

Economic Commission for Africa
African Centre for Women

African Centre for Women

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE PERIOD
2000 - 2005

November
1998

Economic Commission for Africa
Commission économique pour l'Afrique

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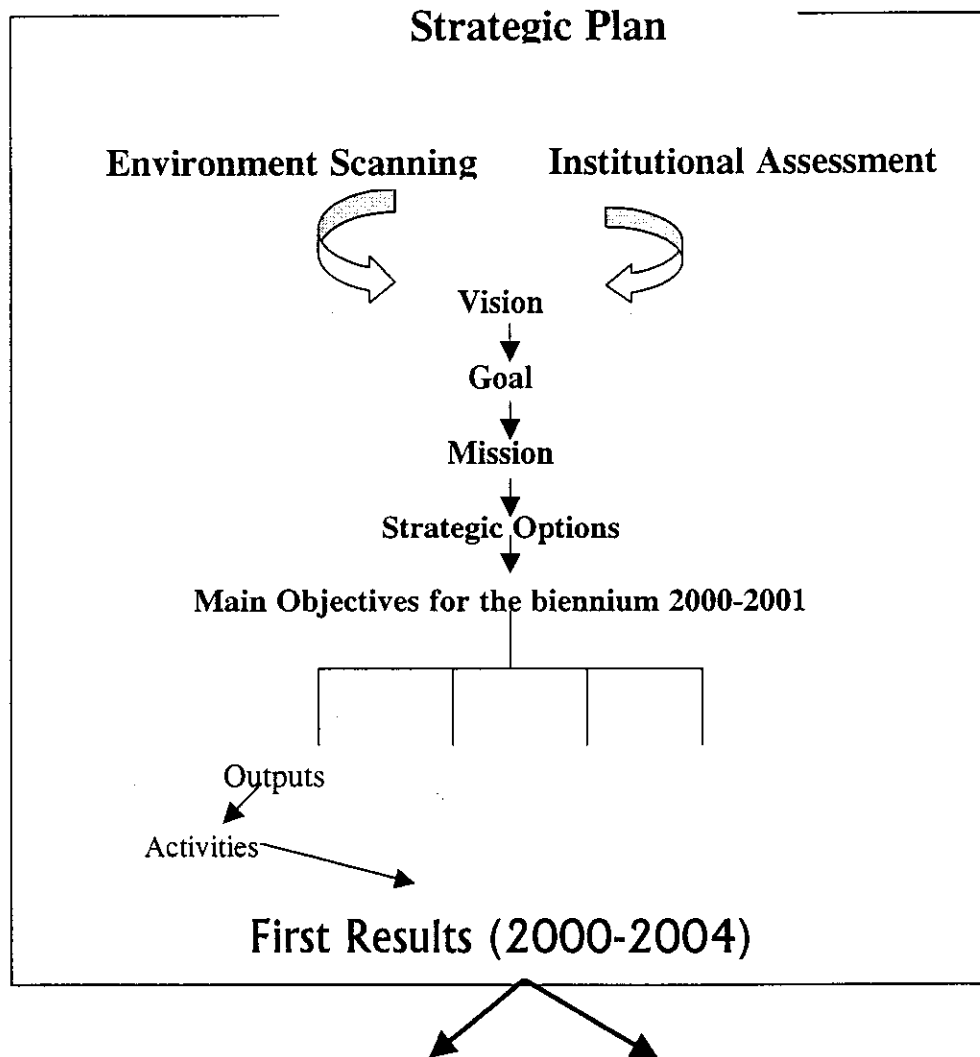
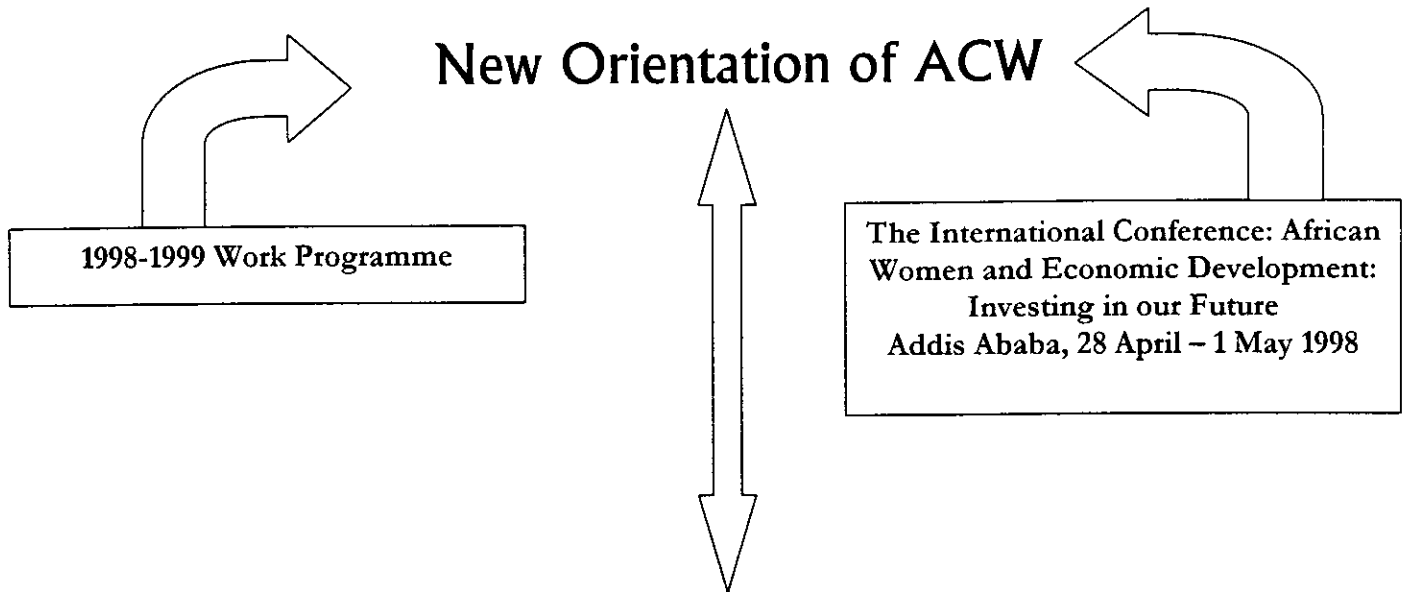
Strategic Plan for the period 2000 – 2005

