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**Sixth African Regional Conference On Women  
Mid-Term Review of the Implementation of  
the Dakar and Beijing Platforms For Action**

**Preliminary Assessment Report  
ECA/ACW/RC.VI/99/6C**

**Women's vital role in culture, the family and socialization**

**November, 1999**

# **Preliminary Evaluation Report**

## **Women's Vital Role in Culture, The Family and Socialization**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This document has been prepared for submission to the sixth Regional Conference which is responsible for the mid-term review of the implementation of the African Platform on Women which was adopted by the fifth Regional Conference on Women held in Dakar in 1994. The African Platform for Action had emphasized the vital role of women in the family culture and socialization and considered it as an area of specific concern requiring the adoption of appropriate strategies and measures.
2. In Africa, the family is recognized as the basic unit that builds morals, values and behavioural patterns guiding individuals in society. It is the basic framework through which a child could be taught his role in the society and adopt values and references which would largely determine his future behaviour.
3. Women in their role as mothers, wives and economic agents play a crucial role in the maintenance of the unity and the functions of the family, social integration, national cohesion, peace, stability and development.
4. They assume these roles and responsibilities in a deeply changing context which is severely testing family bonds and bringing in new problems. The deepening economic crisis, rapid urbanization, civil disorders and armed conflicts not to mention poverty have led to the weakening of the family and worsened the degree of social disintegration, crime, prostitution, drug abuse, child molestation, violence and the resulting rejection of the destitutes and the marginalized groups. The integration of women in the production process, education and gradual affirmation of their rights have been part of these changes.
5. Considering the heavy responsibilities disproportionately borne by women and the need to protect the social fabric, African countries have maintained the following objectives in the Platform<sup>1</sup>:
  - (a) To promote the status of women in African societies through the maintenance of social cohesion and a balance between universal and individual rights;
  - (b) To recognize and value the role of women in the diverse processes of socialization, particularly at the family and community levels;
  - (c) To educate women about their religion in order to prevent the misconception that women should be subservient to men;
  - (d) To remove the negative cultural attitudes and harmful traditional practices that hinder women's participation in the public and political spheres through information, education and communication (IEC) programmes;
  - (e) To develop policies and laws that provide better material and moral support for the family, contribute to its stability and take into account its plurality of forms, particularly the increasing number of single-parent households;

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<sup>1</sup> African Platform for Action-Fifth African Regional Conference on Women 16 to 23 November 1994, Dakar, Senegal, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

(f) To institute social security measures that improve the social, cultural and economic constraints linked to the cost of education and child rearing, as well as promotion and preparation of policies and programmes that are sensitive to the needs of the elderly in the society;

(g) To promote equality of opportunity for family members, especially the rights of women and children in the family;

(h) To promote sports and arts among African women.

6. The proposed actions are as follows:

(a) Mobilize boys and girls to encourage and support the emancipation of girls and women for the development of African societies;

(b) Governments and community leaders must combat culturally biased male and female stereotypes through effective programmes of sustained education and communication, and the enactment and enforcement of appropriate legislation;

(c) Undertake effective sensitization and IEC programmes designed to change the attitudes and behaviour of African parents with regard to the social construction of gender roles;

(d) Include in literacy programmes a component on socialization;

(e) Governments should create a conducive environment for the development of associative networks for promoting family counseling centres with NGO and community involvement;

(f) Promote increased sharing of roles and responsibilities within the family through positive and innovative media campaigns, school and community education programmes with emphasis on gender equality and non-stereotyping gender roles within the family;

(g) Governments, in close consultation and cooperation with employers, should provide and promote the means of reconciling work with parental responsibilities especially for single-parent households having young children;

(h) Governments should take effective action to eliminate all forms of coercion and discrimination in policies and practices pertaining to marriages and the family in general. In particular, measures should be adopted and implemented to eliminate child marriages;

(i) Promote, develop and publish the positive aspects of African cultures and heritage;

(j) Governments should implement the recommendations of the 1994 International Year of the Family; and

(k) Enact legislation to protect women and girls from being ostracized by their immediate families and communities.

7. Assessing the progress achieved since the adoption of the Platform as well as the constraints and prospects for speeding up its implementation would not be easy for two main reasons: (i) the paucity of research conducted on the evolution of the family and its component units; and (ii) the fact that the family is at the centre of an all-embracing and complex social, cultural, political, legal and economic set of interactions which cannot be reduced to a limited number of factors to explain the progress achieved or to justify the clearly identifiable constraints. Along with identifying the major trends, the change factors which have had an influence on the situation of women in the family as well as the threats looming over the next five years would be examined.

8. The first part of this report provides an overview of the role of women in three main areas namely: production, reproduction and community affairs; the rights of women in the family; and the role of women in conflict management. The second part reviews the commitments undertaken by the main organizations for the implementation of the strategies contained in the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action; the outcomes and the recommendations of meetings, conferences and other regional, international and subregional meetings held within the framework of the implementation of the strategies; the commitments on the part of Governments; and the achievements and constraints in the implementation exercise. The third part raises issues that could be used to guide discussions in the thematic workshop during the sixth Conference.

9. The report as a whole will focus on a review of: national reports submitted by countries; reports from regional and subregional meetings organized by the ECA's African Centre for Women (ACW) documents and publication of the UN system and bilateral agencies; the results of studies and research during the period 1994 to 1999.

## **PART I: WOMEN IN PRODUCTION, REPRODUCTION AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

### **A. Overview**

10. In Africa women constitute 51 per cent of the population and play a central role in production, reproduction, and community affairs. However, in the division of labour, assumption of responsibilities, decision-making and access to the means of production are mainly based on gender relations which are in turn determined by a series of representations, codes, and values specific to every society.

11. The definition of the rules and responsibilities draws, at the same time, the distinction between rights and obligations within households.

12. As 62 per cent of the African population live in the rural areas, the principal function of a woman lies in reproduction. According to the United Nations, African women produce more children than other women in the world; that is an average of 5.31 per woman during the period 1995-2000<sup>2</sup>. Ethiopia, the Niger, Somalia and Uganda have the highest fertility rates with seven children per woman. In addition to education, child care, domestic chores as well as care for the elderly and invalids, women combine housekeeping and farm work with income generating activities which would have been impossible without the assistance of young girls. Domestic chores and child rearing absorb most of the time of women. However, though this might be

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<sup>2</sup> Monitoring of the implementation the Dakar/Ngor Declaration and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, Economic Commission for Africa 1999.

indispensable in any society, they are hardly seen or recognized as important and as a result women only receive little support to reduce this burden. The contribution of women hardly appears in any system of national accounts. Measuring work involved in women's activities is skewed by the lack of an appropriate nomenclature.

13. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO),<sup>3</sup> agriculture is the principal source of family income and employment and provides a livelihood for 60 to 80 per cent of women in Africa. As land is held communally and inherited generally through the traditional system, women's access to land resources is based on their status in the family. Generally, women continue to have a usufruct right on land but not the residual ownership of land. In some cases they can farm on the land owned by their husbands and grow food crops but this activity is largely on a subsistent and small scale.

14. Unsecure access to land remains one of the major obstacles to increasing the productivity of women and developing agriculture in general. Many women do not feel encouraged to invest in land which they do not own. The study commissioned by ACW in 1998 on the access of women to land resources and technologies and which focused on Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Guinea demonstrated that no significant development had taken place in this area and that the traditional modes of land ownership still prevailed. In the countries where the survey was carried out, women only possess 20 per cent of the land whereas they constituted more than 75 per cent of the tillers.

15. Rapid urbanization has become one of the most visible causes in the change of life styles and consumption patterns. Thirty-eight per cent of the population would be living in the cities in the year 2000 with Africa having the highest urbanization growth rate in the world (4.9 per cent between 1995-2000 compared to 2.3 per cent for the rest of the world)<sup>4</sup>. Urbanization promotes the culture of individualism at the expense of agriculture. The traditional practices and strategies which were used to cope with crises are under siege as are the family and community structures which ensured solidarity within the extended family. A large number of women are compelled to earn their living and to provide for the needs of their children in an environment that has become increasingly hostile.

16. In most African societies where the family organization is patrilineal, the socialization process makes women reproduce those gender inequities based on male domination and female subservience reflected at all levels of society as well as in the division of labour and decision-making. Polygamy which is a major feature of the matrimonial system, maintains the pressure on women. Factors such as under-education, illiteracy and certain cultural practices contribute to the maintenance of this situation.

## **B. Progress made**

17. This has been the combined result of institutional, political and legal measures taken for the advancement of women and social and economic developments taking place with the modernization of societies.

(a) Access of women to education has increased their participation in economic and political activities and where they have made the greatest progress, fertility has been reduced with positive effects on women as well as on the other members of the family. According to the

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<sup>3</sup> Gender and food security. Synthesis report of regional documents; FAO

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects: The 1996 Revision, New York, 1998.

United Nations estimates, the fertility rate should reduce to 3.28 children by 2025. This reduction applies to North Africa where the age for first marriage has increased considerably, Southern Africa and Eastern Africa (3.9 children per woman in 1995-2000) and this should spread to West and Central Africa where population and reproductive health policies have been implemented successfully since 1994 and before this period.

(b) The changing family structure. The number of households with women as single parents is increasing: 33 per cent in Kenya, 44 per cent in Burundi<sup>5</sup>, 18 per cent in Senegal or in Egypt. The reasons are numerous: greater marriage instability and greater incidences of divorce, men leaving for work in other places, and widowhood. Women as heads of households is a reality upsetting the conventional definitions in gender relationships and roles in society. The increased family responsibility of women has an effect on the development of their social and economic roles. In many villages, the exodus of men has made women to become heads of farmsteads even though the management structures do not consider them as performing such a role. Although these women do not have legal and fiscal rights linked to these situations, measures should be taken to bridge the gap between the reality of their status and their status as women in the family.

(c) The right to control their fertility is increasingly becoming a fundamental human right and in several countries access to contraceptives is more limited by the lack of supply than by religious considerations. Information has been disseminated at this level even though, compared to other regions of the world, Africa is far behind in the use of contraceptives. South Africa is the only country to have adopted a law on voluntary abortion (in February 1997). This law grants women and young girls the right to have an abortion within the first twelve weeks of pregnancy with financial support from the State. Minors could undergo abortion without parental approval.

(d) Efforts have been made by several countries to give greater protection to the rights of women in the family (succession, customary marriage, divorce etc...) The United Nations Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination against Women was signed by all the countries with the exception of seven which had reservations.<sup>6</sup> Botswana ratified (CEDAW) in 1996 and in 1997 all the laws on the situation of women were submitted for review. Zimbabwe has introduced an amendment to the law on succession to establish equity between boys and girls. Namibia has passed a new law on the rights of women as well as their participation in decision-making on an equal footing with men as well as a law on women's right to property, access to credit, social security, health and education. The law reform commission included a committee on the rights of women which led to the inclusion of provisions respecting gender equality in marriage. Uganda adopted a new constitution in 1995. South Africa passed the Employment Equity Bill to encourage the participation of women on an equal basis in modern sector activities.

(e) Measures aimed at eliminating harmful traditional practices (female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriages and violence) are gaining currency. Since 1994 the number of countries which have passed laws on violence against women and girls have increased. In 1996, Burkina Faso passed a law in its penal code to punish parents, traditional practitioners and those aiding and abetting FGM. Senegal adopted new laws in January 1999 to strengthen the situation of women and girls through the prevention and punishment of genital mutilations, sexual harassment, rape, child molestation and corruption of minors. An observatory on the

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<sup>5</sup> Interregional consultation on women's right to land and property on the situation of conflict and reconstruction, Kigali, February 1998..

<sup>6</sup> Egypt, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Tunisia 1999 WILDAF News

rights of women and girls bringing together various human rights organizations, women's organizations, the ministries of justice and the family is being established. Mali and Kenya are implementing ambitious plans of action to eradicate FGM between 1998 and 2005 and 1999-2019 respectively. Laws against female FGM and violence were established in Ghana in 1994, in Cote d'Ivoire in 1998 (on sexual harassment and forced marriages), Togo in 1998, Djibouti in 1995 and in Egypt in 1987. These measures can considerably improve the situation of women in the family if the mechanisms for implementation and the support measures for the information of women and the required assistance are put in place at the same time.

(f) Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have focused on the establishment of legal clinics and training of para-legal officers. Tunisia's example should serve as a reference on the protection of rights in the family. The Council of Ministers and Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted in July 1998 the Addis Ababa Declaration expressing their commitment to the campaign to eradicate harmful traditional practices.

