



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**



Distr. : LIMITED

E/ECA/ACW/SRMN/98/9
Octobre 1998

ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Subregional Follow-up Meeting on the implementation
of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action – North Africa

Rabat, Morocco
27 – 30 October 1998

REPORT

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A. ATTENDANCE

1. The North African Subregional Follow-up Meeting on the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action was held in Rabat, Morocco from 27 to 30 October 1998. It was organized by the African Centre for Women (ACW) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the State Secretariat in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children in the Ministry of Social Protection, Solidarity, Employment and Training of Morocco.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives from governments, parliaments and non-governmental organisations of the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia.
3. Also in attendance were representatives from the following subregional and regional organisations: The Arab Maghreb Union; Centre africain de recherche administrative pour le développement (CAFRAD); and the Association of African Trade Promotion Organisations (AATPO).
4. The following United Nations agencies were also represented: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF); and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

B. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Opening ceremony (agenda item 1)

5. The meeting was formally opened by Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Fatima Al Zahra of Morocco.
6. In her keynote address Princess Lalla welcomed the participants and stated that the meeting, which was a follow-up to the Beijing Conference, should be treated as a major forum at which significant measures would be adopted towards strengthening the advancement of women.
7. Princess Lalla was confident that the subregion's characteristics would enable participants to formulate practical programmes that would also pave the way for the preparation of the African mid-term review conference to be held in 1999.
8. She called on the participating countries to support the work programme of ACW and hoped that the follow-up of the recommendations of the International Conference on African Women, held in Addis Ababa, would yield benefits and pave the way towards greater multilateral cooperation. Declaring the meeting open, Princess Lalla wished participants every success and conveyed the welcome of His Majesty King Hassan II.

9. On behalf of the Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms. Joséphine Ouédraogo, Director of ACW commended the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for the invaluable support extended in the organization of the meeting by the Government through the State Secretariat for Social Protection, Family and Children. Her appreciation also went to UNDP and to the people of Morocco for their warm hospitality.
10. In adopting the Dakar and Beijing Platforms, African States had committed themselves to working for gender equity. They had, furthermore, committed themselves to formulating National Plans of Action (NPAs) the follow-up phase of which at the subregional level, would constitute the preparation for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women and mid-term review of the Beijing Platform scheduled for 1999.
11. Member States in the subregion were expected to submit country reports during the Conference. The purpose of the Rabat meeting was to work out the orientations, indicators and modalities evaluating the progress made in the implementation of the plans of action. The meeting would also provide a forum for examining the constraints that affect the implementation process.
12. In accordance with the new strategic directions, ECA was intensifying its interactions with member States, particularly through the Subregional Development Centres (SRDCs).
13. Mr. Bouna Semou Diouf, UNDP Resident Representative and Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in the Kingdom of Morocco, said that the texts in which the principles of women's advancement were enshrined often proved difficult to implement owing to adverse conditions. He emphasized the interdependency of women's advancement, sustainable human development and democracy.
14. He commended the generosity that the Moroccan authorities had demonstrated in hosting the meeting of North African countries, which ECA, in championing the cause of women, had taken the initiative to organise for the purpose of reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform.
15. The work being done in this regard throughout the world indicated that a new woman was emerging who intended, despite the many hindrances to the exercise of her basic rights, to play her role fully in every sector. Many were the conferences at which the international community had taken a stand to promote women's advancement, recognising their tremendous contribution in areas such as agricultural production and income generation. This was why it behoved the countries of the subregion to take stock of the progress achieved in the difficult but practicable implementation of the Beijing Platform.
16. Mrs. Belarbi Aicha, State Secretary for cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that development of women was a major challenge for the Government of Morocco. The invisibility of women, she added, was not because they did not work, but rather because their work did not appear in official statistics. Women's rights needed to be recognised as well. Women needed to exercise their rights as citizens, by participating fully in all sectors of development, particularly in decision-making.

17. In her statement, Mrs. Nozha Chakrouni, State Secretary in charge of the Disabled noted that feminisation of poverty was becoming an important characteristic of the new economic order. She insisted that the management of public resources must address women's issues, particularly women's participation in development without which there would be no democracy. Women's capabilities needed to be developed so that they could become a new tool for development. She noted that Morocco had signed several international conventions related to the advancement of women, which, to her, was a sign of its serious commitment to the promotion of women.

18. On her part, Miss Zouleikha Naciri, who is in charge of Missions in the Royal Cabinet noted that women have been working since the beginning of time but that their work was not recognised. She stressed the importance for decision-makers to take stabilizing measures that would avert imminent population explosion. In her view, women's education was the best response to the threat of Africa doubling its population within the next 50 years.

19. In his opening statement, the Secretary of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children expressed his pride in the fact that the Kingdom of Morocco was hosting this Conference organised in collaboration between his secretariat and the ECA and with the moral support of H.R.H. Lalla Fatima Al Zahra, President of the National Association for Moroccan Women.

20. He expressed his appreciation to ECA for all the efforts exerted for the success of this event, and welcomed all participants from the subregion representing governments, parliaments, non-governmental organisations, regional organisations; as well as all the Moroccans attending.

21. He indicated that this meeting came at an opportune time and provided an excellent occasion to unify positions regarding the critical priorities for the advancement of women. This was particularly important in view of the fact that it coincided with the preparations for the Sixth African Regional Conference, the Arab Conference to be held in Beirut in December 1998, as well as the formulation of the Morocco National Action Plan for ratification. The objective of the current meeting was to reinforce prior national commitments to international and regional principles and resolutions and to their implementation.

22. In his view, African States faced many challenges on all levels and were witnessing significant changes dictated by the transitional period and the new international order. Women in particular had been affected by various social phenomena namely poverty, illiteracy and violence. That called for the restructuring of programmes and projects, coordination of efforts and a widening of the horizon for the development of women in terms of resources and programme activities.

23. The importance that H.R.M King Hassan II attached to the advancement of women had been reflected in Morocco's adherence to numerous international conventions and treaties, particularly Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the revision of various regulations such as the Mudawana (Code of Personal Statute).

24. Since women's issues were an integral part of the national and local planning, the State Secretariat for Social Protection, Family and Children, in coordination with the National Committee for Women was finalizing the NPA to integrate women's concerns in the medium and long term development plans, with emphasis on the following: education and eradication of illiteracy;

reproductive health; integrating women in economic development; and reinforcing the economic, social, political and legal status of women.

Presentation of Agenda and Election of the Rapporteur-General (agenda item 2)

25. This session was chaired by Ms. Khadija Raki, Chief of Cabinet in the Secretariat of State responsible for Social Protection, Family and Children. It was introduced by Mrs. Joséphine Ouédraogo who presented the Agenda of the meeting that was adopted without amendment as follows:

Agenda

1. Opening ceremony.
2. Presentation of agenda and programme of work.
3. The post-Beijing political climate in North Africa: country presentations (by heads of delegation)
4. Presentation of summary document on the implementation of national plans of action in countries of the subregion.
5. Presentation of a model national plan of action :
Group discussions on agenda items 4 and 5 and
Group reports
6. Presentation of a monitoring tool.
Group discussions on agenda item 6 and
Group reports.
7. Guidelines for the preparation of country reports on progress achieved in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.
8. Presentation of the recommendations made by the International Conference on African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future (Addis Ababa 28 April-1 May 1998).
9. Presentation on the various stages of preparation for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women (mid-term review 1999).
10. Presentation on the areas of activity of the African Centre for Women.
11. Strategies for the integration of gender issues in development planning.
Group discussions on agenda item 11 and
Group reports.

12. Gender and Law in North Africa in relation to implementation of CEDAW.
Group discussions on agenda item 12. Group reports.

13. Adoption of the report and closing of the meeting.

26. The meeting elected Mrs. Zohra Ben Romdhane, Director-General of Communication and Public Relations in the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs in Tunisia as Rapporteur-General. Mrs. Fatima Ahmed of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Egypt was elected Vice Rapporteur-General.

The post-Beijing political climate in North Africa: country presentations (agenda item 3)

27. The session was presided over by Mrs Khadija Raki, Chief of Cabinet in the State Secretariat in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children.

28. Participants made brief country presentations on the above agenda item which are summarized below.

ALGERIA

29. The representative from Algeria described the profound political, economic and social changes taking place in her country and the increasing attention being paid to the participation and advancement of women. Progress had been made in such areas as the schooling of girls; literacy; women's integration in economic activities; women's involvement in decision-making and improvements in their legal status.

30. She also stated that there was currently in Algeria greater gender awareness, particularly in institutions like the National Council for the follow-up of the Beijing Platform, the National Population Council and the National Council on Education. Moreover, the new dynamic created in the civil society was reflected in the existence of more than 50,000 associations.