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1. Process of elaboration of the Strategic Plan



2. ACW's Vision, Goal and Mission

The Vision

The vision of the African Centre for Women is a society in which development patterns, processes and structures are so transformed, and women so empowered as to enable both women and men equally, to address the challenges facing Africa

The Goal

The overall goal of ACW for the period 2000-2005 is to mainstream gender in development structures, policies and programmes in order to ensure parity in distribution of resources and to enable women to participate in strategic decisions.

The Mission

In the 20 years since the First World Conference on Women in 1975, ACW has been contributing to improving the knowledge on African women's issues and concerns, through training, research and the dissemination of information. It has facilitated the creation of government machineries in charge of the advancement of women.

In line with its mandate, it will continue to monitor the effective implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action, adopted in 1994 and 1995 respectively. It will promote and support the implementation of the overall strategy of the Platforms of Action to mainstream gender in policies and programmes, in order to achieve measurable progress in the 12 critical areas of action.

ACW will build consensus around a core message that African women's economic and social advancement is a crucial precondition for the development of Africa. As part of ECA's strategic services, ACW will provide to policy makers and actors involved in economic and social development in Africa, the information and the tools necessary for designing and implementing gender responsive policies, programmes and strategies.

ACW will specifically focus on macro policy and programme options to capture, reflect and address the needs and the priorities at the micro level, using an approach that integrates economic and social dimensions. It will promote coordinated policies to remove constraints in access to resources and to support initiatives for economic advancement among African rural women, in particular. It will promote and facilitate women's contribution to and enjoyment of universal human rights. It will develop women's capacity to participate effectively in decision-making on the basis of this agenda. In so doing ACW will enhance the generation and transfer of knowledge, the production, processing and dissemination of information which captures and reflect women's experiences

3. Developing a Strategic Direction

3.1 *The policy and institutional context*

One of the major initiatives of the United Nations system in the promotion of women's advancement has been the series of World Conference on Women (from Mexico to Beijing) to build consensus on issues and constraints, the strategies and actions to be taken at local, national, regional and international levels.