(g) The involvement of women in economic activities is clearly on the increase, reflecting a change of mentality and morals as well as a change in the economic realities. Women are moving increasingly away from the home to the job market especially to work in the informal sector. According to the United Nations, the self employment rate of women aged 15 years or more increased more than 50 per cent from 1970 to 1990. In the urban and sub-urban areas, women are contributing immensely to household incomes needed for the survival of their homes and being appreciated for it. Unemployment and late salary payments in many countries undergoing structural adjustment have resulted in men being unable to cater for the maintenance of their families. Women have considerably increased their economic activities notably in their formal sector where they are highly represented. In the rural areas, women are increasingly requesting plots of land and investing in the extensive cultivation of cereals and cash crops. The food crops are often used as buffer stock invaluable in and the revenue derived from their diverse activities help invaluable in meeting the needs of their households. Their role in food security has increasingly been recognized even though it has not been given consistent support.

(h) Community affairs is one area in which the participation of women has been very noticeable in recent years. Indeed, while social and gender roles seem to have changed little within family units, there is no doubt that women have been active in community activities through the various organizations and associations that they have established. The emergence of women's organizations in rural areas as well as associations on various diverse issues of primary concern is the most visible demonstration of these developments which goes beyond the traditional role assigned to women under certain customs or religions. In Senegal, the number of female groupings rose from 4,700 in 1987 to 6,800 in 1999. A network of women's organizations has emerged or has been strengthened all the subregions.

(i) There is an increasing recognition of the important role played by women in the education of children. Several studies<sup>7</sup> indicate that women as heads of households tend to educate girls more than men as heads of households, all things being equal. Even though women live in more precarious situations, they give greater attention to educating their children than men. Women also tend to devote more resources to educate their children. In Côte d'Ivoire, studies have demonstrated that if the share of the revenue of women doubles it increases by 2 per cent of the household budget allocated to food and reduces respectively by 26 and 40 per cent, the share allocated to cigarettes and alcohol (HODDINOT and HADDAD, 1995).

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<sup>7</sup> Living Standards Measurement Surveys by the World Bank in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Census and Demographic Survey in Mali; Demographic and Health Survey in several African countries, Llyod and Blanc 1995.

(j) The role of women in conflict prevention and peace-making continues to be affirmed. In 1998, 14 out of the 53 African States were involved in armed conflict. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of displaced persons is around 8 million with women and children constituting about 72 to 80 per cent. A study<sup>8</sup> carried out in 15 African countries estimate that the number of orphans will double to reach 4.2 million in the year 2005. Armed conflict, ethnic tensions, political instability and lack of security have been some of the major contributing factors to the weakening of the family. They have had serious consequences on children and women, affecting their lives and their physical and mental well being. They have also a serious impact in terms of malnutrition, exploitation, displacement, sexual abuse and rape. The social structures have been disrupted leading to family dislocation, the destruction of communities and the systems of social protection.

18. Instead of being mere victims, African women raised their voices at the Kampala Conference in 1993 and have since organized themselves to be more involved in activities aimed at the prevention and resolution of conflicts at the highest level. The Women's NGO Africa Solidarity was created in 1996 to serve as a link between women and organizations working for peace at all levels. It has organized two senior African women's missions to Liberia and Burundi and two training workshops on conflict resolution and peace building. The movement of African women organizing themselves to promote peace and non-violence in Africa and the Pan African Conference of Women for a culture of peace derive their roots from this initiative.

19. The hallmark of these efforts has been the creation in 1997 of an African Women's Committee for Peace and Development (AWCPD) jointly organized by OAU and ECA. It is composed of 16 women from the Governments, NGOs and civil society organizations. The main objective of AWCPD is to strengthen the participation and the influence of women in the peace process through the OAU mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

20. The strategies for the prevention of conflicts and the maintenance of peace are:

- (a) The establishment of peace network at the national and subregional level;
- (b) The training of trainers for peace;
- (c) The training of trainers on negotiation techniques and conflict resolution;
- (d) Case studies on conflict and non-conflict situations in order to gain a better understanding of the causes and to prevent conflicts;
- (e) The role of the media in conflict prevention;
- (f) The promotion of civic education at school as well as at home and in the community;
- (g) The development of a network of "child ambassadors" to promote peace and human rights in schools;
- (h) The promotion of education for a culture of peace; and
- (i) The publication of information on activities of women for the promotion of peace.

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<sup>8</sup> World Human Development Report UNDP 1997



21. The African First Ladies took the initiative of organizing two meetings (in 1997 in Abuja , Nigeria and 1998 in Accra, Ghana) to outline areas in which they could use their privileged position to promote peace in the region.

22. The agenda that these women have prepared to promote a culture of peace is certainly one of the most significant demonstrations of their commitment to peace. Throughout the countries in conflict, the networks of women for peace are operational and usually intervene at the highest level of the State as in the case of Burundi during the peace negotiations.

23. Although all these developments might not be uniform, they do signal the beginning of major changes which might have an impact on the distribution of gender roles and responsibilities in the family and society.

### **C. Constraints**

24. Despite the major role played by women in the day to day activities of society and the family, the overwhelming majority of them still suffer from an inferior status which constitutes a major obstacle to their development and to human development in their countries. A number of factors are responsible for the situation. These include:

♦ **Poverty and high fertility which reduce women, their families and their communities to a struggle for survival.**

25. Poverty increases the weight of the socio-cultural burden of women. According to UNDP<sup>9</sup>, from 1970 to 1995 per capita income fell for more than 80 per cent of Africans. Of the 48 countries classified as having a low human development index, 37 are African and 54 per cent of the population of Africa live in absolute poverty.

26. Poverty rises in direct proportion to the size of the household and women suffer the most serious consequences. As families become poorer, women have to work longer hours and have to be more involved in economic production to ensure the welfare of the family. In the poor areas of urban Cairo, it is estimated that 37 per cent of the households headed by women live in very precarious conditions. The survey carried out in Mali on economic and social conditions<sup>10</sup> has shown that the percentage of poor households increases proportionally with the number of people in the household. For example, there are 40 per cent of poor people in the category of households with 3 to 5 people whereas this percentage would reach 60 per cent for households with 5 to 9 people and 70 per cent with households with 10 or more people.