TUNISIA

31. On her part, the representative from Tunisia described the very strong political commitment being demonstrated in her country to advancing the political, economic, social, institutional and legal status of women. Since 1987, several institutional and legal reforms to strengthen women's basic rights had been realized; many structures for the management of women's and family affairs had been created based on the human rights principle.

32. As far back as 1992, the Government of Tunisia had prepared two national reports on the advancement of women, which contained specific recommendations for the implementation of sectoral programmes and policies.

33. She went on to list the various national machineries that handled women's issues, including the Ministry of Women's and Family Affairs, CREDIF, the National Commission on Women and Development and the National Council on Women and the Family.

SUDAN

34. The representative from the Sudan described the broader participation of women in the economic and political spheres and in peace building. In the Sudan, women could be elected to parliamentary, governmental and regional offices on an equal footing with men. They had equal economic, political and social rights and responsibilities as men.

35. Nevertheless, Sudanese women bore the brunt of poverty, unemployment and armed conflict. Their representation in the legislative machinery needed to be increased and their capacity developed accordingly.

MAURITANIA

36. The representative from Mauritania described a number of goals that her country had achieved since 1995 in terms of the National Strategy for the advancement of women and the NPA for implementing the strategy, as well as the creation of a National Council on Children.

37. For the first time, women were sitting in parliament and their numbers in government had increased.

EGYPT

38. The representative from Egypt stated that, in its constitution, her country had enshrined the principle of equal rights and responsibilities for men and women. The family code had been amended in favour of women and children. A National Council had been established for the welfare of mothers and children as well as a National Commission to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform. Egypt had launched several literacy and family planning programmes and ratified the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

39. In terms of governance, she mentioned the increase in number of women occupying decision-making positions at the national level and in the decentralised structures. It was further noted that two machineries, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the Women's National Committee have been established. Together, they were in charge of monitoring the policies related to women's advancement. The National Committee for women is responsible for follow-up of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms. Since the Beijing Conference, two national Conferences had been organised as follow-up to the Beijing Conference.

MOROCCO

40. The representative from Morocco informed the Meeting that, through the combined efforts of civil society and the government, which accorded equal priority to gender issues, the prospects for change in her country had become highly favourable.

41. Moroccans currently enjoyed genuine freedom of expression and association and were moving towards the institution of a new bicameral legislature, social dialogue structures, constitutional reform to reflect regionalisation and decentralisation, review of the Moudawana or family code and the ratification of the CEDAW (with reservations).

42. An NPA was being prepared for the short and medium term integration of women in development with inputs coming from all-ministerial and NGO representatives. The main areas of focus were education and literacy, reproductive health, women's entrepreneurship and the Enhancement of their political, social and legal status. The NPA would be finalised in December 1998.

Report on the implementation of National Plans of Action in North Africa (agenda item 4)

43. This session was chaired by Ms. Mounina Mint Abdallah of the State Secretariat in charge of Women's Affairs in Mauritania.

44. Ms. Hassania Chalbi, ECA Consultant, introduced the report on the research that she and Mr. Mongi Bedoui had conducted in North Africa to assess the state of implementation of the Platforms for Action. To provide participants with a deeper understanding for interpreting the results, she explained the methodology used in preparing the report.

45. The summary document described the significant progress made in the subregion towards the advancement of women. Initiatives had been taken specifically to improve the education, health and technical skills of women. And yet women still had a substantial way to go (cases in point were the unfavourable legal system, difficulty in securing paid employment and the fact that national policies did not take the needs of women into account).

46. On the whole, the national plans of countries of the subregion were being pursued with varying degrees of success and contained gaps and weaknesses. While national concerns and priorities differed from one country to another, the goals of improving the situation remained the same and could be described in terms of poverty eradication, health, education/literacy and women's participation.

47. In the discussion that followed, the importance of the study (particularly the operational work done in the countries) was highlighted. The participants made comments and proposals concerning the best use of the research findings. The report was an important reference document, which, upon scrutiny, revealed the need to update some of the data in statistics and to conduct a comparative analysis of the situation in countries of the subregion.

48. Some of the proposals advanced to improve the content of the study included: listing the priorities set by Morocco to specifically enhance the participation of women in decision-making; describing the efforts made by Algeria to design and implement its NPA; citing Tunisia's experience with the establishment of a national solidarity bank;

49. After the plenary presentation, the participants worked in two groups to discuss the details of the report. They were also requested to identify obstacles experienced in developing and implementing NPAs and to recommend strategies for enhancing the implementation exercise.

GROUP I

Facilitator: Hassania Chalbi Drissi

Rapporteurs: Jane Wright
Naima Senhadji
Aimée Andrianasolo

50. After the facilitator had introduced the concept of the NPA, Group I discussed two methodologies for preparing post-Beijing NPAs. One dealt with the incorporation of all twelve themes proposed in the Beijing Platform while the other regrouped themes by major areas of focus.

51. In either case, it was deemed necessary to specify:

- The strategic objectives;
- The implementation steps;
- The actors involved;
- The sources of financing;
- The follow-up and evaluation mechanism; and
- The monitoring indicators.

52. In the introduction of the NPA, it would be advisable to describe the general situation of the country in terms of overall and socio-economic indicators. It was proposed that the NPA should include new themes like "women and sport" and "women and peace"

Planning strategy

53. Ideally, the NPA should fit into the national planning exercise while highlighting gender specifics and involving civil society. It is possible to combine the two approaches of participatory methodology and the use of technical expertise.

Difficulties encountered

54. Group I identified a number of common difficulties in NPA preparation:

- Achieving consensus in the participatory approach;
- Financial problems with the payment of experts;
- Lack of skilled personnel;
- Poorly demonstrated policy commitment;
- Weak coordination among the various actors
- Designation of an NPA-formulating authority;

- Access to information and gender specific indicators;
- Lack of male motivation; and
- Lack of a follow-up and evaluation mechanism.

Strategies recommended

55. To address the difficulties identified above; the group recommended the following:

- Sensitising decision makers;
- Involving governmental and NGO players right from the beginning;
- Fine-tuning gender statistics and securing every information available;
- Mobilising domestic and external resources (debt recycling for example);
- Establishing research and information machinery;
- Training governmental and NGO officials in programme and project preparation;
- Creating women-in-development and women-and-the-media networks; and
- Achieving a radical shift in attitudes towards women.

Co-operation with ECA

56. The group expressed the need for greater assistance by ECA in terms of:

- The provision of gender training;
- Fielding missions to identify the needs and programmes of countries in the subregion;
- The preparation and implementation of NPAs.

GROUP II

Facilitator: Mr Mongi Bédoui

Rapporteurs: Ms Belmahi Malika
Mr Mohamed Ould Zeidane.

57. The Group covered the following points:

1. NPA preparation and follow-up in each country ;
2. Obstacles to NPA implementation ; and
3. Recommendations.

58. From the discussions, it emerged that each country had an NPA but was facing problems, which had to do with methodology and resource mobilisation.

59. With regard to the second point above, the Group identified the following obstacles to NPA implementation:

1. Sectoral execution and its attendant dissipation of effort from lack of coordination ;

2. The paucity of follow-up mechanisms and the lack of involvement of the players concerned ;
3. Lack of an NPA supervisory organ ;
4. The fact that actors were not briefed on the importance of gender issues ;
5. The lack of gender research centres ;
6. The paucity of human and technical expertise on gender and development ;
7. The absence of civil society participation in certain countries;
8. Untimely resource mobilisation ; and
9. An overly sectoral approach to NPA formulation which did not make for complementarily .

60. The following recommendations were made:

1. National and regional mechanisms should be instituted to monitor and study problems relating to the advancement of women ;
2. An IEC strategy should be developed for promoting women's advancement and NPA outreach ;
3. Civil society and the public sector should join hands in conducting research ;
4. A quarterly African information bulletin on women should be made available in English, French and Arabic;
5. Tools should be developed for NPA follow-up and evaluation in accordance with a set time frame ;
6. A pilot NPA programming exercise using the gender approach should be instituted ;
7. Domestic and external financing mechanisms should be developed and synchronised with implementation time-lines ;
8. The effective participation of women in national planning and of men in the NPA programming exercise should be elicited ; and
9. The financing of the NPA should be integrated in the national development budget exercise.

Presentation of a model national action plan (agenda item 5)

61. This session was chaired by Ms. Mounina Mint Abdallah from the State Secretariat in charge of Women's Affairs in Mauritania.

62. Ms. Joséphine Ouédraogo presented the model NPA as a frame of reference for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and follow-up of NPAs.