The Economic Commission for Africa's mandate is to promote economic and social development in Africa. The African Centre for Women, as an ECA's organ has a broad mandate¹ to promote and monitor the economic, political, social advancement of African Women, within the framework of the statutory regional and global conferences of women.

Since the 1995 Global (Beijing) and Regional (Dakar) Platforms of Action and the structural reform process initiated under new leadership at ECA, especially as from 1996, the gender perspectives in all the programmes of ECA has become a major focus. The basis for this reorientation lies in the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action's overall strategy of implementation: the mainstreaming of gender in development policies, programmes, structures and processes in the 12 critical areas of action. As an institutional response to the Beijing and Dakar commitments, ECA has adopted the goal of gender equality as a development objective and gender mainstreaming as a strategy to achieve this goal.

The core message that underlines ECA's development agenda is that African women's advancement and Africa's development prospects are inseparable. More specifically, African women's economic and social advancement is a crucial pre-condition for the economic and social development in Africa. This development perspective has been encapsulated in theme of the International Conference organized in Addis Ababa in May 1998, on the occasion of ECA's 40th anniversary on the theme "African Women and economic development: Investing in our Future".

3.2 *The International Conference and ACW's strategic direction*

Under this reorientation, the challenge for ACW was to clarify and affirm its mandate, define its specific role in achieving concrete, realizable, measurable outcomes over the time span leading to the Seventh Regional Conference and the Fifth Global Conference of Women in 2005. What specifically could the Centre contribute to in this broad, complex and challenging agenda and what would it not

¹ General Assembly Resolution 15/12/1975, as part of the launching of the United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985.

contribute to? What would be its domains of intervention and the services it could provide to member states, and how could these be provided effectively?

The Conference was a key strategy in the preparatory process of developing this direction. After two preparatory workshops involving key stakeholders, the broad agenda was narrowed into four main themes, and twenty-two sub-themes, directly linked to the Center's priority areas as defined in its 1998-1999 work programme.

The guidelines for discussion were framed to identify strategic actions, the likely partners and the possible means of implementation. The Conference yielded about two hundred strategic actions proposed by the 24 working groups.

The Conference was a participatory process of scanning the regional and global environment, of identifying and reviewing critical issues, actions already engaged at all levels, emerging challenges, of identifying and networking with partners. It was an innovative space for action-focused dialogue using a cross-cutting approach and involving a cross-section of participants. It brought together policy-makers across economic and social sectors, civil society organizations close to local communities, international government organizations, technicians and professionals from the fields of economic, social, environment and information sciences, young women and men and the media in Africa and the international community.

The level and diversity of participation at the Conference indicates the scope for affirming of the leadership role of the Centre as a regional space for giving voice to African women and for mobilizing partnerships around outcome-focused strategic actions. The feedback from participants and the Conference outputs demonstrate that it was a leading point in establishing gender as a cross-cutting issue of Action development. It positions ECA and particularly ACW as focal point for promoting and building capacity for mainstreaming a gender approach in policies and programmes. There were clear expectations for follow-up.

What could the Centre realistically focus on, what would be its priorities among the strategic actions identified during the Conference?

3.3 The strategic planning exercise

A strategic planning exercise was done in September 1998 as the next step to sharpen its strategic focus. The exercise incorporates the Conference outputs as part of the environmental scanning exercise and combines the results with a thorough assessment of the Centre's institutional capacity and its collaboration with other divisions².

³ The institutional assessment was enriched by feedback and recommendations derived from the training needs assessment and gender sensitization workshops for gender focal points, Divisional Directors including SRDCs, individual interviews and Focus Group Discussions conducted as part of the strategic planning exercise. The participant observation of the three consultants facilitating the strategic planning exercise

- ⇒ **It refines, clarify the vision, goal, mission of the Centre.**
- ⇒ **It determines the strategic options for implementation of the Centre's programme.**
- ⇒ **It focuses and limits the activities of the Centre around a few desirable objectives, realizable areas of intervention and services over which the Centre could establish and affirm comparative advantage.**
- ⇒ **It sets out the main programme of the Centre, the goals, objectives, activities deliverable outputs for the biennium 2000-2001 and expected measurable impacts in a mid and long term perspective.**

4. The present situation of the Centre

4.1 *The program and organisational structure of ECA*

Since 1996, ECA has adopted a new programme to translate its new strategic orientations into concrete activities to support the development efforts of African countries. ACW's 1998-1999 work programme falls under one of the five sub-programme areas, as Theme 1.4 of the Facilitating Economic and Social Analysis Sub-Programme.

