life of rural women.

3. Law and legislation

13. At the international level, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180) has been signed by most Member States and ratified by two thirds of them. In Africa, 49 per cent of African States had ratified the Convention as of September 1987. In addition, several major conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have been widely accepted.

14. Despite the ratification of international conventions, discriminatory legislative provisions in the social, economic and political spheres still exist, including civil, penal and commercial codes and administrative regulations. Civil codes, in some instances, have not been adequately reviewed for repealing those laws and for determining, on the basis of equality, the legal capacity of women, particularly in terms of nationality of children, family law pertaining to marriage, inheritance, divorce and alimony. Other areas which need to be addressed include employment opportunities, access to education and vocational training, pension benefits, access to credit and insurance eligibility, access to land and taxation.

15. At the national level, a review of progress made since the adoption of the Arusha Strategies shows that there has been some progress, although perhaps at a slower pace, in revising national legislation. Many member States have enacted reforms to ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate in economic and social life. These efforts can be assessed through the promulgation of improved national legislation on employment, maternity leave, marriage, inheritance and property, education and constitutional rights.

4. Institutional structures

16. Most African Governments have now established national machineries or government focal points for the advancement of women. A number of subregional and regional institutions have also been set up to accelerate the pace of improvement of the conditions of women. Many non-governmental organizations have emerged, especially since the end of the United Nations Decade for Women (1985). These entities which range from professional associations, co-operatives, religious organizations to general purpose organizations continue to supplement government efforts in bringing about development in the country and further ensuring the integration of women in the development process.

B. Areas of slow progress

1. Employment

17. In this sector, women still constitute a greater proportion of the unemployed. In fact, growing male unemployment has further accentuated the gender discrimination. In the urban areas, faced with the combined pressures of high inflation rates, falling wages and high male unemployment rates, more women are entering into the informal sector. Recognition of the importance of the role of women in the informal sector assumes a greater significance at this time of economic crisis.

18. Africa's informal sector plays a significant and growing role in economic activity, particularly in production, distribution, finance and employment creation. It is estimated to account for about 20 per cent of total output and over 20 per cent of the total labour force and these ratios are expected to rise over time. According to various estimates, women in West Africa constitute from 60 to 80 per cent of the total labour force in the sector.

2. Health

19. A general examination of the situation of women and children in Africa with regard to hazardous traditional practices, such as early marriage and pregnancy, female circumcision, nutritional taboos, inadequate child spacing and unprotected delivery, has revealed that these practices are current realities in many an African country. Such practices often inflict permanent physical, psychological and emotional damages, even death, and yet little progress has been achieved in their abolition.

20. With respect to fertility levels and maternal mortality rates, the situation of women in Africa has not changed much. While overall mortality rates have declined, maternal mortality rates remain very high. For instance, fertility levels are reported to be above six children per woman while one out of 21 African women dies as a result of pregnancy or childbirth; the corresponding figure is one in 38 in South Asia and one in 90 in Latin America.

3. Access to resources including credit and technology

21. Because of the deterioration of the economic situation in the 1980s, the condition of women has been affected adversely. It has constrained governments

from allocating the necessary resources to the multiple roles of women and their access to development.

22. Donor agencies have continued to provide support to women's programmes. However, relative to women's multiple roles, diverse needs and the deteriorating socio-economic conditions, such assistance is not adequate. It is also a fact that some resources earmarked for women do not reach them. Therefore, the level of assistance should be increased and women should be equipped to utilize, manage and monitor such assistance for their own benefit.

23. There seems to be a gap between technologies developed by research institutions and the end users, more so with technologies for reducing women's workloads, including agricultural production, processing and storage. This gap should be bridged. Developed and improved technologies should be disseminated. When developing new technologies, women's needs, knowledge and concerns should be taken into account.

24. As governments develop structural adjustment policies and programmes, especially when working on public investment programmes with such institutions as the World Bank, they should take advantage of the World Bank's new approach to include measures to cushion the impact of these policies on vulnerable groups such as women, children and families in the low-status, low-income brackets.

C. Areas where implementation is being initiated

1. Science and technology

25. The participation of women in scientific and technical professions in Africa is critical to the future technological development of the continent. It is crucial because in most African countries, women constitute more than half of the population, yet most of them lack the necessary education, especially in the science and technology fields, the development of which has been identified as an important instrument for rapid socio-economic development in Africa. A review of recent studies on the situation of women in the scientific professions has shown that the enrolment of girls/women in science-based training programmes and professions is very low. It is important that women should be encouraged to study science and technology so that they can secure access to professions which demand a scientific and technological background for rural development. Technology is changing society, and it is essential to ensure that women benefit from such changes.

