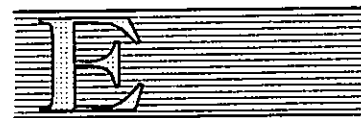


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African Centre for Women

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**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE AFRICAN
CENTRE FOR WOMEN
2000 to 2001**

Summary of Activities of the African Centre for Women 2000 to 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

The period under review marked the end of the ECA Medium-Term Plan 1996-1999 and the beginning of the implementation of the new one, 2000-2003. It was in this context that the African Centre for Women (ACW) launched its Strategic Plan 2000-2005 in which it has clarified its mandate and defined its priority areas of focus. During the biennium 2000-2001, the African Centre for Women sought to acquire the necessary capacity to implement the main objectives of its mission for the period 2000-2005 including the recruitment of 5 new professionals.

The mission of ACW is to influence, from a gender perspective, the content of policies and programmes discussed and adopted by decision-makers at national, subregional and regional levels on socio-economic development issues.

The work-programme of the Centre puts emphasis on the following three core services:

- ◆ Advocacy and policy analysis for mainstreaming gender in national development issues
- ◆ Convening stakeholders and building consensus on progress made, best practices and new priorities towards the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action
- ◆ Technical cooperation with and capacity building of public services, intergovernmental organizations parliamentarians and the civil society organizations on issues related to the development of national, subregional and regional gender policies

The specific objectives for the 2000-2001 work programme are:

- ◆ To prepare and implement, in collaboration with stakeholders under the leadership of the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) a monitoring and evaluation process of the implementation of the African Plan of Action (2000-2004) to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action
- ◆ To build the capacity of ECA's experts in the utilisation of methods and tools for gender mainstreaming in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of their programmes
- ◆ To produce information and advocacy documents for expert groups, decision-makers, and parliamentarians involved in the assessment and the formulation of national macroeconomic and sector-related policies and strategies
- ◆ To provide technical support and advisory services to member States upon request
- ◆ To support the implementation of the above-mentioned objectives with information, communication and net-working activities

II. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN PLAN OF ACTION

Among the major outcomes of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women in November 1999 were three documents namely *the Report of the Conference*, the *Synthesis of the National Progress Reports* and the *African Plan of Action* to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.

The African Plan of Action was adopted by the African Heads of State in March 2000. It aims at accelerating the implementation of the Platforms for Action by addressing the following institutional and structural issues:

- ◆ Mainstreaming gender in all policies, plans and programmes at the local, national, subregional and regional levels and to this end, promoting a system of collection of gender-disaggregated data and building capacity in gender analysis and gender planning
- ◆ Defining concrete strategies for coordinating the activities that are implemented by a range of actors in various sectors
- ◆ Formulating and instituting a well defined monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the implementation process that is predicated on clearly defined set of indicators. This would have to be accompanied by mechanisms for accountability to the targeted beneficiaries of the Platforms for Action
- ◆ Instituting a concrete, time-bound institutional mechanism for promoting equal gender representation in decision-making bodies in the public and private sectors, the legislature, political parties and international organizations.
- ◆ Engendering the national budget and macro-economic planning processes to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to accelerate the implementation of the Platforms for Action
- ◆ Reducing the rate of HIV/AIDS infections by creating awareness and reducing the socio-economic devastation of the disease
- ◆ Poverty reduction through industrialization of indigenous entrepreneurial activities that would produce and provide utility goods and employment while reducing women's domestic work load

The monitoring and evaluation programme of ACW will focus on the performance of governments in relation to the implementation of the *African Plan of Action*. It is the actions or absence of expected actions rather than their impact that will be monitored. The systematic monitoring over time will lay the ground-work for impact assessment in future. Among the priority areas to be monitored and evaluated will be the existence or absence of a national gender policy which is an indispensable tool for engendering national development policies, plans and programmes.

In order for the national gender policy to be effective, it must be accompanied by a couple of institutional mechanisms that will facilitate its implementation. The monitoring and evaluation programme will therefore focus of the co-ordination mechanism established by the members States to ensure that in different sectors gender is being mainstreamed within all departments and at all levels. Its mandate, structures and the functioning modalities will also be monitored to ensure that they facilitate the co-ordinating role.

The other institutional mechanism that will be subject to monitoring and evaluation is the set of accountability mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the commitments made to women by governments are being honoured at different levels. Particular attention will be paid to their mandate, structures and capacities.

The task of integrating gender into national policies, plans and programmes requires specific skills for identifying , analyzing and incorporating gender concerns. Capacity building programmes therefore will be subjects of monitoring and evaluation with particular attention being paid to scope, content, methodology and the human and financial resources allocated for the task.

At the subregional level, the monitoring and evaluation programme will be implemented within the Regional Economic Communities, while at the regional level the OAU and the ADB will carry out similar exercises.

ACW has developed monitoring indicators for each of the areas of focus which will permit the collection of information in 2002 and 2003 that will partially serve as the basis for the end of decade performance evaluation in 2004. These indicators will be submitted for review and validation to a group of experts and then to the Committee on Women and Development during this statutory meeting as indicated in the agenda.

III. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE CAPACITY BUILDING OF ECA'S EXPERTS IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Within its mandate to promote the capacity for mainstreaming gender in all ECA Divisions, ACW's primary focus was on the development of competence to engender the planning and programming process and the contents of the core activities of the Divisions. In this context, the period between 1997 and 1999 was dedicated to the needs assessment of the professional staff and the subsequent participatory formulation of a capacity building programme. In January 2000, an internal workshop was held to validate the capacity building programme that spans a 5 year period from 2000-2005.

In October 2000, ACW organized the first two training Workshops for selected professional staff from all substantive divisions and the Subregional Development Centres. A meeting was also organized for programme managers of the substantive divisions to sensitize them on institutional framework as well as budgetary implications for gender mainstreaming. This was done as a corrective measure to the slow progress in implementing the capacity building programme and in meeting the targets and benchmarks proposed. It was agreed that at least 20% of financial resources would be allocated to gender mainstreaming. Besides, the responsibility for senior management mainstreaming gender and for exercising the gender focal point functions including reporting in meetings was placed on the programme managers. It was further agreed that starting 2002, all the 4 ECA flagship publications would be gender-sensitive given their important influence on the formulation of development policies, programmes and actions.

IV. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND ADVISORY SERVICES TO MEMBER STATE

Advisory services were provided by ACW to member States and Regional Economic Communities upon request in the following areas; gender mainstreaming; formulation of national gender policies; formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive programmes for women's empowerment; strategies for implementation of the CEDAW, capacity building ; and needs assessment and partnership building as summarized below.

1. *Technical assistance in mainstreaming gender concerns in national and sectoral policies, plans and programmes*

Several requests were made by member States, Intergovernmental organizations and NGOs to provide assistance in mainstreaming a gender perspective in national and sectoral development policies, plans, strategies and programmes. Some of the countries and institutions that benefited from the services include Comores, Rwanda, Uganda, Nigeria, Economic Communities of West

African States (ECOWAS), West African Women's Association (WAWA), Lesotho, Intergovernmental Authority on Development IGAD etc.

2. Technical assistance in training, programme formulation and research

A Training Workshop held in South Africa was conducted in the development of gender monitoring indicators for participants from the Southern Africa subregion. Another Training Workshop was conducted in Lesotho on the development and use of gender indicators. In a bid to promote economic empowerment of women, a Training of Trainers Workshop was conducted in Uganda for women entrepreneurs in food processing.

The Niger Department of Women's Affairs benefited from advisory services in the formulation of the Niger Plan of Action for the Promotion of the Legal Status of Women. Technical support was similarly provided to a project known as *Rights and Citizenship of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa* initiated by the Canadian Centre for Studies and International Cooperation (CECI). Besides, ECA jointly organized a Workshop entitled Access of Women to Legal and Judicial Services in Sub-Saharan Africa with the World Bank, CECI/ACDI and WILDAF /FEDDAF.

The Management Committee of the Women and Law in Southern Africa Trust (WILSA) benefited from advisory services in the review of 7 studies conducted in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

V. INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY DOCUMENTS

The Centre produced a CD-ROM on the status of women in Africa. It puts together available data on women in Africa, mostly from United Nations sources and therefore brings out clearly where the gaps are in gender-disaggregated data. This CD-ROM was launched in New York in June 2000 during the Special Session on Beijing + 5. The launch generated much discussion particularly about the gender gap in existing data in the economic sector and the need for Member States to adopt a more systematic and sustainable strategy for filling this gap. International Research Institutions and NGOs were particularly interested in possibilities of information exchange and collaboration in furthering this work.

In order to respond to the needs of those who may not be in a position to access the information in the CD-ROM, ACW has updated and converted the information into the *African Women Report- 2000*, the flagship publication that is produced biennially by the Centre.

VI. RESULTS OF THE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

As mentioned above, one of the strategies for building the capacity of the Centre in order to better fulfil its mission is to increase the human resources assigned. A total number of 10 professional staff had been allocated to the Centre since 1998, but out of these, 5 had to be recruited. During the period under review, ECA launched a big recruitment campaign in an attempt to fill all existing vacancies. The Centre which was part of this process succeeded in filling the 5 vacancies of 2 Senior Economic Affairs Officers (P5s), 1 Information Officer(P4) , 1 Social Affairs Officer (P3) and 1 Economic Affairs Officer (P3). Among the newly recruited staff is a male, in conformity with ACW's attempt to demonstrate that the gender approach to development requires expertise from both males and females.

VII. MEETINGS OF THE BUREAU OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Bureau took advantage of the opportunity presented by the Preparatory Meeting of the Special Session on Beijing + 5 and held its own meeting on 6 March 2000 at the Regional Commissions' Office in New York. At this meeting, the Bureau decided to play an active role in promoting the implementation of the *African Plan of Action*, particularly by sensitizing the ECA Ministers of Economic and Social Planning and Finance of its contents and the actions required to ensure its successful implementation. It also decided to hold a regional meeting in 2001 on concrete modalities for reducing women's poverty from an African perspective. Additionally, the Bureau applauded the restructuring of ACW and the orientation and focus of its Work Programme for the period 2000-2005.