There is a correspondence between the programme structure and the organizational structure in ECA. Each Division is responsible for a Sub-programme. The Economic and Social Policy Division is responsible for the Economic and Social Analysis Sub-programme. The programme manager is defined as a Head of Division. Within the organizational structure, ACW, is headed by a Chief, who is also defined as a programme manager³, and accountable to the Executive Secretary.

4.2 *The Work Programme:*

Institutional modalities

ACW's work programme is regulated by the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and the Biennial Budget Process. The MTP covers the four year period 1998-2001 and the current Biennial Programme Budget covers 1998-1999. Programmes already approved by the General Assembly are firmly set with little room for manoeuvre⁴. There is scope for new activities, as indeed was the case for the Conference in April 1998. These activities normally rely mainly on extra-budgetary sources of funding.

In view of the planning and procedural period of at least one year before the operationalization of programmes, the 1998-1999 work programme had to be established by end 1996. There was little time for ACW to engage in an in-depth process of developing a strategic direction before formulating its work programme. The strategic plan exercise has therefore to consider options for implementation during 1999, 2000 and 2001 within the constraints of the 1998-1999 work programme.

Areas of intervention

The work programme for 1998-1999 falls under the following areas of focus:

- The economic empowerment of women
- The promotion of women's legal and human rights
- Fostering the leadership role of women
- Assisting member states in their efforts to implement the Global and Regional Platforms of Action on Women
- Mainstreaming Gender in ECAs Programme of Work

Package of services

The current package of services include the servicing of the intergovernmental expert meetings, substantive servicing of meetings, reports or substantive documents submitted to the legislative organs of the Commission, recurrent and non recurrent publications, technical and information material and services, group training, special events such as conferences, workshops, field projects.

4.3 ACW resources

Regular Staff

Current human resources at ACW consists of one Chief at Director level, three professional staff at P2, P3 and P4 level, one research assistant, general support staff.

Three new additions to the core professional staff have been approved, but the staff is not yet operational:

- One post at P5 level, with competence in gender mainstreaming for which applications are being processed;
- One post at P4 level with competence in monitoring and assessing the implementation of the Regional and Global Platform for Action.
- One post at P3 level, with competence in information and communication, which has not yet been advertised.

It is not likely that the three new staff will be operational until the first quarter of 1999.

Regional advisers

ACW has two regional advisers in the field of economic empowerment and legal and human rights. The high level expertise is tied however to the provision of advisory services to member states under Technical Cooperation arrangements

which are driven by requests from member states. Advisory services have a separate budgetary provision and performance is monitored and evaluated separately from the core staff.

Financial resources

ACW's regular financial budget is constrained by its status as a theme within a sub-programme. There is scope for mobilizing extra-budgetary resources. This scope depends on the clear demonstration of ACW's comparative advantage, its actual and emerging comparative advantage and potential effectiveness in the implementation of the Platforms for Action (POA). There are also specific and convergent areas of the POA, over which partnerships within the UN system and development cooperation agencies as a whole could be mobilized.

5. Strategic Options

Priorities have been established and choices are based on ACW's mission and the provision of services in which it has or needs to and can develop comparative advantage. They provide the criteria for the rationalization of the existing work programme.

5.1 Thus, the main objectives for the Biennium 2000-2001 are the following:

1. To provide Member States with adequate tools and information in order to improve their capacity for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action;
2. To establish the African women training programme in leadership for members of Parliament and grassroots women leaders;
3. To build the capacity of ECA divisions to mainstream gender in their programmes ;
4. To promote and advocate for the use of data on women's unpaid labor in national accounts and the desegregation of budgetary allocations for equitable distribution of resources in the countries of focus;
5. To enhance women entrepreneurs regional networks;
6. To improve partners' and clients' access to gender information.