63. All national actors from the public and private sector could use the model as a framework for their activities in furtherance of the Beijing Platform.

64. The document highlighted five major elements that must be included in the NPA:

- a) Prioritised objectives and actions
- b) Time-bound targets (short, medium and long term) for the objectives
- c) Identification of all actors involved in NPA implementation
- d) Required budgetary resources (national and international)
- e) Institutional and legislative machinery

65. The secretariat maintained that the model was an aide-mémoire designed to help the countries to review their NPA and to make particularly sure that the main elements described had been taken into account.

**Presentation of a Practical Kit for monitoring the implementation of NPAs
(agenda item6)**

66. The session was presided over by Ms. Fatma Ahmed of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Egypt.

67. Ms. Hannah Tiagha of ACW introduced the agenda item. In her presentation, she stated that the three objectives to be achieved with the use of the kit were to:

- a) Secure a harmonized understanding of the follow-up evaluation process;
- b) Acquire a degree of experience in the formulation of indicators;
- c) Identify the needs for training in order to gain control of the follow-up mechanism.

68. What was important was to define clear and specific objectives in the NPA, planned for the implementation of activities in time and space, fine-tune the identification of target groups and evaluate the budgetary, material and human resources to be mobilised. Such base-line data made it possible to determine the results to be achieved and to formulate indicators to be used in measuring progress and taking corrective measures. Ms. Tiagha also explained how performance indicators were formulated. They had three characteristics: relevance, clarity and a quality/quantity aspect.

Discussion

Facilitator: Ms Hilda Tadia

Rapporteur: Mr Mongi Bédoui

69. After this presentation, it was proposed that the discussions should follow the proposed guideline to facilitate:

- a) Achieving a common understanding of this monitoring tool ;
- b) A practical demonstration of how indicators are formulated ; and
- c) A practical assessment of national training and information needs.

70. The discussion led to three sets of recommendations summarized below:

Formulation of indicators

71. Participants highlighted the importance of formulating indicators to monitor NPAs and particularly recommended that:

- a) Account should be taken of the qualitative and quantitative aspects of indicators ;
- b) Summary indicators should be developed to highlight strengths and weaknesses ;
- c) Relevant follow-up parameters should be selected ;

- d) The indicators should be formulated at the same time as the NPA ; and
- e) It should be possible to analyse variances between set goals and actual outputs.

Practical exercise

72. The case of women and poverty was used for the practical exercise of accessing micro-credit. The lesson drawn from this exercise can be summarised in four observations:

- a) The importance of instituting a monitoring machinery ;
- b) The need to identify institutions responsible for monitoring;
- c) The fundamental importance of identifying constraints ; and
- d) The importance of taking corrective measures to remove the constraints ;

Training needs assessment

73. Participants identified support and training needs which are summarised in the following seven recommendations:

- a) Training should be provided in the formulation of indicators and the mechanics of NPA follow-up and evaluation ;
- b) NGOs should be helped to enhance their skills in NPA working methodologies and follow-up/evaluation ;
- c) Training should be targeted at high-level Government officials;
- d) Gender training should be provided for development policy planners and managers ;
- e) A methodology should be devised to assess the impact of NPAs on women ;
- f) Economic and legal training should be provided to boost the monitoring of NPAs and;
- g) The various countries should be given direct assistance with training needs assessment.

74. The Director of ACW reiterated the preparedness of ECA and SRDC to develop their activities in the subregion and informed the meeting that ACW had a regional adviser in legal matters and another in economic empowerment of women who were available to provide advisory services upon request.

Presentation of guidelines for the preparation of national reports (agenda item 7)

75. The session was presided over by Ms. Bouguettoucha Saadia, Parliamentarian from Algeria.

76. Ms. Hannah Tiagha of ACW presented the guidelines for writing the national progress reports on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms by highlighting the two main objectives pursued:

- a) To establish and define national priorities and spell out the operational guidelines;
- b) To measure progress and address the difficulties encountered.

77. She stressed that government national machineries were responsible for the preparation of the report. An institutional mechanism should be set up for monitoring purposes within a broad consultative framework such as a national follow-up committee.

78. The progress report should comprise five main chapters:

- a) An overview of the national and international situation and an assessment of the degree to which the Dakar and Beijing Platforms had been implemented within the specific context of the country;
- b) A description of the national priorities, the progress achieved and the machinery instituted;
- c) An assessment of progress relative to the set objectives, programme activities and budgetary resource allocation;
- d) An analysis of the constraints, the lessons to be drawn and best practices; and
- e) The conclusion describing the strategy to be pursued beyond 1999.

Discussions

79. Participants stressed the importance of the proposed guidelines and the need to focus their discussion on the methodological approach to preparing the progress report.

80. Participants emphasised the following four essential points:

- a) The importance of providing support that would enhance national reporting capability;
- b) The need for improving NPAs in order to facilitate the follow-up and evaluation exercise with reference to the findings of the study conducted by the consultants and the recommendations of this subregional meeting;
- c) The importance of coordinating the efforts of United Nations and other agencies efforts in order to avoid duplication and make the follow-up and evaluation exercise cost-effective; and
- d) The fundamental role of government, NGO and private sector participation and coordination in the NPA follow-up and evaluation exercise

Recommendations coming out of the international conference on the theme: "African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future" (agenda item 8)

81. The session was presided over by Ms. Khadija Abu El Gasim, Director-General of the Ministry of Social Planning in the Sudan.

82. In her presentation, Ms. Joséphine Ouédraogo explained that the ECA 40th Anniversary Conference had provided a forum for Africa's economic development actors to engage in a gender dialogue with the policy makers.

83. The proceedings had focused on four themes:

- a) Developing African economies: the role of Women;

- b) Achieving good governance : the essential participation of women;
- c) African women and the information age: a new window of opportunity;
- d) Creating opportunities for Africa's new generation.

84. Two workshops had been held in November 1997 and in February 1998 to prepare the Conference which had been attended by some 1,000 invited guests, 2,500 participants (including five Heads of State and Government), Ministers, members of civil society, trade unions and representatives of regional, subregional and women's organisations. There were 22 working groups which had come out with recommendations on the above mentioned themes of the Conference. Those recommendations would be implemented through:

- a) Information dissemination;
- b) National consensus-building workshops;
- c) The involvement of civil society including women and youth;
- d) The institution of follow-up and evaluation machinery.

85. The dissemination and implementation of the Conference recommendations would require the establishment of a Women and Development Fund.

Presentation on the various stages of preparation for the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women (mid-term review) 1999 (agenda item 9)

86. The session was presided over by Ms Khadija Abu El Gasim from the Sudan.

87. On the occasion of the above statutory meeting, Mrs Ouédraogo explained that country reports would have to be submitted which would:

- a) Review progress made under the 12 priority areas identified in the Beijing Platform;
- b) Reflect the degree of commitment by all actors;
- c) Contribute towards building a consensus around a new paradigm for the advancement of women by the time of the Fifth World Conference in 2005;
- d) Reflect the synergy achieved among the various subregional, regional and national agencies.

88. The calendar for the Conference preparatory meetings is : December 1998; March 1999; June 1999; September 1999.

89. Proposals were made to assign NGOs a more substantial role in the organisation and running of the Conference than had been assigned them in the past. Indeed, like the ECA 40th Anniversary Conference, the proceedings will be conducted to promote interaction between governments and civil society. A Government – NGO caucus will be scheduled. Discussion guidelines will be used to focus the thrust of interaction on achieving set goals and the media briefed in advance to secure their practical involvement.

Presentation on the areas of activity of the African Centre for Women (agenda item 10)

90. This session was chaired by Mr S. Jugessur, Acting Director of the SRDC for North Africa.

91. Mrs Ouedraogo described the terms of reference of the African Centre for Women (ACW) within the organizational structure of ECA. She explained that ACW had attained the level of a full-fledged substantive division of ECA after two years of reform at the Commission. The new mandate of the Centre consisted mainly of training ECA staff in the gender approach and developing methodological tools and strategies for mainstreaming gender in the ECA programme.

92. The role of ACW also consisted of building governmental and NGO capacity in the formulation of gender policies and advocacy for the implementation of international commitments in favour of women.

93. The five areas of focus of the ACW work programme are:

- a) Generating and disseminating information regarding the status of African women with specific reference to country brochures, success stories and opportunities;
- b) Creating gender training programmes for ECA Staff and member States;
- c) Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms by designing tools for the monitoring exercise and organising follow-up and evaluation meetings at which experiences can be shared;
- d) Promoting the advancement of women in decision-making structures through training and advocacy; and
- e) Integrating women's concerns into economic policies by strengthening women's entrepreneurship and by lobbying to render the contribution of women visible in national statistics.