2. Decision-making

26. Another key issue in the full and equal participation of women in development is their lack of participation in decision-making and management at all levels and on all matters. It is also to be noted that African women are still inadequately represented in political processes at the national and international levels. Since all actions and projects flow from policy decisions and many such decisions are made without sufficient knowledge of the needs of women, this area is of crucial importance.

3. Mainstreaming

27. Mainstreaming is an important mechanism for incorporating women in major programmes. The perspective is one of integrating women-in-development into all aspects of development assistance. For mainstreaming and bridging strategies to be effective, concrete action needs to be taken through a well-designed implementation strategy supported at the highest levels by development assistance agencies and governments. In many instances, these measures have not been taken.

28. The relatively slow pace of the implementation of these strategies calls for a revised focus that views development as a sustainable process of expanding the capabilities of people and that seeks to mobilize all human and material resources available to a nation. Development can take place only when the human resource value of women is recognized and fully developed.

29. The change in focus mentioned above would also require a substantial reorientation of the role of the national government, the private sector and that of women themselves. Participatory development, the empowerment of people - in this case the women - should be the objective of national governments, private sectors and institutions.

4. Environment

30. Changes in agriculture, forestry, water and waste management all have local environmental implications for women as those who have a special relationship with the natural environment by virtue of their daily tasks. Although women are the primary natural resource managers in developing countries, the importance of their role is often ignored by governments and agencies. They do most of the work to gather food and fuel from the environment to sustain their families. When the environment is degraded, it is the women who first suffer the consequences.

III. OVERALL PICTURE

31. In the best of times, there is no automatic link between economic growth and improvement in the situation of women. Specially targeted actions and reforms in policy and legislation are necessary to induce fundamental change in the socio-economic position of women. As repeatedly stated, the mobilization of women for development is not just a question of equity but one of economic efficiency. Not only do African women constitute a significant portion of the labour force, directly contributing to the economies of African countries but also they play a singular role in determining the quality of the labour force in general. Positive attitudes to work, to life, creativity, and the need for achievement are all prerequisites for harmonizing development and are often inculcated in early childhood where the mother plays a predominant role. Hence, socio-economic transformation and recovery in Africa require a major shift in policy towards this vast human capital.

32. The burden of debt which Africa is experiencing is a matter of concern. An examination of the impact of adjustment policies on women, both in relation to their participation in economic development and to the support of their families, reveals a negative impact on women. For instance, women working in the public sector have been affected by the reduction in the work force and by wage and salary freezes. The desire to limit the costs to firms to pursue the objective of structural

adjustment can also lead to reductions in the coverage of minimum wage legislation. As a result, women in the public sector, and more generally those in the formal sector, have experienced a lowering of their income or of the household's income during the period of adjustment. Adjustment may have affected women's health and education because schools, hospitals and basic health services have frequently received lower subsidies, especially in rural or remote areas. These services are important for women, given the need for maternal and child care and the educational gap between men and women.

33. In this regard, women need to participate more actively in public life. The United Nations major goals of equality, development and peace cannot be realized without African women playing increasingly active roles in their societies. They must act as a significant pressure group to promote enlightened policies, attitudinal changes and recognition. It is women who can better articulate women's needs.

34. In view of the foregoing, it is clear and beyond doubt that sustainable development cannot take place without the effective participation of women.

IV. FACING THE 1990s

35. In the light of the foregoing assessment of the situation of women in Africa, the following priority actions are advanced. It is hoped that these recommendations will be taken into account when national development plans and budgets are prepared and within the System-wide Medium-term Plan of the United Nations system. It is also hoped that subregional and regional organizations, institutions and individuals will take them fully into account and implement these recommendations in whatever way they may find feasible and appropriate, taking into consideration their own respective mandates.