5.2 *Implementation Options*

The following options are not mutually exclusive. They represent combinations of strategies, which taken together represent the strategic choices of ACW.

5.2.1 Concentration and inclusiveness

Countries of Focus:

The programme areas, specifically in the economic and political areas will focus on a few countries for maximum impact and manageability. These countries will provide the nucleus for disseminating results and best practices. For inclusiveness, 3-5 countries will be selected per sub-region, to reflect linguistic balance and take into account the diversity of sub-regional contexts, over the ACW programme as a whole. The SRDCs for each sub-region, will be an important channel for disseminating information about the programmes and for providing substantive support for the programme.

The Regional Advisers can develop their work programme in response from requests from member states of the Countries of Focus on the basis of implementation of the programme.

Target group orientation and results-based programming

The overall goal of the programmes is to link the micro to the macro and mesa levels of intervention, to ensure that policy and programme options capture, reflect and address the needs and the priorities at micro level in coordinated way. The purpose of the macro and mesa level interventions is to yield significant impacts at the micro level, to be measured in terms of removal of constraints and increased access to resources, markets and improving indicators of well-being/poverty reduction.

The shift in emphasis from delivery of outputs to ensuring development impact requires the development and use of appropriate monitoring and impact indicators.

Phased operations over time

The programme needs to take into account the different time horizons of ACW, given its mandate and ECA as a whole. ACW's time horizon is patterned by the 10 year rhythm of the UN Global and Regional Conferences of Women. ECA's time horizon covers a medium term frame and a biennial programme budgeting period.

⇒ These are phases of programme preparation and implementation

Immediate

1998; Programme preparation phase leading to 2000-2001 work programme.

Short-term

1999; Transition phase, Completion of retained activities under existing work programme, reorientation of activities towards the new programme.

Medium-term

2000-2003: New programme implementation, Phase 1

Mid-term Review

2002-2003: Programme Implementation, Phase 2

Long term

2003-2005: First Results achieved, emerging issues processed for Seventh Regional Conference and Fifth Global Conference of Women, Phase 3

The options to be explored concern delaying the implementation of one programme area, ensuring a different space of implementation so that there is no bunching of activities, combining programmes with long lead times with a few activities with measurable outputs which can stand alone, combining visibility, quick results and impact.

The programme document needs to indicate expected impact within the programming period and anticipated impact with continuation of objective/activity and completion of tasks, in future programme periods.

It would be difficult to mobilize partnerships over a five year period. An iterative approach, which mobilizes partnerships and resources over three years from 1999-2001, in the first instance, is the most realistic.

5.2.2 Internal growth:

This option is necessary to provide a critical mass of professional staff for ACW to build up its capacity, collaborate with other divisions and deliver services to member states at country-specific, sub-regional and regional levels in line with its new mandate.

Strategic condition: The Centre's programme of work becomes a sub-programme (and this has already been agreed by ECOSOC).

This would enable it to mobilize internal core resources, appoint professional staff at high levels of expertise, with specialized competencies in areas of gender analysis and gender mainstreaming. The greater institutional capacity would establish a sound basis on which it could collaborate with other divisions, whose programme areas are critical to the implementation of the Platforms for Action.

Lead time for achieving internal growth: It is not envisaged that enlarged resources would be operational until the middle of the next biennium, 2000-2001.

The issue is to have within the Center 14 regular professional staff in total that means that there will be an additional need of creation of 7 regular posts.

5.2.3 External Growth (Partnership arrangements)

Collaboration with other divisions

Activities under the gender mainstreaming programme are two-pronged. They are directed to strengthening capacity of ACW to be able to act as institutional focal point for gender mainstreaming. They also target the capacity of other substantive divisions to respond to the implementation of the Platforms for Action and the follow-up to the relevant strategic actions of the Conference, as part of a results/impact approach to implementing the institutional policy of gender mainstreaming. The impact will be felt through the gender-responsive package of services each divisions will offer to member states.

It is only after this dual process that ACW can begin to mobilize resources from other divisions around its work programme. But organizational learning is a process which stresses the learning on the job aspects. There is particular scope for learning how to deliver cross-cutting programmes through the economic programme area of ACW. Staff from other relevant divisions, particularly ESPD, DMD, RCID, FSSD, DISD can form part of a team for implementing this programme, some elements of which would cut across divisions.