94. The ACW team is made up of four regular professionals and two Regional Advisers. Currently, the posts of Gender Mainstreaming Specialist, Information Specialist and Platform Implementation Specialist were vacant but would be filled shortly.

95. In the ensuing debate, participants sought clarification on:

- a) The funding of ACW;
- b) ACW support for women's entrepreneurship;
- c) Whether ECA could assume responsibility for monitoring the degree of gender equity in member States.
- d) Whether ECA could gather and disseminate information widely.

96. It was clarified that most of ACW's funding came from United Nations and bilateral sources.

97. Regarding entrepreneurship support, ACW was assisting the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs with the organisation of study tours that promoted the sharing of best practices and enhanced South-South cooperation.

98. With regard to recruitment policy, ACW did not discriminate on the basis of gender. Among the several planned activities of ACW for the next three years was training in gender analysis for women parliamentarians so that they can perform better as legislators.

99. With regard to the former MULPOC, now referred to as the SRDC for North Africa, it was clarified that a new Gender Focal Point would shortly be appointed. In addition, training support was traditionally extended upon request by member States.

100. ACW would make every effort to issue its newsletter (Gender Net) in Arabic and French in addition to the current English edition. The same applied to the compendium of Good Practice. Some participants hoped that ACW could serve as a facilitator between NGOs and donor agencies.

The gender approach to development planning (agenda item 11)

101. The session was chaired by Ms. Neziha Ben Yeder, member of Parliament in Tunisia.

102. Ms. Tادria's presentation focussed on a definition of the gender approach, its principal characteristics and its use in development planning. The main characteristics of this methodology are:

- Gender disaggregated data and statistics;
- Gender analysis capabilities;
- Gender policies which take gender equality values, resources, structures and monitoring indicators into account;
- Indicators for the evaluation of changes in the status of women; and
- Women's participation in development at all levels.

103. Participants commended the quality of the presentation, the usefulness of the document as a working paper and repeated their request for training in order to master the gender approach. The comments and observations focussed on the following:

- a) The need to correct the map of Africa used in the ECA document with respect to Morocco;
- b) Use of the gender approach in analysing environmental and natural resource management issues;
- c) Relations between ECA and the Pan-African Association of Women;
- d) Country ranking by human development indicators and gender-specific human development indicators;
- e) The need to follow-up the presentation with a practical application adapting the gender approach to the context of each country; and
- f) The need to examine the socio-cultural causes and effects of the gender approach in order to change the attitudes of children and men.

Discussion of strategies for integrating a gender approach in development planning

104. The discussion focused on country experiences and lessons to be drawn therefrom. For example, the study conducted in Morocco on the contribution of women to development in the informal sector had shed light on the various activities that could be developed in the sector. The quantification and classification of the findings of a recent survey demonstrated a clear increase in the numbers of rural women working in the informal sector. Several other examples were cited to emphasize the need for a gender approach and to illustrate how this could be done.

105. A consensus was built around three ways in which a gender-sensitive mechanism could be developed.

106. First, it was proposed that socio-economic data should be collected for the purpose of conducting an analysis which could be used to develop a gender approach in the various development sectors.

107. Second, it was proposed that a degree of coordination should be instituted among the sectors concerned in order to identify the problems encountered in mainstreaming the gender approach. Only a governmental mechanism could galvanise those activities that make for achieving deep and lasting change in the public and private domains and which would enhance the effective participation of women.

108. Finally, it was pointed out that the socio-economic inertia described could not be done away with if the current division of labour among men and women persisted. It would be wise to combine a judicious distribution of tasks between the two in various aspects of social life.

Gender and law in North Africa in relation to implementation of CEDAW (agenda item 12)

109. The session was chaired by Ms. Ouguini Kheira, Sub-Director in the Ministry of Foreign in Algeria

110. In her presentation, Ms. Souad Abdennebi, ECA Regional Adviser, considered the legal and economic status of women in the subregion with reference to the NPA follow-up study prepared by Ms. Chalbi Hassania and Mr. Bedoui Mongi, two ACW consultants.

111. She recalled the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of women's rights as defined by the Dakar and Beijing Platforms and highlighted the obligations of member States in this respect.

112. Analysing the situation with regard to the ratification by North African States of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the only exceptions turned out to be the Sudan and Mauritania but all the states of the subregion had expressed reservations in respect of article 28 of the Convention.

113. She highlighted the adverse impact of those reservations on the status of women both in law and in their daily experience and urged participants to devise strategies that would contain and

address those reservations in a manner consistent with Islamic respect for the equality of human beings irrespective of their gender.

114. Deep reflection on mechanisms for protecting women from the various discriminatory practices in society would help to mobilise the actors around clear emancipation objectives.

Discussion

115. The discussion on the document presented by Mrs Souad Abdennebi led to the following observations and recommendations:

a) With respect to law

116. There was a need for policy commitment and for lawmakers to help legislation and legal practice to evolve in favour of respect for women's human rights. In this regard, all participants stressed the need to promote EL IJTihad (enlightened interpretation of sharia law in order to improve the situation of women. Participants also suggested that:

- Follow-up of the implementation of CEDAW was necessary in order to harmonize national laws with international norms;
- Social, political, economic and cultural actors had a fundamental role to play in devising strategies and alternatives for improving the legal status of women;
- Gender sensitive marriage contracts could be used as an important tool for enhancing the status of women within the family and society.

b) Information, education and communication strategy

117. Participants highlighted the assigned role of local traditional actors and recommended the pursuit of targeted information strategies to mobilise people around the need for improving the status of women.

- Information and educational policies would be important in facilitating wider application of acquired rights and the promotion of law reform;
- Within the context of such an information policy, the strategy of advancing by example should be used to make any rights acquired by women in one country of the subregion, rights acquired by all women.
- It was important to build a regional dynamic around these issues by promoting the organisation of related fora, studies and workshops and propagating laws in languages easily understood by all segments of society.

c) Civil Society

118. Under this theme, participants particularly recommended that:

- Pressure, cooperative and lobbying groups should be created to defend acquired rights, improve legislation and ensure that the laws are positively enforced in favour of women;
- NGO's should be supported and their capacity strengthened with a view to enhancing their operational activities and creating an interface with policy-makers. Such a dynamic would enhance policy commitment to safeguarding the rights of women.

Adoption of the report and closing of the Meeting (agenda item 13)

119. The draft report of the meeting was read by Mrs. Zohra Ben Romdhane, Rapporteur-General and Mrs. Saadia Bougettoucha. The participants adopted the report.

120. The Secretary of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children in Morocco, Mr. Saad Said closed the meeting. In his statement, he thanked the ECA/ACW for a successful meeting and emphasized that during the three days, participants had learnt much through the exchange of experiences. He said that the substantive outcome of the meeting would be beneficial to all.

121. Mr. Saad Said explained that one of the objectives of the new Government of Morocco was to demonstrate that the promotion of women was high on the list of legal, social, and economic priorities. In the coming months this commitment would be demonstrated by the implementation of the National Action Plan which was a product of work done by representatives of the government, NGOs and such partners as the UN agencies. The 1999 Regional Conference to assess progress made in the advancement of women will receive much support from the participants of the subregional meeting. The Secretary of State concluded by thanking all those that had made the meeting a success.

122. In her closing remarks, Madame Belarbi Aicha, State Secretary in charge of Cooperation in Morocco thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the meeting. She also observed that in the Islamic world, real dialogue was in progress on issues of great concern to women. She cited the example of the meeting that had been organized by the Islamic University in Rabat on Women and Islam and had coincided with the subregional meeting. She was optimistic that such meetings provided opportunities for necessary reflection in the wake of the current rapid global changes that could otherwise easily result in derailing people. She noted that the government of Morocco was committed to improving the status of women and had demonstrated this already by its actions. She concluded by stressing the importance of strengthening women's status in policy, law and decision making.

123. In her statement, Mrs. Joséphine Ouédraogo, Director of ACW stated that the report of the Meeting indicated the commitment of governments to the implementation of the Platforms for Action, and the constraints encountered in apportioning the responsibilities and benefits of development among women and men. She appreciated the quality of the discussion during the meeting and the openness in which it was carried out.

124. The gracing of the meeting by the presence of Her Royal Highness, Princess Lalla Fatma El Zahra and other highly placed women in the Government of Morocco, was an indication of policy commitment to the advancement of women.

125. On her own behalf and on behalf of Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of ECA, Mrs. Ouédraogo thanked the Secretary of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children and his staff for all their efforts to make the meeting a success.