A. Education

**TARGET 2000: PARITY IN LITERACY, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION AND AT LEAST 40 PER CENT OF UNIVERSITY ENROLMENT**

Action at national level

(a) Measures should be taken to educate the public that changes in women's education must be seen in terms of enabling women and girls to secure employment and equal participation with men in the political and economic fields;

(b) To enable girls to attend institutions of learning, facilities such as boarding schools and hostels should be increased and fellowships provided;

(c) Vocational education centres for providing early and functional literacy classes for women should be established;

(d) The production of gender-free textbooks should be promoted. As a means of learning more about the continent, the curricula at all educational levels should be expanded to reflect problem areas in Africa such as apartheid, refugees, desertification, drought and environmental pollution;

(e) As a precursor to free education, access of every child to at least one textbook annually should be guaranteed;

(f) Educational authorities should constantly ensure that the quality of education is maintained at a high level.

Action at regional and international levels

(a) International and regional organizations as well as donor agencies should provide fellowships with focus given to the training of girls/women in priority areas of national development;

(b) Bilateral and international donor agencies should promote programmes for the exchange of students and teachers and assist in innovative approaches to educational training.

B. Science and technology

TARGET 2000: AT LEAST 20 PER CENT OF TOTAL ENROLMENT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN THE FIELD OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Action at national level

(a) Adequate opportunities for access by women to scientific and technological education and training should be provided;

(b) Model training institutions for girls at secondary and post-secondary levels that have a strong bias towards science and technology should be created. Such model schools might usher in greater participation of girls in scientific and technological education;

(c) School-based in-service training and discussion forums on the problems faced by girls in science and technology should be intensified;

(d) The quality of teaching of the sciences, technical subjects and mathematics in secondary schools should be raised;

(e) Teacher training with emphasis on practical skills should be provided in order to give teachers confidence to instil these same skills in their students;

(f) Specific training programmes for women in the rural areas aimed at developing their technical skills in agriculture and other fields including environment, water and energy should be designed;

(g) Science and technology education should be part of adult non-formal education programmes, particularly in the rural areas. These programmes should relate to their everyday life and be geared to self-reliance;

(h) Associations of women research fellows who can contribute to the research activities of specialized agencies should be established.

Action at subregional and regional levels

(a) Subregional and regional institutions should undertake research in agricultural biotechnology targeted at increasing food production and decreasing women's workload in their agricultural activities;

(b) An association of women scientists to promote the exchange of experiences and information in the field of science and technology should be established.

Action at international level

(a) International research institutes like the IARCs and ICGEB play an important role in the transfer of technology by training women researchers in Africa and by providing advisory services. Research by international institutes should be explicitly targeted at women's needs in science and technology;

(b) International organizations and donor agencies should give financial support and/or fellowships for the training of women at the technical and higher levels in specific areas of science and technology. Special funds should be made available for these purposes.

C. Agriculture and food production

Action at national level

(a) Measures should be taken to eliminate all impediments to women being able to acquire and own land;

(b) Governments should substantially increase the number of female extension agents and fully utilize them;

(c) Greater efforts should be made to establish co-operatives and rural banks for women to promote small- and medium-scale production;

(d) Governments, through national machineries, should insist that developed and improved technologies should be passed on to the end-users;

(e) Research on major crops should be made available to the farming community through appropriate mechanisms.

Action at regional and international levels

International organizations, together with national governments, should carry out studies/research to identify those technologies that reduce women's workload in order to improve and develop them for women's use.

D. Employment

TARGET 2000: AT LEAST ONE OUT OF FIVE OF ALL VACANT GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONAL POSTS BE FILLED BY A WOMAN

Action at national level

(1) Formal sector

- (i) Increased opportunities should be provided through diversified training to enable women to acquire the needed skills to branch out into all areas of the formal sector;
- (ii) As women's participation in this sector remains inadequately quantified and available indicators still do not take account of the whole range of jobs performed by women, there is a need to improve data collection and develop indicators to reflect the contribution of women;
- (iii) Women's access to income in the formal and informal sectors, and in the family, needs to be examined as well as their access to credit in the context of adjustment policies.