27. When women do not have access to land and take a major responsibility for work both on the farms and in the household, the only alternative they have is reproducing children which is a form of insurance. For these women having many children can reduce the work burden as well as their vulnerability. This is "a rational" defence strategy for the survival of the household though it has serious consequences on the reproductive health of women and compromises the future welfare of thousands of young girls.

28. Structural adjustment policies have led to the dismantling of the systems of protection and social security that were provided traditionally by governments or families. The reduction in

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<sup>9</sup> World Human Development Report UNDP 1998

<sup>10</sup> National strategy for poverty alleviation , Government of Mali and UNDP 1998

Government budgets, the elimination of subsidies on basic foodstuffs, currency devaluation, credit restrictions, review of pricing policies, privatization and liberalization have had a negative impact on family resources and most of the responsibilities have been borne by women. Cost recovery policies and price increases have reduced people's access to basic social services. The reduction in hospital beds has increased the work of women who are responsible for caring for the sick members of the family. There has also been an increase in the number of home deliveries in several countries which increases the risk of maternal mortality.

29. The impact of poverty alleviation programmes which have been implemented after the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development has not yet been felt and remains uncertain to a large extent. Whereas, most of the programmes are aimed at women and young girls, it is difficult to target them because the inadequacies of the methodologies to tackle poverty do not guarantee their making a real impact on the socio-economic situation of women. Other than Egypt which has established a major fund for social development, the strategies are more often corrective measures for negative effects of adjustment policies at the micro-economic which do not take into consideration the macroeconomic and sectoral policies which should form an all-embracing framework to include all strata of society.

30. In addition to political, economic and social issues, poverty has a particularly devastating effect on the family structure as well as on social integration. Several studies have shown that there is a direct link between domestic violence and the fall in the revenue of men which is sometimes accompanied by excessive drinking of alcohol. Economic difficulties set parents and children at loggerheads. It is now a common feature to see more and more street children and homeless families.

#### ♦ The lack of decision-making power by women in the family

31. Women have little control over their lives and when it comes to their family and the society, have no clout of consequence to men. The absence of any such power has serious consequences on their reproductive health. In this regard, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has revealed that women are greatly vulnerable as a result of their social status.

32. Africa is the continent most affected by HIV infection. The recent figures by UNAIDS show that 22.5 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are HIV positive out of a total of 33.4 million people infected throughout the world and this trend is continuing to the detriment of women. Poverty and the shortage of medical services, education and drugs have prevented many women from protecting themselves.

33. AIDS has catastrophic consequences on the family. At the moment, it is one of the principal factors for the disintegration of families in several countries in southern and eastern Africa. In Botswana 31 per cent of people aged between 15 and 19 are HIV positive<sup>11</sup> and this will have serious short- medium- and long-term consequences. The lack of communication particularly on love and sex between couples in our societies leaves women with little negotiating power on matters of sexual relationship and protection, thus increasing their vulnerability.

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<sup>11</sup> Report of the State of the World's Children, UNICEF 1999

34. Children and adolescence are also affected by the consequences of AIDS. Ninety per cent of eight million children who are AIDS orphans live in sub-Saharan Africa. As a result of the prejudices surrounding this illness such children are particularly exposed to ill treatment and rejection within their families.

35. The vulnerability of women to HIV should be reduced through the improvement of their position in society at all levels (education, communication and economic empowerment). The studies have insisted on sensitization of men and their involvement in the campaign against AIDS. In this regard, Uganda has played a pioneering role in the implementation of preventive strategies to reduce the percentage of HIV positive pregnant women from 21 per cent at the beginning of the 1990s to 15 per cent by 1995. This experience has demonstrated the need to closely associate socio-economic development, health and basic human rights.

♦ **Inadequate protection of the rights of women in the family**

36. There is a big gap between the legislation enacted by the vast majority of States and actual enforcement. The fact that family affairs are governed by several legal systems (civil law, customary law and the laws applicable to certain ethnic or religious communities as is the case of (the Hindus in Kenya) is one of the causes. The laws are not well known by those whom the laws are supposed to serve and the enforcement mechanisms are often defective. The progress achieved through the mobilization of women and the defense of their rights are not guaranteed. The effects of culture as well as the basic structures which deny any powers to women (patrilineal inheritance, dependency) should not be underestimated in any manner. Without adequate protection, many women opt for negotiation or resignation as choices which, for their "Security", entail less risks than going to the courts. There is a lack of political will and support for the legislation of family laws under preparation for the past 15 years in some countries.

37. Women's access to land has not been guaranteed by the land tenure reforms being implemented within the context of liberalization because such reforms favour money as the fastest method of gaining access to land.

♦ **The burden of socio-cultural values**

38. These are the basic structures working against women. Certain beliefs, traditions and prejudices are very strong whereas positive points such as the patient search for consensus building are hardly emphasized. The negative image of women still persists in school books and the media despite the efforts undertaken by professional women to combat such stereotyping. Another constraint remains the preference for boys in most societies. All the relevant studies have yet to be undertaken to show the impact of these preferences on young girls but they might have serious consequences on their physical development as well as their emotional, psychological and intellectual development. The masculine condition continues to be determined by polygamy and large families.

♦ **Inadequate support services to enable women reconcile domestic and professional activities**

39. The changes that are taking place within the family structure have reduced the responsibility of the extended family with regard to children at a time when an increasing number of women are working away from home. Ninety-seven per cent of children between 0 and 6 years have no access to basic education and lack proper homes. Abandoning children at

this critical period of their growth has an immediate negative effect and longer term repercussions on their development. It is important that children at this age should be properly protected, fed, cared for and given affection. They also need emotional and mental stimuli to strengthen their ability to learn. The programmes on the care and development of young children should reduce the domestic burden of mothers to enable them take care of certain essential needs of their children although they are not amongst the priorities of most countries. The pilot experiments which have been successful in Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, Namibia and Mauritius have demonstrated the importance of this not only for the children themselves but also for their mothers and their communities as a whole.