126. She also expressed her profound gratitude to His Majesty King Hassan II, the Royal Government of Morocco and Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Fatma Al Zahra and hoped to see the participants at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women.

127. On behalf of all participants, a representative from Tunisia read a motion of thanks to His Majesty King Hassan Al Thani. She thanked him for the hospitality and generosity that had been extended to the participants throughout the period of the meeting and his interest conveyed through Her Royal Highness Princess Al Zahra who had opened the Meeting. She also thanked the Government of Morocco for its interest in the meeting and for its contribution to the success of the meeting.

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Annexe I

Page

QUESTIONNAIRE

Kit for Testing the Viability of a National Plan of Action

A. National Action Plan

1. a. Does your country have a National Action Plan?

Yes _____ No _____

b. If no, why not?

c. If yes, is the responsibility for drawing up the National Plan of Action clearly defined? Please explain.*

2. a. Are there other plans for the implementation of the African Platform for Action and the Global Platform for Action?

b. If yes, please list who drew up the plans and who implements them.

B. Priorities

1. What are the national priorities that guided the formulation of the National Plans of Action? Please list them.

2. How are these priorities selected? *

3. Who was involved in the choice of these priorities? *

C. The Process

1. Who formulated the National Action Plan (specify who the principle actors were at the different stages of the formulation of the National Plans of Action) *

**Please refer to the Clarification Notes*

2. Was the body that formulated the National Action Plan a multidisciplinary body? *

Yes _____ No _____

3. Were there provisions for consultation during the formulation process? *

Yes _____ No _____

4. If yes, who was consulted and by whom?

5. If there was no consultation process, why not?

6. What were the main constraints in involving other partners in the process of the formulation of the National Plans of Action?

D. Implementation

1. Who is responsible for implementing the National Plan? *

2. How was the responsibility for implementing allocated?

3. To what extent are the implementors aware of their responsibilities?

4. What are the provisions for ensuring that implementors have the requisite skills to implement the Plan?

5. a. Is there a time frame for the implementation of the National Action Plan? *

Yes _____ No _____

**Please refer to the Clarification Notes*

b. If yes, are the programs segmented in terms of what is to be implemented in short, medium and long term periods? Please explain.

6. Is implementation decentralized? * Yes _____ No _____

7. a. Are special efforts being put on strengthening the capacity and capability for gender analysis for planners in sectoral ministries, national machineries, NGO's? Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, what are they?

E. Monitoring and Coordination

1. Who is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the National Plan in the various sectors?

2. a. Are there indicators to monitor progress?

Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, describe briefly what those indicators are. (use additional paper if necessary or attach copies of existing indicators)

3. a. Are there consequences for not carrying out the implementation process?

Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, what are they?

4. What mechanisms are used to minimize duplication and negligence of various areas of concern?

5. What are the major constraints in the implementation process?

**Please refer to the Clarification Notes*

6. a. Is there a mechanism for solving the problem encountered in the implementation process?

Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, please indicate briefly.

7. a. Are there regular reports given to the governments and other involved parties by the monitoring body?

Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, how often are those reports submitted?

8. Does the monitoring process include generation of gender-disaggregated data?

Yes _____ No _____

F. Networking

1. How is information exchanged among the various actors?

2. Are there mechanisms for networking among the various actors? Yes _____ No _____

3. a. Are there joint programs for the critical areas of concern with other countries within the same subregion and outside of the subregion? Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, with whom is this partnership created?

G. Resources

1.a. Are there specific resources allocated for the implementation of the Plan? *

Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, where do they come from?

**Please refer to the Clarification Notes*

c. How adequate are the resources?

2. Are the resources readily accessible or tied up in bureaucratic procedures?

3. If resources are not available, who is responsible for their mobilization?

4. What specific strategies have been selected for resource mobilization? *

5. a. Is there a percentage of the national budget allotted for the Plan?

Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, what is the percentage? _____

6. Have potential sources of necessary resources been identified? * Yes _____ No _____

H. Guidelines for Implementation of the Regional and Global Platforms

1.a. Did you consult the ECA/ACW Guidelines for the Implementation of the Platforms?

Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, did you find them useful? Yes _____ No _____

c. If no, why not?

2. How can the Guidelines be improved?

3. Are there activities undertaken to popularize *

i. the Guidelines?

a. Yes _____ No _____

**Please refer to the Clarification Notes*

b. If yes, what are the activities?

ii. the National Action Plan?

a. Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, what are the activities?

iii. the African Platform for Action?

a. Yes _____ No _____

b. If yes, what are the activities?

** Please refer to the Clarification Notes*

Clarification Notes

Section A

A1.c. Explain if the different parties to be involved are clearly identified (e.g. national ministries, UN agencies, other machineries, NGO's etc.) in NAP and if their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and appropriately allocated.

Section B

B2. Explain some possible influences of the selection process: for instance, current development plan etc.

B3. Please indicate whether the governments, NGO's, Civil Societies, parliament etc. were involved in the choice of the priorities.

Section C

C1. Please explain if the NAP formulating party is an autonomous committee comprising government, NGO representatives, women and men researchers and development partners or any other parties.

C2. A multidisciplinary body means a body consisting of persons/agencies with different professional backgrounds, disciplines and expertise.

C3. Consultation can include a variety of actors outside of the NAP formulating body such as universities, other organizations specializing in the areas of concern etc.

Section D

D1. For example, was the allocation via voluntary choice by actors, appropriation by higher authority etc.?

D5. A time table of programs and activities with time limits and/or deadlines indicating targets to be achieved by various actors needs to be formulated.

D6. Decentralization means that the tasks outlined in the NAP are not carried out by a single party but by a variety of actors at the national and local levels.

Section G

G1. Resources can be allocated by governments, ministries, and by other donors such as NGO's etc.

G4. For example, are matching funds, income generating activities, project elaboration for funding requests etc., some of the strategies employed for resource mobilization?

G6. Potential sources can be agencies that are currently not providing resources to the NAP but have supported similar projects in the past and can provide resources to this project in the future.

Section H

H3. Efforts to popularize the NAP, APA, and GPA include but are not limited to conduction of workshops with close involvement of the ACW, development of promotional materials and exchange of information among member states and the general public, dissemination of the NAP, APA and Guidelines etc.

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Annexe II

Page

**WOMEN IN NORTH AFRICA IN THE
POST-BEIJING PHASE : REALITIES AND
PROSPECTS**

**By Ms. Hassania Chalbi
Mr. Bedoui Mongi**

This study is based, firstly, on field studies on the status of women in North Africa and secondly, on interpretations of the results of a survey carried out through a collective questionnaire compiled by the African Centre for Women among various governmental and non-governmental entities involved in women's advancement in the subregion.

The study, and the suggestions made, also drew heavily on the meetings and work of the focus groups.

We are very grateful to the actors on the ground and to the researchers who actively participated in this undertaking and facilitated the preparation of the study.

September 1998

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the context of globalization and the attendant imperatives, North Africa faces a number of pressing challenges, including:
 - (a) Population growth, which is still a major source of pressures in the labour market;
 - (b) Growing demands in education, training, health, social welfare and human settlements;
and
 - (c) Pressures on the environment.
2. North African countries have made considerable progress in the economic sphere, but like other countries in various parts of the world, face the developmental problem of persistent disparities among different segments of the population.
3. Throughout North Africa, women and children constitute a significant element in the populations of the various countries and may face exclusion in the social and economic spheres.
4. Through the ages, women are the one section of society that has been most affected by marginalization and exclusion.
5. Now, the development agenda which prevailed in the 1970s, and which on the whole, was characterized by an inability on the part of States to recognize the enormous potential of women as agents of development and social progress, has given way to a new awareness of the role of women, and so there is room to hope that inequality will soon be a thing of the past.
6. Consequently, various gender-focused policies in North Africa are gathering momentum.
7. The current orientation, in the contexts of over-all educational development as well as capacity-building in the essential professional and technical spheres, is gender-focused.
8. Accordingly, planners and decision-makers now consider health, education and women's employment as objectives and long-term investments that tie in with the national interest; hence the remarkable progress made in these areas.
9. None the less, women are still hampered by glaring social disadvantages in the economic and political spheres, and some of the indicators of the status of women still lag behind expectations.
10. Initiatives in the area of women's advancement must be seen against the background of the various development plans. Thus, for instance, the objective of poverty alleviation is pursued through the development of income-generating occupations for women and the introduction of assistance programmes for disadvantaged social groups, which include women. In the same vein, employment creation entails the integration of women into the socio-economic milieu.

11. Women's advancement also entails enhanced social security, the consolidation of women's fundamental rights and women's empowerment at all levels.