(2) Informal sector

Since women usually engage in informal activities for which there exists a large demand, it is important to support the sector with clear policies aimed at ensuring greater linkages with the rest of the economy and increasing its productivity, which in turn will have a positive impact on the overall gross domestic product, given the size and the growth potential of the sector. This then calls, inter alia, for the following:

Action at the national level

- (i) The contribution of the informal sector should be recognized by creating enabling conditions for integrating the sector into the mainstream of the economy;
- (ii) Training programmes for women should be designed to upgrade their technological capabilities as well as their managerial skills;
- (iii) Physical facilities such as shops, warehouses, day-care centres, etc., should be provided for improving the work environment and welfare of women traders;
- (iv) Technical and financial assistance should be provided to meet the needs of women and sustain their dynamic entrepreneurship and major improvements made in production, sales, management and training and in other areas, such as the establishment of support institutions and the availability of information about:
 - a. industrial policies,
 - b. fiscal advantages,
 - c. easier access to foreign exchange and credit,

- d. incentives related to reduction of energy costs, the abolition of inhibitive customary practices etc.,
- e. market assessment and marketing;
- (v) Sectoral plans which take into account the informal sector should be formulated to integrate it more in national development plans;
- (vi) Technological research should be more oriented towards promoting appropriate technologies needed for improving the quality of products, and for relieving the workload of women in food processing, portorage, etc.;
- (vii) Appropriate legislative regulations for the informal sector should be formulated and made known to the agents concerned;
- (viii) Policies and measures for reducing taxation on the income of women working in this sector should be formulated.

Action at international level

- (i) International agencies and NGOs should endeavour to carry out research into enterprises and businesses run by women in the informal sector in order to ascertain the types of constraints faced by women and their order of importance;
- (ii) International agencies and donor countries should give greater attention to assisting women to have access to credit. Hence, revolving loan funds and guarantee loan schemes are needed to support women in the informal sector.

(3) Credit and entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial activities can play important socio-economic roles in the development aspirations of the African continent. They provide a solid framework for the facilitation of self-actualization and have an inherent spill-over effect on the development of national economies. Thus, there is a need for the generation of entrepreneurial spirit and capabilities in order to inject dynamism into national development, especially in the areas of employment creation and industrial development. There is also a definite need to enhance and facilitate entrepreneurial efforts, of women, especially rural women, to enable them to increase their contributions to national economic development. Critical to this is the provision of skills and resources - financial and others - by expanding available credit facilities, which can be one of the most appropriate means of increasing entrepreneurial activities. The following steps should be taken:

Action at national level

- (i) Women's access to credit should be ensured by eliminating all gender-based conditionalities;

- (ii) A back-up organization through which the necessary entrepreneurial and credit skills are provided and the appropriate linkages and network arrangements facilitated should be established;
- (iii) The following credit programmes should be developed: direct loans, credit guarantee schemes and collateral arrangements;
- (iv) Women, especially rural women, should be mobilized and organized into groups so that they will have access to group-based credit from banks;
- (v) Entrepreneurial management and credit training should be provided so as to improve women's creditworthiness;
- (vi) Necessary follow-up services should be provided through extension services and other approaches which will contribute to the viability of economic projects;
- (vii) Resources should be mobilized from international, regional and national financial institutions for the development of investment portfolios to be used in creating special credit windows for the promotion and enhancement of women entrepreneurship;
- (viii) The informal savings system should be linked to the formal bank saving system to help women meet collateral and other banking requirements for obtaining credit.

Action at international level

International organizations and donor agencies should give support through the interventions of:

- (i) Funding training programmes and start-up cost of special credit programmes;
- (ii) Providing technical assistance to promote research and development. Assistance should also be given in developing technical expertise and institution building.

E. Structural adjustment

Action at national level

(a) Women's health situation appears to have deteriorated. National research institutes should undertake research focusing on variations in female mortality at two critical periods of their existence, early childhood and maternity, through examination of maternal and infant mortality rates including variation in mortality rates of children under the age of five during periods of adjustment;

(b) Increased poverty and workload is likely to lead to families withdrawing their children from school, in order to either work at home or generate additional income. In this context, more often than not, girls are more negatively affected than

boys, a phenomenon which can be studied through examining retention rates by sex in first, second and especially in third level studies;

(c) Follow-up activities for the operationalization of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) should continue to give gender concerns their due importance.

Action at regional level

In the light of the current economic and social crisis and the current trend toward regional market groupings, African women should urge governments to expedite the establishment of an African common market.

Action at international level

(a) International organizations should give attention to the development and appropriate use of social and economic indicators and their relationship to women's programmes;

(b) International organizations should continue to search for measures that stimulate the economies of African countries while avoiding adverse effects on human well-being;

(c) The flow of resources to women should be of the highest priority and should be channelled to the target groups.