♦ **Lack of data on the real contribution of women in households**

40. The contribution of women in the households continues to be greatly underestimated due to the lack of gender disaggregated data. And yet such data are indispensable for the preparation of appropriate policies and decision-making by Governments. Even though, since the first World Conference on Women held in Mexico the need for reliable data on the activity of women was recognized, very little progress has been made on the ground. No country has reviewed its system of national accounts to bring it in line with the international definition of economic activity adopted by the United Nations in 1993.<sup>12</sup> Time budgeting taken into consideration and a national system of satellite accounts are not generally used. The fact that most women are involved in the informal sector means that their contribution could be better assessed through an improvement in the methods of determining the outcome of the activities in the sector. In most countries data collection depends to a large extent on external financial sources which set the priorities. The technical capacities to constitute data banks are inadequate and generally the priority given to follow-up action on structural adjustment policies has pushed data building on social conditions to the background.

## **Part II. COMMITMENTS OF PRINCIPAL ORGANIZATIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIES OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM**

### **A. The commitments on the part of regional organizations**

#### **Achievements**

41. The resolution adopted at the end of the African Regional Conference held in Dakar urged international organizations, in the preparation and implementation of their programmes, to focus mainly on the principal areas of the Platform.

42. It also requested African Governments bilateral and multilateral development institutions, United Nations and other specialized agencies to support the adoption of a gender approach in the formulation and implementation of programmes in their respective areas of competence.

43. In this regard, the three regional organizations namely: OAU, ECA and ADB were requested by the member States to ensure follow-up action on the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Dakar Platform as well as the Beijing Platform for Action. A joint secretariat OAU/ECA/ADB was established in this regard as a consultative framework.

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<sup>12</sup> The recent review of the 1993 UN system of national account extended the international definition of economic activity to include manufacturing activities not on the market but continues to be excluded from service activities which are the most important on the domestic market albeit not a source of income.

44. ECA's commitment was demonstrated through: upgrading the status of ACW which became a Division within ECA as well as the focal point for follow-up action on the Dakar and Beijing conferences with a mandate:

(a) To reinforce the capacities of member States to define and implement gender approach policies;

(b) To organize subregional follow-up meetings aimed at adopting the policies of the States to conform with the decisions of the Platform;

(c) To establish a training institute for the political training of African women to enable them play a more efficient role; and

(d) To continue to strengthen capacities within ECA with a gender approach.

45. In this regard, ACW held four subregional follow-up meetings for: West Africa in Dakar in November 1997, Central Africa in Bangui in June 1998, North Africa in Rabat in November 1998, East and Southern Africa in Seychelles in February 1999. These meetings examined the state of progress in the preparation and implementation of the national programmes of action and the preparation of evaluation reports.

46. Guidelines and indicators were prepared for the monitoring action on the implementation of the Platform and advisory services were provided to Mauritius and South Africa for the preparation of their national plans of action on gender. The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) helped to prepare a plan for the mainstream of women in economic development and planning and both Guinea and the Niger were assisted with human rights capacity building. Various training and research activities were also undertaken.

47. To strengthen its own capacity, ACW recruited two regional advisers in the area of women's rights and women's empowerment respectively. The services of these advisers could be provided free of charge to member States at their request.

• **Strengthening of the Committee on Women and Development (CWD ex ARCC)**

48. As a consultative organ for the coordination of policies on women, CWD was revitalized in 1997 and given a new mandate. Its role includes:

(a) The periodic review of progress achieved in the implementation of Platform;

(b) The mobilization of resources for the implementation of subregional plans of action; and

(c) The organization of exchange of information, data and experiences on various policies of countries relating to women.

49. CWD was pro-active in advocacy among African policy-makers. It supported the adoption during the last OAU Summit (1999) of a resolution to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar Plan for Action and the Beijing Plan for Action. Among the recommendations included in the resolution was the creation of a post of "gender" advisor to every Head of State and as well as the systematic participation of women in the statutory meetings of OAU.

- **The inclusion of a gender perspective in all activities of ECA Divisions as well as in the training of personnel and the creation of gender awareness.**

50. OAU was active in encouraging African Governments to implement the Dakar and the Beijing Platforms for Action through resolutions that were submitted regularly for adoption to the summit meetings of the Heads of State and Government.

51. OAU was also active in the following areas:

- **Protection of the rights of the child**

52. Through the preparation of an African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children adopted in 1999 and the campaign against the economic exploitation of children, the African Common Position against the most intolerable and abusive forms of child labour adopted during the last Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Ouagadougou in June 1998 has exemplified progress in this area. OAU also established a special committee to review the situation of children in countries in conflict in 1997 and has pursued its campaign for the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Addis Ababa Declaration which was adopted by the Heads of State and Government in July 1998 expresses OAU's commitment to the campaign for the eradication of harmful traditional practices.

- **Mobilization for education for all**

53. On education, OAU has indicated its commitment for universal education in Africa through the proclamation of the Education Decade in Africa 1997-2006 which was adopted by the thirty-second session of the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Yaounde in 1996. The Decade was officially launched in 1997. The Action Programme was prepared with the support of UNICEF and IDRC. Its specific objectives aimed at extending education and reducing every kind of gender inequity as well as the disparities between rural and urban areas. The improvement of the quality of education, vocational training and capacity building will, if resolutely pursued, have some impact on the situation of young girls.

- **The establishment of an African Women Committee for Peace in May 1998**

54. The objective of this Committee is to ensure that women participate actively in all peace activities and clearly articulate the needs and concerns of refugee and displaced women and children.

#### ♦ **African Development Bank**

55. As a regional institution to promote economic and social development in Africa, ADB has been involved, at various stages, in the preparation and implementation of the Platforms. Its commitment is reflected through:

- **The inclusion of gender as a cross-cutting issue**

56. Gender issues should now be taken into account in the preparation of country strategies as well as in project evaluation in the areas of focus: agriculture and rural development; human resources development and the private sector; good governance; regional integration and economic cooperation. The following measures have been taken:

- (a) The systematic inclusion of the "gender" dimension in all projects submitted to ADB for funding;
- (b) The strengthening of gender skills ADB;
- (c) Training in gender for team leaders and heads of departments;
- (d) Establishment of inter-departmental advisory committees on issues relating to women; and
- (e) Strengthening of the human and financial resources of the women's unit.