12. The plan of action that emerged from the fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, identifies twelve (12) critical areas which have become priority areas for action by the international community towards gender equality.

13. Three main principles underpinned the deliberations of the conference participants: recognition of the essential role of women in development; the need to empower women; and the need for gender mainstreaming in all public policies and programmes.

14. The programmes of action recognize the need for strategic steps in poverty alleviation, education, training and health.

15. How far have we gone in North Africa?

I. Key data relating to the status of women in North Africa

(a) Population

16. North Africans belong to diverse ethnicities, cultures and civilizations; the total population of the subregion was about 160 million in 1996, i.e.:

Algeria	28.5 million
Egypt	59.3 million
Libya	5.6 million
Mauritania	2.3 million
Morocco	27.1 million
Sudan	27.3 million
Tunisia	9.1 million

17. Population poses a major problem for North African countries. The implications particularly as regards women – in the economic, cultural and social spheres, are adverse, and worsen social inequalities.

(a) Population growth rates have slowed down, as the current figures show:

Population growth rates						
Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Mauritania	Morocco	Sudan	Tunisia
2.4	2.3	2.6	2.4	1.8	2.4	1.6

(b) On the basis of fertility indicators for 1995, and the 1997 UNFPA report on the world population.*

* State of World's Population, UNFPA.

Fertility indicators

Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Mauritania	Morocco	Sudan	Tunisia
3.81	3.40	5.92	5.03	3.10	4.61	2.92

18. Family planning programmes in all the other countries preceded those in Algeria, Mauritania and Sudan. {Algeria in 1978; even more recently in Mauritania and Sudan}. This explains the figures.

- (i) Life expectancy has fluctuated considerably. The figures given below are based on UNFPA reports.

Life Expectancy

Algeria		Egypt		Libya		Mauritania		Morocco		Sudan		Tunisia	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
67.5	70.3	64.7	67.3	63.9	67.5	51.9	55.1	64.8	68.5	53.6	56.4	68.4	70.7

- (ii) Maternal mortality rates are still fairly high, as the following figures show:

Algeria:	160 per 100,000 live births
Egypt :	170 per 100,000 live births
Libya:	220 per 100,000 live births
Mauritania:	930 per 100,000 live births
Morocco:	660 per 100,000 live births
Sudan:	660 per 100,000 live births
Tunisia:	170 per 100,000 live births

19. This is attributable to limitations in the family planning programmes in place, particularly owing to inadequate integration and harmonization with public health policy in so far as it relates to women, and a shortage of preventive medicine based on information, public awareness, and health care.

20. As appears in the figures given below, for children under five years of age, child mortality rates are still high.

Child mortality

Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Mauritania	Morocco	Sudan	Tunisia
41%	76%	75%	158%	75%	109%	50%

Source: World Bank 1997 Africa Development Indicators

- (b) Education and culture

21. Even though North African countries have different political systems, they have made significant progress in education and culture.

School enrolment: percentage of girls
(1980-1990)

	Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Morocco	Mauritania	Sudan	Tunisia
1980	54	54	63	39	16	28	53
1990	72	81	87	41	27	30	74

Source: ACW,ECA.

22. The education of girls has developed appreciably throughout the subregion. The following table shows literacy levels among the adult female population (1994, percentages):

Literacy levels by gender
(1994, percentages)

	Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Mauritania	Morocco	Sudan	Tunisia
Women	43.5	36.7	57.2	25.6	27.7	31.3	50.4
Men	71.8	62.6	88.9	48.4	54.4	56.4	77.9
Total	59.4	51.0	75	35.9	42.1	45	65.2

Source: ACW/ECA

23. The levels of school enrolment in the different countries vary significantly. (For instance, 57.2 per cent of Libyan women are literate, whereas the figure for Mauritania is only 25.6 per cent. Illiteracy levels are high on the whole, despite the efforts made in the area of education.

Illiterate population, 15+age bracket (percentage)

1985	65	71	60	71	84	90	53
1995	26/51	36/61	12/37	43/69	50/74	42/65	21/45

Source: WB

24. Glaring gender disparities persist, even though women in all seven countries have made considerable progress in the area of education. They do not in fact enjoy the rights enacted under national legislation relating to their right to education. Naturally, the disadvantaged status in the area of education is reflected in the social milieu, in terms of the participation of women in the economic and political sphere.

c) North African women: economic activities

	Algeria		Egypt				Libya			Morocco		Mauritania		Sudan		Tunisia			
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	
Economically active adult women (over 15)	8		75	22			71	9			7	2	8	25	8	26	8	2	7
											7	1	1		7		6	6	9
% economically active women (1994)		10			23			10		21		23		23					
Agriculture (1994)		20			8			32		27		82		84		47			
Industry (1994)		21			20			15		46		4		5		44			
Services (1994)		69			71			54		28		14		11		10			
Entrepreneurs (1990)		2			20			-		11		23		-		17			

Source: ESCWA/CAWTAR

25. The level of participation of North African women indicates a fair degree of integration in the labour market. Differences occur, however, in relation to their presence in various sectors. For instance, Sudanese women are particularly active in agriculture (84 per cent), Moroccan women in industry (46 per cent), Egyptian women and Algerian women in the service sector – 71 per cent and 69 per cent respectively. However, Mauritanian women show the highest degree of participation as self-employed entrepreneurs and independent workers. It may be surmised that these factors are governed by the operative economic policies in the various countries as well as the ability of women to participate in the economy after overcoming a number of obstacles such as those relating to educational and health opportunities as well as labour laws and social advancement. On the whole, however, the visible role of women in the economic sphere is still modest in the light of their actual contribution to the economy. The fact that women are invisible actors greatly influences perceptions of their actual participation in the social milieu and is the factor that most affects their status.

26. One unsettling possibility is that a global economic downturn and increasing pressure on resources may constrain governments to relegate the advancement of women to a non-priority category. None the less, this is an area that deserves more investment, to formulate strategies for generating employment and self-employment opportunities in North Africa.

(i) Legal instruments(i) National level

27. In the wake of the fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), it is clear that the issue of equal rights is predicated upon the political will of the governments of North African countries.

North African countries have endeavoured in various ways in the legal domain, to improve the status of women with the objective of actualizing their integration into modern life and democratic ideals while remaining faithful to Arab and Islamic culture. Although, however, North African women have equal rights with men in public law, they are unable, in reality, to enjoy those rights because they are hampered by legal incapacity in the domain of private law. This situation should be addressed with a sense of urgency because it is a formidable obstacle to women's access to positions of responsibility and influence.

(ii) International level

28. North African States have ratified various international instruments relating to the protection of human rights, as shown in the table below:

	Algeria	Egypt	Libya	Morocco	Mauritania	Sudan	Tunisia
Convention on the Political Rights of Women	-	-	+	-	+	-	+
Convention on the Nationality of Married Women	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages	-	-	-	+	-	-	+
Global Agenda for Women's Participation in Sustainable and Equitable Development (Pro-Act 21-chp24)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Convention on the Rights of the Child	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

Source: ACW/ECA

29. Although North African States have acceded to and ratified various treaties and declarations dealing with human rights issues, they have at the same time formulated interpretative reservations *vis à vis* some of the international norms regarding the right of women in private law. Indeed, they have rejected some of those norms on the basis of other instruments emanating from regional organs.

Among North African States, Tunisia has acceded to the most international conventions (six out of seven), because its national laws are more progressive in this area. In that connection, there is a personal law code (code de statut personnel), promulgated in 1956, which grants Tunisian women a broad range of rights (including the abolition of polygamy, institution of divorce through the judicial organs, and provisions stipulating the consent of a girl as a precondition to marriage).

(j) Women in public life

30. The right to participate in what is sometimes described as public life features prominently among the considerations underpinning the issue of women's advancement in North Africa; it involves issues such as *de facto* equality before the law, the right to practice a profession and to pursue advanced education, the right to run for public office, and so on. Most of these issues have been satisfactorily addressed, but it is still clear that women are almost totally absent in the political sphere and decision-making organs.

II. SYNTHESIS OF RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE VIABILITY OF THE NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION

A. National Plan for the Implementation of the Global and African Platforms for Action (NPA)

34. Apart from the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, all the countries of the subregion have national plans of action in place.

35. In Tunisia, the NPA has been adopted, and specific programmes are now being put in place; two such programmes are the support mechanism designed to strengthen income-generating activities for women, and the plan of action for rural women.

36. Egypt's NPA consists of the programmes put in place by the Commission on children and the family.

37. A draft NPA has been adopted by the government in Sudan. A national seminar is being organized to discuss the draft NPA. A three-member committee of experts is charged with the task of formulating recommendations within the framework of the national development strategy for the period 1992-2001.