F. Decision-making, development planning and mainstreaming

TARGET 2000: AT LEAST ONE IN EIGHT TOP POLICY AND DECISION MAKERS IN AFRICA (CABINET MINISTERS, HIGH CIVIL SERVANTS, TOP ECHELONS OF THE ARMED FORCES, POLICE AND JUDICIARY AND TOP MANAGEMENT IN PARASTATALS AND PRIVATE CORPORATIONS) SHOULD BE A WOMAN

Action at national level

(a) The data base on women as "economic agents" in addition to their role in the social sector should be strengthened;

(b) Each government should ensure that women are taken into account by introducing "gender" as a concept and development planning tool in all government ministry departments;

(c) Existing mechanisms such as national machineries to integrate women in development should be involved in the formulation of plans and management systems;

(d) Women who play positive roles should be promoted as role models to motivate girls and women at all levels;

(e) The incidence and patterns of women's participation at the decision-making level should be studied with a view to identifying obstacles and strategies for overcoming those obstacles;

(f) In order to enhance the political participation of women, there is a need to increase their access to information, develop their negotiating and organizational skills and fully exercise their voting rights;

(g) In order to ensure that women's concerns are reflected in development strategies, it is essential that the promoters acquire mainstreaming skills;

(h) A national plan of action (where it does not already exist) should be adopted for use as a benchmark for women's participation and for avoiding any negative impact which may occur at times of political instability.

Action at subregional and regional levels

(a) Subregional and regional structures such as SADCC and the West Africa Women's Association (WAWA) should take action to ensure that women's issues are addressed within national programmes;

(b) Subregional and regional structures must advocate policies on data development by gender specifications so as to make data more relevant and useful;

(c) Subregional and regional data banks such as PADIS and the Population Information Network (POPIN) should strengthen their programmes to include the women's dimension in order to generate and disseminate current information and data on women in development in Africa in order, *inter alia*, to facilitate the development of policies and programmes on women

Action at international level

United Nations organizations should assist governments by supporting national or international technical staff to develop data and models so as to ensure that the fullest consideration is given to women in national development plans.

G. Women and culture

The lives of women are dominated by traditions. Certain attitudes and structures and traditional practices such as female circumcision and nutritional taboos which have harmful effects on the health of women and children have rarely been officially surveyed. They have not been fully acknowledged by policy-makers and opinion leaders. Nor have effective steps to stop them been given precedence in health development planning. In this context, there is need for the following:

Action at national level

(a) Member States should promulgate laws to eradicate cultural practices that dehumanize and disinherit women especially in the areas of birth, education, marriage and widowhood;

(b) African Governments should introduce exchange programmes which focus more on the positive aspects of African heritage;

(c) National research institutes should undertake in-depth research on various traditional practices and their effects on women; governments should commission and act upon such studies;

(d) Functional literacy campaigns should sensitize parents and disseminate information on the harmful effects of circumcision, childhood marriage and early pregnancy;

(f) Guidance and counselling should be provided to young adolescent girls as well as parents with a view to making them understand the harmful physical, social and mental effects of several traditional practices;

(g) Religious leaders, traditional rulers, women's organizations, professional bodies and others should act as pressure groups in the promotion of efforts against harmful practices through both traditional and modern means of communication, dissemination of information and other appropriate ways of communication.

Action at subregional and regional levels

Established subregional and regional structures dealing with women in development programmes should give priority attention to the issues of female circumcision and other harmful traditional practices in their programmes.

Action at the international level

International organizations should intensify their efforts in designing appropriate programmes as well as in providing financial support to such programmes.

H. Population issues

Considering issues related to population change elaborated in various documents, particularly the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action (KPA), the Arusha and Nairobi Strategies, which directly and indirectly affect women, the following are recommended:

Action at national level

(a) Measures should be taken to avoid pregnancies before 18 years of age and after 45 years;

(b) Family life education should be provided in the curriculum of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions;

(c) The number of children per woman should be limited as a means of promoting the health of women and children;

(d) Young unmarried mothers should be assisted through the provision of training specially designed to meet their needs, including information on family planning and income-generation activities;

(e) Birth-spacing should be promoted by facilitating access of women and men to family planning, especially in the rural areas;

(f) Governments should collect, compile and analyze data on morbidity and mortality by gender, focusing on childhood and maternal morbidity and mortality;

(g) Governments should set up structures to reduce the current unacceptably high maternal mortality rates in a number of African countries.