### **Increased financing for women and children**

57. Within the framework of poverty alleviation, the impact has been difficult to be measured due to the following reasons:

- (a) The commitments are more political than programmatic or concrete. The declarations which are generally adopted do not contain mechanisms that enable them to be translated into concrete action and are seen to be based more on principle than on the achievement of results;
- (b) The lack of concrete action in the area of the family. Other than the celebration of the International Year of the Family, no action has been undertaken for even an assessment of the impact of this Year in Africa. The impact of this Year has been hardly felt in the continent. ADB has financed a research programme on the family in Senegal but the use of the results for the purposes of preparing policies and programmes remains a problem;
- (c) There is no mechanism compelling the various institutions to give an account of their commitments. The strategies, priorities and the internal constraints of each institution had overshadowed their political and moral commitments to women and young girls. The weaknesses of the OAU's mechanisms responsible for women's affairs have not made it possible for the organization to ensure the necessary follow-up to translate the resolutions adopted into concrete action. For instance, ADB has no statistics on the impact of the gender approach resulting from increased financing for gender projects; and
- (d) The impact of coordination among OAU, ECA and ADB has yet to be felt on the ground.

58. These weaknesses point to possible areas of improvement during the second phase of the Platform implementation ACW in particular, as a regional focal point for this exercise, should strengthen its capacity to reach out and influence ECA-sponsored technical bodies as well as regional and subregional institutions responsible for economic and social development.

## **B. Commitments by international organizations**

### **Achievements and progress**

59. The concerns of women and the family have been expressed during various conferences organized by the United Nations particularly the Cairo International Conference on Population

and Development in 1994 and the Copenhagen Summit on Social Development in 1995, the World Food Conference, the Habitat Conference, and through the celebration of the International Year of the Family in 1994 and naturally during the Beijing World Conference.

60. On the whole, the commitment made by the international organizations and the donor countries following the Beijing Conference have been reaffirmed in documents such as the Role of Development Cooperation at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century and OECD's Guidelines of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment within the context of Development Cooperation".

61. In this context the UNESCO Declaration in Beijing took shape in particular through the special project Women and the Culture of Peace 1998-1999 and the African Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace.

62. The Canadian Agency for International Development has reviewed its policy on women and development in 1995 and adopted a new egalitarian gender policy which gives greater attention to the rights of women and girls. The strategic plan for each region takes two priorities into account: women and development and human rights (part of the six priority areas of the development aid policy of the Government of Canada which has requested each country to draw up its national strategy for gender equality).

63. As an illustration, the project on "Rights and Citizenship of Women in French Speaking Africa which was initiated in 1997, seeks to increase the observance of the rights of women and girls and ensure their participation in democratic activities by focusing on three issues: (i) legal and social equality between men and women; (ii) elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls; and (iii) the sharing of political power.

64. This project focused on Guinea, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso will support for five years the creation of coalitions of organizations involved in women's and human rights and as well as other organizations exerting any decision-making power or influence. At the regional level, the most important result will be the regrouping of these networks into a Forum involving the subregional Committee on harmful traditional practices to the health of women and girls and women ministers and parliamentarians.

65. UNICEF, in accordance with its commitment to promote education for all with the support of the Governments of Canada and Norway, has launched the education initiative for girls in Africa which is being carried out in 15 countries with a budget of 14.9 million dollars. This programme will continue until 1999.

66. Initiative for the education of girls (IEG) has assisted countries to test various approaches to bridge the gap between boys and girls. The strategy is double-edged: to mobilize the community to attain this objective and to influence the education system to improve the education of girls.

67. Beyond these initiatives, the global strategy of UNICEF since 1996 in its new policy for the protection of the child has been based on the recognition of children at risk and on the concept of special protective measures. Most of the activities initiated within the framework are likely to have an impact on girls.

68. The World Bank has reiterated that the education of girls and women is one of the surest ways of attaining the economic and social development of Africa. One of the most significant



achievements since the Beijing Conference has been the adoption in 1997 of a Regional Gender Action Plan, (RGAP).

69. The second strategic objective of this Plan focuses on human resources development in women through significant increase of their participation in education, access to adequate health services, nutrition and planning. Recently, the World Bank undertook to increase its investment in education and the development of the young child.

70. In October 1997 ECA and the World Bank organized a Conference on Women in Gender and Law for the East African countries. Policy makers and law practitioners in these countries compared their national laws on the family and adopted strategies to strengthen such legislation.

71. UNDP has played an important role in supporting governments to formulate policies and programmes on poverty alleviation. HIV/AIDS and Environmental Protection have also been areas of UNDP intervention. One can particularly cite as an example the UNDP/ILO programme initiative "Jobs for Africa: Poverty-Reducing Employment strategies for sub-Saharan Africa" (JFA-PRESSA) which was launched in 1998 and has become operational in at least six countries. The objective is to develop and build capacities within national and regional institutions as well as networks in 10 countries<sup>13</sup> involved in this project to promote alternative policies on poverty alleviation through productive employment.

72. UNDP has launched in Malawi a programme entitled the Sustainable Livelihoods Programme which aims at strengthening the capacities of individuals within families in order for them to plan and undertake activities which effectively and efficiently use household resources to ensure that all the members of the family have secure and sustainable livelihoods. These statements have not been backed by the required resources.

73. ILO: the third commitment of the Social Summit requires ILO to promote the attainment of the objective of full employment by providing to all women and men the opportunity to secure sustainable livelihoods through the free choice of employment and productive employment. In this regard, ILO launched the more and better jobs programme in 1996.

74. Through its International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) ILO is providing support for the campaign against child labour. This programme which is operational in....countries aims at preventing child labour, abolishing in the most dangerous and severest forms of child labour as well as improving the working conditions of children. In this same context, the Subregional Workshop on the Trafficking of Domestic Children in West and Central Africa which was organized with the support of UNICEF from 6 to 8 July 1999 in Cotonou served as a frame for a review and action for greater coordination on the interventions between the countries and subregions in West and Central Africa in particular.

75. UNIFEM has launched a regional programme on violence against women in several countries between July 1998 and 1999. The regional seminar organized in Dakar in 1998 on the law on violence against women enabled 12 countries to compare their national laws and to recommend the necessary amendments particularly on rape, genital mutilation, domestic violence, sexual harassment and forced marriages.

76. On conflict resolution, UNIFEM through its project entitled Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts supports national organizations working for peace as well as grassroots women leaders in Burundi.

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<sup>13</sup> Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

77. The World Health Organization (WHO) prepared a regional plan of action for the elimination of sexual mutilation in Africa (1996 to 2015). It was launched in 1997 for 26 countries in the region. It has a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach to eliminate this practice as well as taking responsibility for the medical complications arising out of this practice. WHO has undertaken to provide assistance to the countries in the preparation and implementation of their national plans.