A semi-internal variant, External Technical Specialists

The initiatives taken by ACW to take the substantive lead and secretariat to organize the Conference of April 1998, to undertake a strategic planning exercise, to initiate gender sensitization and gender training workshop would not have been possible without the support of external resources. These have been mainly consultants, committed to the challenge ACW has set for itself and bringing with them the expertise, skills, experience of the African situation, knowledge of the constituencies and membership of networks. They have "brokered" the substantive collaboration of other divisions by developing gender sensitization modules and conference themes and sub-themes. These have set the tone and the framework for collaboration around the agenda-setting exercise of ACW in relation to African women's advancement and African economic and social development.

For a long period yet, and particularly before ACW can bring on board an enlarged core group of staff, a group of experts needs to be constituted to catalyze, support the formulation and implementation of ACW's programme area.⁴

⁴ This body can evolve in a manner similar to the AD Hoc Committee of Experts in the

There is such a provision in management modalities for the setting up of an External Specialist Group to assist on a specific subprogramme.

Collaboration with SRDCs

In the description of core functions of each division, there are explicit reference to gender issues only in the case of the ACW and SRDCs. The exact nature of the links between the SRDCs and the ACW is not specified and calls for harmonization. While ACW has the lead as institutional focal point for organizational and substantive coordination, the SRDCs have the scope for responding to and articulating gender concerns and priorities at subregional level. They are able to network more closely with member States and subregional organizations in both the governmental and civil society sectors. They provide a space for affirming the Centre's presence at subregional level and delivering joint ACW/SRDC programme services, ensuring their relevance to subregional contexts.

This is particularly effective in responding to local needs and specificities and for ensuring local impact, one of the guidelines for ACW's interventions.

Partnerships

There is practically no area of intervention where a development partner is not active in some form or other. The scope for mobilizing partnerships on the basis of each partner's specificity and comparative advantage is important and is a crucial strategy of implementation. Proposed partnerships are indicated under each specific programme area (programme aspects attached).

6. ACW's Work Programme For the Biennium 2000-2001

Overall goal: Mainstreaming gender in development structures, policies and programmes in order to ensure parity in distribution of resources and to enable women to participate in strategic decisions.

Objectives for the biennium	Expected Results	Indicators for results	Outputs
1. To provide Member States with adequate tools and information in order to improve their capacity for : implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action	1.1 Trained senior officers from sectoral Ministries in gender analysis and formulation of national gender policies. 1.2 Trained National Follow-up Teams in monitoring, evaluation and resource mobilization	1.1.1 National gender policies formulated in at least 20 countries in 2 subregions by 2001	1.1.1.1 Manual on gender analysis/gender mainstreaming in the 12 critical areas of concern (2000) 1.1.1.2 Guidelines for assessing the adequacy of National Action Plans and national gender policies(2000) 1.1.1.3 Training of senior officers from sectoral Ministries in gender analysis and formulation of national gender policies in 2 subregions (2001) 1.1.1.4 Training Manual in monitoring and evaluation(2000) 1.1.1.5 Training of National Follow-up Teams in 2 subregions in monitoring, evaluation and resource mobilization(2001) 1.1.1.6 Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting to validate the Manual on gender analysis/gender mainstreaming; Guidelines for assessing national gender policies; and Training manual for Monitoring and Evaluation in the 12 Critical Areas of Concern ; (2000) 1.1.1.7 Advisory services on issues related to the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern, 2 in 2000 and 2 in 2001
2. To improve the harmonization of the policies and programmes at the regional and subregional levels with the outcomes of the 6 th african regional conference	2.1 Adequate orientation of the priorities and programmes at the regional and subregional levels regarding the needs expressed at the 6 th african regional conference	2.1.1 Support service programmes at the regional, subregional and national levels for the triennium 2001-2003 reflect the needs expressed by the member States	2.1.1.1 Three reports to the Committee on Women and Development (2001) on: - Outcome of the Sixth Regional Conference - Activities of ACW - Topical issues of relevance to the follow-up of the Sixth Regional Conference (2001) 2.1.1.2 Organization of the meeting of the Committee on Women and Development (2001)