Action at international level

(a) International organizations involved in family planning activities should intensify their efforts to ensure that family planning services reach all women, particularly rural women;

(b) International organizations should make every effort to co-ordinate their programmes with a view to making rational use of resources;

(c) International organizations should strengthen their involvement in MCH programmes in African countries;

(d) The Economic Commission for Africa should continue to monitor the implementation of the KPA, in particular the issues pertaining to women.

I. Law and legislation

TARGET 2000: ALL AFRICAN COUNTRIES SHOULD SIGN THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND ENSURE ITS RATIFICATION OR THEIR ACCESSION TO IT

Action at national level

Legal barriers to equality have been removed in most countries. However, de facto discrimination on the grounds of sex still continues. Despite progress made by most countries in repealing discriminatory law and enacting new legislation, further measures are necessary for guaranteeing equal rights for women. The following additional measures are recommended:

1. On content

(a) Discriminatory laws should be repealed as a result of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Governments that have not yet done so are urged to sign the Convention and to take all the necessary steps to ensure its ratification, or their accession to it and its implementation;

(b) All the imported laws that were put into effect in African countries, without taking prevailing local circumstances into consideration should be repealed and substituted with suitable laws that ensure equality of sexes;

(c) Particular attention should be paid to plurality of legal systems in every aspect of life with a view to abolishing such plurality, especially when the interferences between customary and positive law may retard progress in the implementation of new laws;

2. On structures

(d) It is noted that the structures responsible for administration of justice are not conducive to the integration of women in development. The procedures are too long, laborious and too complicated. African women need to be helped to a full understanding and effective use of their rights. Appropriate curricula should be developed and included in both formal and informal education;

(e) Customary family law should be linked to the statutory judicial system so as to cater for matters of a domestic nature;

(f) Governments should establish the appropriate infrastructures that ensure that legal services reach women at all levels and discourage sexual harassment at all levels;

3. On attitudes

(g) Court procedures should be simplified to make it easy for women to utilize them. These courts should be easily accessible to the rural population and should be able to consider cases in camera in order to protect the secrecy of homes;

(h) Particular attention should be paid to instituting recourse procedures that women can resort to in case of violation of their rights. Units should be set up within police stations to cater for domestic and family complaints. Such units should be headed by women officers. Women have no recourse to justice because their problems with battery and other forms of conjugal cruelty are viewed as domestic matters despite the fact that they are criminal offences under the penal codes of many African countries.

Action at subregional and regional levels

(a) ECA should monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and assist governments in the design and implementation of training programmes on the legal rights of women;

(b) Subregional and regional institutions should carry out research with a view to identifying legal problems/constraints pertaining to women and devise strategies for dealing with such problems.

J. Environment

TARGET 2000: ALL WOMEN LIVING IN SHANTIES AND HAMLETS IN THE RURAL AND POOR URBAN AREAS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH DECENT AND DURABLE SHELTERS

Action at national level

Africa has been experiencing economic and environmental crises, the latter evidenced by deforestation, soil erosion and alarming desertification. To reverse this trend, environmental conservation actions must be integrated with socio-economic programmes in order to achieve sustainable development. This could be done through:

(a) Raising the awareness of women and women's groups regarding the need for better management of the environment and for the preservation of development resources;

(b) Instituting legislation on such environmental issues as the protection of the ozone layer and the dumping of hazardous waste which affect the lives of women, men and children;

(c) Training and dissemination of information on environmental issues aimed at reaching African women at the grass-root level should be organized.

Action at regional and international levels

(a) Regional and international organizations should be assisted to formulate special programmes for strengthening the institutional and professional capacities needed for sustainable development;

(b) Substantial aid resources should be made available to African Governments to enable them to promote environmental rehabilitation and management;

(c) Member States should be provided with timely information on the modalities for as well as the experience of successful reconciliation of environmental, economic and social objectives in development.

K. Africa's internal strife

During the 1980s, the number of uprooted communities on the continent increased, with women and children bearing the brunt of the adverse consequences. Women have continued to be stranded in both urban and rural areas, under the constant threat of sexual exploitation, which is attendant to it, while children have continued to suffer from serious malnutrition and other related diseases.

While noting that the number of refugees seems to have stabilized, it is regrettable that the level of resources to meet the basic needs of uprooted persons in Africa has deteriorated, worsening their living conditions. Because the vast majority of refugees and displaced persons are women and children and therefore particularly vulnerable to hardship, they have been the worst affected. Looking after

refugees and displaced persons exerts considerable strain on the ailing economies of host countries.