78. The strategies aim at:

(a) Involving communities in the identification of physical, psychological, and emotional problems of the practices in question;

(b) Developing human resources towards integrated and participatory approaches for the elimination of such practices;

(c) Developing and producing together with the people concerned, materials and programmes on information, education and communication on the cultural aspects and focused on specific targeted groups; and

(d) Promoting multisectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation for planned activities and interventions.

79. At the medical level the action plan supports the inclusion of a model on harmful traditional practices in the training programmes of medical and paramedical personnel.

80. WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA launched in 1997 a "Joint Declaration on Female Genital Mutilation where they affirmed their joint commitment to assist governments and communities to promote the health and development of women and children.

81. UNFPA, in providing support to the Cairo Programme of Action whose objectives are similar to those of the Beijing Conference, committed itself to the empowerment of women and the reproductive health of young women. It has assisted several countries to establish integrated reproductive health programmes and has supported the involvement of groups such as parliamentarians, religious leaders and traditional communicators in their implementation.

82. The African Forum on the Reproductive Health of Young People organized in January 1997 by UNFPA in collaboration with ECA and OAU, brought together 500 boys and girls from 48 countries. The recommendations and the resolutions of this Forum were presented to the OAU Council of Ministers.

## **C. Constraints**

### **◆ Inadequate consideration of the family as an area of research or a focus of projects and programmes for various target groups.**

83. There is no sector of cooperation covering the concept of family. It could be said that most of the activities undertaken for women, children and the handicapped in all areas have a direct effect on the family but these efforts have neither been assessed nor have their long-term implications. The family in itself is not a clear priority for any of these institutions and is therefore not seen as part of their concerns.

♦ **The low level of mobilized resources**

84. Strategy preparation is not always backed up with the resources for speedy implementation. Many countries have deplored the fact that the commitments made at Beijing were not followed with the concrete action they expected. Whereas donors have supported the formulation of national plans of action to varying degrees, the financing of these projects has not been easy. There are no statistics available on appropriations budgeted specifically for women. Funding continues to be problematic.

♦ **Improving the coordination of assistance**

85. Coordination is often informal. The national machinery that should ensure coordination are sometimes weak in some countries. No country has mentioned the organization of a successful roundtable after Beijing.

**PART III THE OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS, CONFERENCES AND OTHER REGIONAL, INTERNATIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL CONFERENCES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM**

86. It is in the area of peace and rights that the greatest and the most significant number of initiatives have been taken.

87. The Pan-African Women's Conference for a Culture of Peace held in Zanzibar, Tanzania from 17 to 20 May 1999 and which was organized jointly by the OAU, the African Committee of Women for Peace and Development as well as other international and non-governmental organizations was the highlight for the mobilization of women for peace. This meeting was arranged by the Forum of Women on Peace which was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1996 and the Kigali Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and development held in 1997.

88. The objective of this Conference was to provide an opportunity for African Women to coordinate the activities for peace in such a way that the impact would be effective and significant on the decision-making process in Africa. This initiative which was supported by UNESCO led to the adoption of the Agenda of African Women for Peace which is an Action Platform for the prevention of conflict and the preservation of peace in Africa.

89. This Conference was also a significant phase in the mobilization process for the year 2000, proclaimed by the United Nations (with UNESCO as lead agency) as the International Year for a Culture of Peace.

90. The First Ladies in Africa held two meetings (in 1997 in Abuja, Nigeria and in 1998 in Accra, Ghana) to define ways of using their privileged position to promote peace in the region. The Accra Plan of action on Peace and Humanitarian issues of the First Ladies of West Africa and the Abuja Declaration on Peace and Humanitarian Issues were adopted by the Heads of State.

91. The workshop on "Women and the Effects of Civil War" was held from 11 December to 13 December and led to the establishment of a coalition of African Women against war with one of its objectives aimed at supporting the Algiers Declaration adopted by the international

colloquium on contemporary forms of violence and culture of peace held from 20 to 22 December 1997. The objective of this coalition is to lobby support for women in countries in conflict, educate people on their rights, collect and disseminate information regionally and internationally.

92. Among other initiatives are:

(a) The interregional consultation on the rights of women to land and property in conflict situations and in reconstruction held in Kigali from 16 to 19 February 1999 which was organized jointly by UNHCR, UNDP, UNIFEM and UNCHS (Habitat);

(b) The inter-agency workshop on best practices used by women for peace-building and conflict resolution through non-violence held in Addis Ababa in 1997.

93. These meetings led to the establishment of bodies such as the African Committee of Women for Peace which has been operational since 1998 and several groups set up in Africa at the national, regional and subregional levels which are working for new approaches to the non-violent resolution of conflict and the emergence of new forms of solidarity. However, the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations continues pose a challenge for initiators. The resources available are minimal and there is a lack of effective coordination.

## **Part IV COMMITMENTS BY GOVERNMENTS**

### **4-1 Achievements and progress**

94. At the institutional level, post Beijing saw the establishment of ministries responsible for family affairs in several countries and these ministries were first and foremost responsible for women's affairs. The significance of these decisions underlines the relationships between women, family and the problem of childhood for example. However, this interrelationship is not borne out in the national report in the manner in which they are integrated in the conceptual stages of project and programme planning or the activities undertaken to strengthen the family structure.

95. Morocco, for the first time in March 1998, established a ministry responsible for social affairs, the family and children whose main function is the coordination of policies and programmes for women. A commission called Women and Development was also established for the preparation of the five year development plan 1999/2003. The Statistics Department as well as the Centre for Demographic studies were encouraged to introduce gender disaggregation in their data collection. Efforts should be pursued for the adoption of more egalitarian laws.

96. In the effort to promote peace, Burundi has appointed women on the National Council for National Unity and Reconciliation and the women's group obtained in October 1998, observer status in the Burundi peace talks taking place in Arusha. Although women have not been fully integrated in the peace process, these decisions will enable them to take part in deciding the future of their country.

97. On the implementation of the recommendation and commitments made at the World Summit on Social Development (1994), it should be recalled that African countries adopted a common position in which they reaffirmed four priorities:

- (a) The poverty alleviation;
- (b) The establishment and the maintenance of productive employment and revenue;
- (c) The strengthening of social integration, national unity, peace and political stability in the region;
- (d) The promotion of democracy, human rights and popular participation.