38. Although no NPA has been drawn up in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya as yet, the Secretariat of the People's Committee on Women's Affairs has a programme of work derived from the national programme of the People's General Committee.

39. In Algeria, the Office of the Ministry of State for National Solidarity and the Family organized workshops in 1996 (16-18 April) on the advancement and welfare of Algerian women as part of the implementation process in respect of the recommendations made at the Beijing Conference. Owing to the importance of the recommendations, a Standing Committee was established to oversee their implementation and follow-up.

40. In Mauritania, annual action plans, established on the basis of the Dakar recommendations, make up the strategies pursued by the Council of Ministers (1995-1998). These are also the priority areas of the annual plans of action.

41. The formulation of Morocco's NPA is under way. The key aspects of this plan of action were discussed in June 1998, following which a broad-based follow-up committee working under the auspices of the SEPSFE drew up a set of priority areas.

42. The following organs are, respectively, charged with the preparation of national plans of action:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • Tunisia | the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Family |
| • Egypt | the Commission on the Child and the Family |
| • Sudan | the Ministry for Social Planning |
| • Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | the Secretariat responsible for women's affairs |
| • Mauritania | the Commission on Women's Social Advancement |

- Morocco the Commission responsible for social welfare, the family and the child

B. Priority Areas at the National Level

43. In connection with the 11 areas of concern of the African Platform for Action, there is a considerable degree of similarity in the priority areas identified in the various countries, as indicated below:

<u>Tunisia</u>	Strengthening women's participation in various sectors: economic empowerment Stimulating efforts to combat illiteracy, focusing on urban as well as rural women Alleviating poverty, within the framework of a national programme of work to integrate the most disadvantaged districts, which, in Tunisia are known as zones <u>d'ombre dans le tissu socio-economique du pays</u> (grey areas in the national socio-economic fabric).
<u>Egypt</u>	Combating poverty Combating illiteracy Promoting women's health
<u>Sudan</u>	Combating poverty and strengthening national solidarity Combating illiteracy Promoting education of the girl child
<u>Libya</u>	Encouraging women's participation in the People's Bureaux Strengthening the education of girls Developing public health
<u>Morocco</u>	Developing education Developing reproductive health Integrating women into the development process: employment, training and poverty alleviation
<u>Mauritania</u>	Combating poverty Developing community life Promoting welfare at the level of the family
<u>Algeria</u>	Developing education Developing public health Creating more employment opportunities Promoting women's legal rights Encouraging research and forward-looking studies

44. On the basis of those priority areas, the cross-cutting issues are the following:

- Combating illiteracy

- Promoting public health programmes
- Promoting women's economic empowerment

45. Consequently, the priority areas in the context of women's advancement in North Africa relate mainly to the social sphere – in particular, illiteracy and public health – and to the development of small-scale economic activities, particularly in the context of poverty alleviation and employment creation. The main targets are the disadvantaged social groups at the level of the community or geographical area.

C. National Plans of Action: the Formulation Process

46. The priority areas are derived, in the main, from the development planning process at the national level, certain features of which are specific to each country. In Tunisia, for instance, the priority areas were identified through two separate mechanisms, viz a consultation process at the local, provincial and national levels to establish an economic and social development plan (the eighth and ninth development plans, respectively), with a special committee responsible for gender issues, and, secondly, the post-Beijing national plan of action, where the consultation process was spearheaded by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Family, and the Commission responsible for women's affairs and the family; the process involved provincial and national seminars as well as case studies.

47. The principal agency in Sudan was the technical committee of experts which drew up a draft national plan of action, to be considered by the Ministry concerned and submitted, after approval, to the consultation process at the level of a national seminar.

48. In Egypt, the consultation process was effected within the framework of the National Committee responsible for gender issues, which falls under the Commission on the Child and the family.

49. The elements of Libya's plan of action and the pertinent priority areas are elaborated by the People's Bureaux within the framework of the over-all development planning process.

50. In the case of Algeria, the priority areas were elaborated on the basis of a specialized study on the status of women, in the context of "enhancing their contribution for future generations".

51. The priority areas in respect of Morocco's NPA were identified during a meeting of the national committee responsible for gender issues at a one-day seminar (held in June 1998), which was organized for that purpose. This is a broad-based committee comprising governmental agencies, NGOs, private-sector entities and experts, among others.

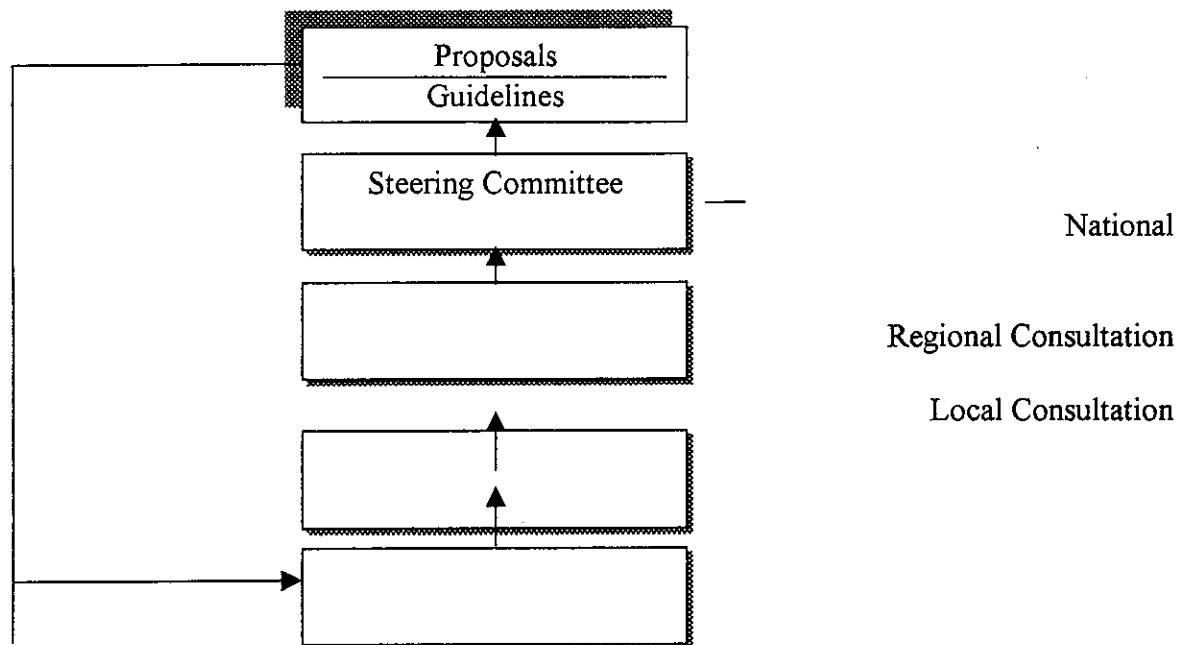
52. In the case of Mauritania, the priority areas were identified on the basis of thematic studies carried out for that purpose, and also on the basis of an overarching study for the interministerial technical committee.

53. Three distinct approaches emerge from the consultation processes:

- (i) Participation as well as consultation, in the case of Tunisia, Egypt, Mauritania and Algeria, are integrated within the framework of a national council (conseil supérieur);

- (ii) The main agency in the case of Sudan is the technical process and the draft NPA elaborated by the committee of experts, before the draft is passed on to the consultation mechanisms;
- (iii) The principal consultation mechanisms in Libya are the national political structures (the people's committees) established for the purpose of national development planning;
- (iv) In Morocco, the National Commission on Women has been constituted and is in the process of integration. It is a broad-based organ, consisting of representatives of governmental agencies and NGOs, among others, and is designed to embark on a consultation process among all the parties concerned.

54. The consultation process is structured vertically, but with hardly any element of interaction.



55. The following bottlenecks affecting the consultation process may be cited:

- unwillingness on the part of men to participate in the consultation process (apart from the representatives of the governmental agencies);
- paucity of mechanisms for feedback;
- difficulties in distinguishing between certain priority areas;
- the issue of feasibility (financial, practical, etc.)
- organizational considerations (particularly in the case of Sudan.

D. Agencies responsible for women's advancement oversee the implementation phase

56. Coordinating agencies are responsible for implementation of the national plans of action in the countries visited (i.e. Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria and Mauritania). In Tunisia, the coordinating body is the ministry responsible for the advancement of women and the girl child; in Egypt, it is the Commission on the Family and Child Welfare; in Mauritania, the Department of Women's Affairs; in Algeria, the Ministry for National Solidarity and Women's Affairs; in Morocco, the Department of Social Development, the Family and Child Welfare, and in Mauritania, the Department of Women's Advancement.