Similarly, despite the continuing efforts that the front-line States, the rest of Africa and the world at large are making to put an end to apartheid in South Africa, millions of women and children are still displaced as a result of apartheid.

Action at national level

(a) The plight of refugees should be critically reviewed and lasting solutions worked out and implemented;

(b) African women should observe International Women's Day, 8 March by mobilizing resources to assist women displaced by the system of apartheid;

(c) African Governments are urged to put an end to internal strife, civil wars and abuses of human rights which are depleting the continent of its valuable human resources;

(d) As it embarks on nation building, the future Namibian Government is urged to initiate measures to ensure that women's concerns are included in all development plans.

Action at regional level

The Secretary General of the OAU and the Executive Secretary of ECA are requested to do all within their powers to support the current efforts of member States in establishing or improving early warning systems and disaster preparedness programmes.

Action at international level

(a) The international community is urged not to relax sanctions against South Africa until the regime frees all political prisoners, and abolishes all laws that infringe on fundamental human rights and dignity;

(b) The international community is requested to provide all possible technical assistance to enable the Namibian Government to implement measures aimed at improving the conditions of women and children in Namibia.

L. The role of national machineries, regional, non-governmental and international organizations

1. The role of national machineries

In the last few years, national machineries or government-supported focal points for women's issues have come under increasing scrutiny either for doing too much or allegedly doing too little. Although operating under severe constraints, they have made considerable gains for women. The notion that such machineries are answerable for all questions relating to women is unrealistic. In the light of developments, each country needs to reassess the mandate of its national

organization for women and, as necessary, redefine its role. The following actions need to be taken:

- (a) Existing national machineries should be strengthened;
- (b) The participation of national machinery in the early stages of policy formulation and implementation should be ensured;
- (c) Links should be forged between the national machineries and government ministries as well as national institutions.

2. The role of regional organizations

The United Nations Decade for Women has led to the formation of a number of organizations dealing with women's matters in the region. There is need for co-ordination and division of labour among these agencies. While it is recognized that a certain degree of overlapping is inevitable, each organization should reflect on its specific focus so that resources are not wasted and activities are interrelated rather than duplicated. This principle should apply among all regional, subregional and national organizations operating in Africa, regardless of their source of funding. The ECA Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) has emerged as an effective intergovernmental co-ordinating mechanism and should be utilized to the fullest by the various African and other organizations.

3. The role of non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whatever their character, should co-ordinate their action with governmental sectoral ministries and national machineries for the advancement of women. Similarly, the national machineries and government departments can greatly benefit from the innovative experimental approaches of NGOs that often reach small and poor communities at grass-root level. Accordingly, the experience and efficiency of single or regrouped NGOs in the field is incontestable in terms of assistance and support for action directed to women as well as in the domain of techniques, technology and credit. Therefore:

- (a) Greater effort should be made to forge links between NGOs and government-sponsored organizations;
- (b) These NGOs should produce and disseminate educational, training and information materials to accelerate the impact of development actions for and with women;
- (c) Considerable effort should be made to establish and reinforce co-operation between NGOs and national mechanisms as well as between governmental and/or national institutions responsible for the promotion of African women in development.

4. The role of international organizations

In view of the current economic and debt crisis being experienced by member governments, the international community, in particular, United Nations agencies,

will have to play a crucial role in helping African member States to define the areas of concern, elaborate programmes and projects for the promotion of women and mobilize the necessary resources for their implementation.

M. Monitoring changes in the situation of women

Action at national level

(a) The gains made should be consolidated and a better understanding of the role of women-in-development statistics like birth and death registration should be fostered at the grass-roots level;

(b) Documentation centres and data banks concerned with women should be established in all African countries;

(c) National statistics should be developed along gender lines;

(d) Accurate data collection and recording should be introduced to enable the planning, evaluation and monitoring of all programmes for women as a continuous exercise.

Action at regional and international levels

(a) Regional and international organizations should promote the establishment of data banks and information networks at regional level;

(b) Regional and international organizations should provide appropriate technical assistance for the establishment of data banks on women in member countries.

V. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT IN 1994

36. The above recommendations will be reviewed and assessed during the fifth Regional Conference on Women in Development in 1994.