98. The preamble of this document on the common position taken by Africa <sup>14</sup> states that the negative social and human conditions in Africa require reorientation of the fundamental development process in Africa. This guideline should be based on local capacities and to strengthen such capacities through the establishment of confidence among the peoples. It should be accompanied by greater responsibilities to the peoples especially women and the youth who should be positive change agents.

99. In this regard most of the countries have established programmes to mitigate the social cost of structural adjustment (Ghana) or poverty alleviation programmes. At the moment, the subregional follow-up meetings of the Social Summit have been held for North Africa in Marrakesh from 23 – 29 March 1999 and for East and Southern Africa in Nairobi. The follow-up meeting for West and Central Africa was held in September 1999. It should be noted that women likewise the family have not featured in the mid-term reviews on the result of the Summit.

100. On the Programme of Action drawn up by the Cairo Conference on Population and Development, States were requested to take into consideration the rights and responsibilities of all members of the family and to take appropriate measures to protect the family from distress and disintegration in conformity with the welfare and health requirements taking into account the survival strategies designed by the families themselves as well as providing couples and individuals with the means of deciding the size of their families, to include issues of interest to the family in the development plans policies and programmes. It should also encourage the execution of analytic studies on the demographic process in the family cycle for a better understanding of the factors determining small families.

101. Although in most of the countries population activities do not give specific attention to the family, the report on the regional assessment indicates that the measures undertaken to improve the quality of life of various segments of the society could have a positive impact on the family. For example, about 84 per cent of the member States have adopted measures to guarantee equality of opportunities and the legal protection of young girls. About half of these countries have passed laws and formulated policies and strategies for adolescents. Various methods have been developed on the youth. Eighty-five per cent of the countries which responded to the questionnaire have taken measures to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years and in some countries to 21.

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<sup>14</sup> Common African position on social and human development in Africa. Conference of African Ministers responsible for Human Development, ECA, 20-21 January 1994.

102. The following recommendations will remain for the next five years.

**Constraints:**

◆ **Inadequate consideration of the family in its various dimensions**

103. The role of the family as a framework for economic decisions and actions is not adequately taken into account. Parental education and programmes for young children are almost absent from most of the action plans. Advisory services and assistance to families are required only in cases of litigation. Parents are sufficiently involved in programmes on the reproductive health of adolescents which constitute a major handicap. The media and the various resources from the cultural environment are not adequately called upon in this regard. With the support of UNFPA, an original experience is underway in West Africa involving the use of traditional communicators to educate people on issues relating to the family but this type of action should be adequately monitored and well managed.

◆ **Difficulties encountered in the implementation of laws passed**

104. Many countries have admitted that granting women the right to own land was more difficult to implement than other reforms. Although there were positive developments in Zimbabwe in 1996, the real effects are yet to be seen in view of the slow nature of the changes as well as the weaknesses of the control mechanisms that have been established. The multiplicity of the legal system further compounds the issue. In Swaziland, women can only acquire property, land or loans with the endorsement of the husband. Many countries do not have family laws. In some other countries, family laws have been in gestation for the past 10 years which shows the lack of strong political will. There is a lack of effort to disseminate these developments in countries which have passed family laws.

◆ **The lack of a gender relationship within the family**

105. There are growing signs of the potential negative effect that investments to increase agricultural production can have on the workload of women if the problems of gender roles and relationships are not addressed. But such an assessment is not systematized. Gender mainstreaming is still inadequate in most countries due to the lack of political will and/or lack of control over its tools. In most cases the programmes focus on "women" without due consideration given to the family as a dynamic entity containing several issues as well as an essential determinant of the situation.

## **PART V: ISSUES FOR ASSESSMENT**

106. In short, the principal objective of the Action Plans prepared by the countries aims at achieving the harmonious development of women as mothers, wives and persons within the family. The premise "a world where each family can be a sanctuary of security, respect and love<sup>15</sup>", which was the message for the celebration of the International Year of the Family necessarily presupposes moving from a conflict situation in which the interest of women and those of their families as determined by men move towards a more harmonious position where the roles and responsibilities of each one are recognized and respected. Obstacles have been identified as well as very clear opportunities which have been identified or revitalized during the course of the next five years.

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<sup>15</sup> International Year of the Family 1994 building the smallest democracy in the heart of the society.

107. In this respect three areas of concern will be taken into account:

- (a) The autonomy of women which should be ensured within the family;
- (b) Social and legal protection of women within the family;
- (c) The strategies to develop the positive aspects of culture and tradition for the advancement of women and protection of the family;

## **EVALUATION WORKSHOP: GUIDELINE QUESTIONS**

1. In the light of the experience gained, how do we measure the impact of projects and programmes and the principal constraints in the exercise of their economic activities?
2. How do we improve the economic activity of women, sustain their mechanisms for coping with crisis situations and encourage them to participate in planning and in the implementation of initiatives taken on their behalf?
3. What are the most successful survival strategies developed by women in recent years, their effect on women and other members of the family?
4. How do we improve the involvement of women in policies and programmes on poverty reduction, the AIDS pandemic and reproductive health particularly for adolescents?
5. What are the services, the required support measures in the family within the professional framework to facilitate the economic activity of women?
6. What are the most adaptable strategies to promote the integration of the most disadvantaged women?
7. What are the appropriate strategies to involve men in activities to promote and develop the role of women?
8. What are the appropriate strategies to promote greater sharing of gender responsibilities in the family?
9. What are the relevant areas of study and research to promote greater awareness of the complex relationships within the family?

### **On social and legal protection of women within the family:**

1. In the light of experience gained in the various countries what are the major constraints in the implementation of the laws passed: family law, land legislation, laws against violence etc.? Identify measures with the greatest impact on the improvement of the status of women in the family.
2. What are the appropriate mechanisms to resolve the constraints and what role should be played by the various government actors, NGOs and women themselves?
3. What are the strategic actions to be undertaken to promote respect for the rights of various members of the family?

### **On the strategies to develop the positive aspects of culture and tradition for the advancement of women and protection of the family:**

1. What are the most efficient strategies and actions to be undertaken to gather and disseminate women-friendly traditional practices and culture?



2. How do we integrate community values which might be a catalyst for change into development projects and programmes?
3. How do we develop and disseminate activities undertaken by women for the maintenance of peace?