Objectives for the biennium	Expected Results	Indicators for results	Outputs
3. To establish the African women training programme in leadership for members of Parliament and grassroots women leaders	3.1 Contributing to the fulfillment of the training needs expressed by women leaders in politics	3.1.1 Virtual Leadership institute established 3.1.2 One training programme completed for 2 subregions in 2001	3.1.1.1 Training modules in French English and Arabic prepared (2000) 3.1.1.2 Workshop of Experts and users to examine and finalize training modules organized (2000) 3.1.1.3 Meeting of partners to mobilize resources for a field project to provide training programmes in five subregions (2000) 3.1.1.4 Organize the First African Women Leadership Institute (2001)
4. To build the capacity of ECA divisions to mainstream gender in their programmes for the biennium 2002-2003	4.1 ECA senior staff trained and able to use adequate gender tools and gender indicators for formulating, monitoring and evaluating their work programme by the end of 2000.	4.1.1 appropriate tools and methodologies are available within the divisions by mid-2000 4.1.2 the appropriate tools and methodologies are utilized by 75% of the team leaders by October 2000 for the formulation of the work programme for the biennium 2002-2003 and for the adjustment of the work programme for 2001	4.1.1.1 Five training workshops for the Divisions and the SRDCs' senior staff in 2000 4.1.1.2 Manuals on gender approach of: - economic and social development analysis - food, population and environment - development management - information system - regional cooperation and integration
5. Promoting an advocating for the use of data on women's unpaid labour in national accounts and the disaggregation of budgetary allocations for equitable distribution of resources in the countries of focus.	5.1. Awareness created among decision and policy makers on the economic value of women's unpaid labour 5.2. Awareness created among parliamentarians and women's groups on the need to integrate a gender perspective into budgetary processes.	5.1.1 Number of requests received from countries for assistance in integrating a gender perspective into national accounts 5.1.2 Number of requests received from parliamentarians and women's groups for advocacy and policy briefs.	5.1.1.1 Study on how to integrate a gender perspective into national accounts completed, 1 st quarter 2000 5.1.1.2 Expert Group meeting on integrating a gender perspective into national accounts organized, 2 nd quarter 2000. 5.1.1.3 Regional Sensitization Seminar for policy-makers and women in decision making positions in 2001. 5.1.1.4 Advocacy and policy briefs produced and disseminated by 2001.
6 Enhancing women entrepreneurs regional networks.	6.1. Improvement in the management of women entrepreneurs networks,	6.1.1 Number of associations connected to the network	6.1.1.1 Training materials on information technology for women entrepreneurs, 2000. 6.1.1.2 Regional training seminars in information technology for

Objectives for the biennium	Expected Results	Indicators for results	Outputs
7. Improve partners' and clients' access to gender information	6.2 Improved networking and sharing of gender information by ECA with clients and partners	6.2.1 Increased number of requests for information and publications 6.2.2 Number of countries connected to the gender network	<p>leaders of national associations of women entrepreneurs organized as a tool for improving networking and information flow (one for English and one for French speaking countries, 2000).</p> <p>6.1.1.3 Establishment of a regional business information network for women entrepreneurs, 2001</p> <p>7.1.1.1 Creation of an information networkd on gender 7.1.1. 2 Gendernet (newsletter) (2 per year in 2000 and 2001) 7.1.1.3 African Women Report (one in 2000, one in 2001) 7.1.1.4 Compendium of Best Practices (2001) 7.1.1.5 Country statistical brochures (2001)</p>
8. Coordination and harmonization of programmes and activities with other UN Agencies, IGOs and NGOs.	8.1 Harmonization and better coordination programmes in the implementation of the system wide medium term plan on the advancement of women and recommendations and decisions from regional and global conferences.	8.1.1 Number of programmes, activities, projects harmonized.	<p>8.1.1.1 Participation and substantive contribution in activities of other UN Agencies and bodies, IGOs and NGOs such as INSTRAW, UNIFEM, CSW, OAU, ADB, COMESA.</p> <p>8.1.1.2 Advisory services on issues related to the implementation of the regional and global Platforms for Action on Women</p>