Annex I

RESOLUTION

THE ABUJA DECLARATION: TOWARDS PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990s

The Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development and on the Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa,

Having examined in depth the Abuja Declaration: Towards Participatory Development of African Women in Development in the 1990s as adopted by the Conference at its fourth meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria from 6 to 10 November 1989,

Having noted that the issues raised and concerns expressed by the Conference with regard to the implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa are consistent with the afore-mentioned Declaration and to reinforce the mandate of this Conference,

Mindful of the need for accelerating the pace of implementation of the Arusha Strategies and for concerted action to harness support from every quarter to promote women's participation and integration into the development process,

Mindful also of the promotion of a socio-economic strategy for the 1990s enabling women to fully play their roles and assume their responsibilities with regard to the conceptualization, planning, design and implementation of programmes conducive to long-term sustainable socio-economic transformation,

Deeply concerned about the devastating impact of Africa's socio-economic crisis and alarming limitations of short-term structural adjustment measures which have further aggravated the social degradation and lack of economic opportunities for women,

Appreciative of the initiative taken by the Conference which represents an essential contribution to national, regional and international efforts to improve the human condition in Africa,

1. Congratulates the organizers of the Conference for this commendable initiative to assess the progress of implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa as well as to identify problems impeding its overall impact and to recommend comprehensive measures whose implementation at the

national, subregional, regional and international levels would accelerate the integration of women into the development process;

2. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for hosting the Conference so generously and in particular to His Excellency the President of the Federal Republic and Mrs. Maryam I. Babangida for their leadership role in ensuring that the Conference was a success;

3. Further expresses its deep appreciation to the participating governments who ensured high-level and fully motivated representation as well as to the United Nations, in particular UNDP, NGOs, IGOs and other multilateral and bilateral donors who generously contributed to the organization of the Conference which gave birth to the Abuja Declaration;

4. Endorses the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Conference as set forth in the Abuja Declaration concerning participatory development of African women in the 1990s;

5. Decides to submit the Abuja Declaration to the next meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers for adoption;

6. Urges member States to fully implement the recommendations of the Abuja Declaration by making women an integrated part and essential objective of their recovery and long-term development programmes;

7. Further urges international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors, organizations of the United Nations system, NGOs and African IGOs to implement, as a matter of urgency, the recommendations contained in the Abuja Declaration;

8. Requests the ECA Conference of Ministers, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations to ensure that appropriate follow-up action for the implementation of the recommendations in the Abuja Declaration are set in motion with minimum delay;

9. Requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to disseminate the Abuja Declaration as widely as possible, particularly to member States, all United Nations agencies and organizations, donor countries and organizations, regional and subregional organizations, NGOs, institutions of higher learning and manpower development establishments in Africa;

10. Further requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Abuja Declaration and to present comprehensive reports thereon to the ECA Conference of Ministers.

Annex II

List of Conference Papers

A. List of country papers on the Integration of Women in Development on the Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| - Angola | - Mauritania |
| - Benin | - Mauritius |
| - Botswana | - Morocco |
| - Burkina Faso | - Nigeria |
| - Burundi | - Rwanda |
| - Central African Republic | - Senegal |
| - Cameroon | - Sao Tome and Principe |
| - Chad | - Sierra Leone |
| - Comoros | - Sudan |
| - Djibouti | - United Republic of |
| - Ethiopia | - Tanzania |
| - Gabon | - Togo |
| - The Gambia | - Uganda |
| - Ghana | - Zaire |
| - Liberia | - Zambia |
| - Malawi | - Zimbabwe |

B. List of working documents

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| E/ECA/ATRCW/RCIWD.4/3: | Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa Beyond the end of the United Nations Decade for Women: Regional perspective |
| E/ECA/ATRCW/RCIWD.4/4: | Progress Report, implementation of the project: "Improving African Women's Role in the informal sector production and management" |
| E/ECA/ATRCW/RCIWD.4/5: | Strategies for improving women's access to education and training in science and technology |
| E/ECA/ATRCW/RCIWD.4/6: | Flow of resources to women in the context of the African food and debt crisis |
| BR/27/SARRED/15.89: | The situation of displaced women and children: under <u>apartheid</u> , drought and desertification (OAU) |

Annex III

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A. In Annex II of the Declaration The List of conference Papers (Item A) should include the following countries:

- EQUATORIAL GUINEA
- KENYA
- LESOTHO
- LIBYA
- MADAGASCAR
- MALI
- NIGER

In Annex II of the Declaration the List of participants should include:

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- Mrs. MARIAMA SOW, Ex-ARCC President
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- Mr. P.B. WA MUTHARIKA
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