57. The institutions, which are organized in a horizontal schema coordinate the implementation process, in conjunction with the pertinent specialized units. In general terms, the following organigramme shows the organizational structure:

Social welfare services

- Poverty alleviation programmes
- Training centres for women
- Literacy

Agricultural services

- Agricultural projects
- Rural development

Health services

- Family planning
- Reproductive health

Educational services

- Information campaign
- Education of girls

Women's organizations

- Women's group
- GOs involved in gender issues; other associations

58. Thus, the distribution of tasks in the implementation process corresponds with sectoral structures. None the less many of the horizontal activities are carried out through the coordinating agencies, and in particular, the information mechanisms, case studies and joint projects which involve several entities at any one time.

59. Over and above the horizontal-sectoral coordinating mechanisms, there are other special, mechanisms for the application of the national plans of action. Two mechanisms of application may be cited:

- There are, firstly, support mechanisms for income-generating activities for women, which follow the implementation schedule given below.

60. The NPA adopts the establishment of a special mechanism for income-generating occupations for women.

61. The Ministry for Women's Affairs and the Family develops an implementation mechanism in consultation with NGOs and donors as follows:

62. Financing: debt conversion fund, in collaboration with the Netherlands and Sweden.

63. Coordination: Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Family, and a steering committee to oversee the equity.

64. Implementation: agreement between the Ministry and the NGOs involved in development issues and operating in income-generating initiatives across the country.

65. Evaluation and follow-up: the steering committee

The second implementation mechanism relates to a special facet of the NPA concerned with rural women: The Tunisian government has adopted a plan of action focusing on rural women, consisting of the following phases:

- A technical study to propose a prioritized plan of action (research unit);
- A steering committee for the purpose of conducting consultations across the country, in conjunction with governmental and non-governmental agencies;
- Proposals regarding priority areas for action by the Ministry responsible for women's advancement and child welfare by NGOs and the specialist entities concerned;
- Advocacy for the purpose of funding; objectives: the national budget and international cooperation;
- Implementation by specialized entities and by NGOs;
- Evaluation and follow-up by the national committee.

66. Apart from the NPA, the implementation mechanism in Egypt should be mentioned. It operates in conjunction with the National Council on the Family and Child Welfare which elaborates frameworks for the development of small-scale enterprises for women.

Ministry responsible for social affairs

= Department responsible for women's advancement, to implement the project in collaboration with UNICEF

NGOs

= participate in the work of the Ministry in the context of women entrepreneurs.

67. In Morocco, development initiatives focused on micro-credit mechanisms, and the poverty alleviation programme are gender-focused.

In the case of Sudan and Libya (the latter does not yet have an NPA in place), gender-focused projects connected with the implementation of the Beijing platform and the African Platform for Action

are actualized through the activities of the Department of Women's Affairs (Sudan), and the Standing committee responsible for women's affairs (Libya).

68. In general terms, the advancement of women in all the countries concerned falls under the pertinent sectoral units, non-governmental organizations (particularly women's groups), and international cooperation.

69. Notwithstanding the abundance of entities concerned with the implementation of the national plans of action, there is no coordination among them. The mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration have not evolved sufficiently, particularly with regard to the interaction between, on the one hand sectoral initiatives (which are focused on specialized operators within a well-defined social context) and, on the other, cross-cutting initiatives which are focused on many multiplicity of operators at a time).

70. Accordingly, gender-focused initiatives in Egypt, Tunisia, Mauritania and Algeria fall under the Prime Minister's office. This facilitates coordination, follow-up and overall leadership.

71. The schedules of implementation at the national level fall into four distinct categories:

- (i) National action plans with the steps in the implementation spread over covering the short-, medium- and long-term, as is the case in Tunisia and Egypt;
- (ii) National action plans setting out priority areas and orientations in relation to the advancement of women, with a time-frame indicated for the socio-economic development dimension; Morocco's and Algeria's NPAs may be placed in this category;
- (iii) Gender-focused actions integrated into the national strategic framework and the development plan, as with Sudan's NPA;

72. The orientation of the implementation phase tends to be decentralized throughout the subregion.

73. In the case of Egypt, the implementation phase ties in with the decentralized structure of government projects, but various units at the centre spearhead certain sectors.

74. The implementation phase in Tunisia, for large-scale national projects, is similar to Egypt's; the community-focused projects, and the projects initiated by the NGOs, are highly decentralized.

75. A programme, in Sudan, to strengthen the implementation of gender-focused initiatives, is under way, and coordinating units are operational in seven of the country's provinces. More such units are to be set up across the country during the next three years.

76. The implementation phase in Libya is similar in structure to the national development plan.

77. In Mauritania, implementation within the framework of self-help projects, and in particular, those that are internationally funded, are entirely decentralized.

78. In Algeria and Morocco, responsibility for the implementation of the national action plans is spread out among the various government departments according to their respective areas of competence. Other entities, particularly NGOs and multinationals, are also involved.

79. In parallel with the planning and execution structures for gender-focused projects, the research capacities on gender issues has been strengthened at the level of the various government departments, governmental agencies and NGOs.

80. For example, there have been several training programmes on research capacities on gender issues, in Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan and Morocco, including, in particular, those carried out within the framework of cooperation programmes with UNDP, the World Bank, UNFPA and UNICEF.

81. Apart from training, all the seven North African countries are trying to make it a requirement that all data be gender-specific. The respective government departments responsible for gender issues are giving high priority to this question, being sorely aware of the particularly serious inadequacies in this domain, at the local and national levels. Moreover, all seven countries are endeavouring to integrate a gender perspective into the national development plans.

E. Resources

82. The implementation of the national plans of action is funded in three distinct ways:

- (i) Within the context of the national budget, particularly in so far as it covers education, health and social development. These aspects of development, which affect women, are mainly funded by governmental agencies;
- (ii) Most of the gender-focused actions that are based on support and capacity-building initiatives funded by international agencies. For example, the UNDP programme for 1997-2001 funds gender-focused projects, and in particular, income-generating projects in the context of poverty alleviation; UNICEF has major literacy programmes in Egypt and Sudan, focusing on women. The Canadian International Development Agency supports women's project in the subregion. Debt conversion to support women's projects in Tunisia is another noteworthy initiative, in conjunction with the Netherlands and Sweden. UNFPA is involved in a similar capacity-building project in Algeria.

In the context of international cooperation, Germany has mainly been involved in financing training programmes for women. The contribution of the international community has been steadfast, but governments tend to give priority to training, education and technical assistance. It is evident, however, that public works and infrastructure projects are important social needs which are certainly relevant to women.

- (iii) Special programmes and funds are an important element in the financing of gender-focused projects. The social fund in Egypt and the micro-credit facilities in Morocco are cases in point; both are programmes that focused on women's advancement. Most beneficiaries of Tunisia's Fonds d'insertion et d'adaptation professionnelle (53 per cent) are women; the Fonds national de solidarité (also operating in Tunisia) is focused on

poverty alleviation. The Savings and Social Welfare Bank in Sudan gives financial support to programmes focused on poor families (18 projects).

All these special programmes and in particular, those concerned with poverty alleviation, are increasingly focused on women. This orientation should be strengthened, however, to take into account factors such as sustainability and the support mechanism. Both factors are often relevant to special projects of limited duration.

83. Notwithstanding the foregoing, however, the countries considered are facing difficulties with the financing of women projects. Among the many reasons for these are:

(a) The obvious lack of financing in the Sudan;

(b) Mauritania's inadequate machinery which does not make for easy access to financing, not to mention the lack of coordination among the various projects;

(c) The imbalance between the enormous need in the women sector of Egypt and Morocco in terms of literacy in particular and the paucity of available resources; and

(d) The increasing lack of international cooperation resources in Tunisia which has been justified in terms of per capita income achieved by that country. This situation is creating difficulties and is considered as an inadequate reward for the effort made.

84. In the circumstances, several specific strategies have been worked out for resource mobilization. Three examples can be cited in this context:

(a) In Tunisia, the specific strategy for mobilizing resources has taken two forms: (i) the first has to do with recycling the country's external debt and channeling the proceeds into projects targetting women and the environment; (ii) the second relates to the drafting of a plan of action and the institution a coordinating mechanism among donors in order to ensure that women's project financing is properly coordinated.

(b) In Morocco, the thrust of this effort has gone into enhancing the role of women in various development programmes. Indeed, particular effort has been made in the area of micro-financing and the UNDP poverty eradication programme. The social project funds currently being mobilized in collaboration with the World Bank will pay particular attention to women's project; and

(c) In Egypt, UNDP has prepared a three-year development programme and is supporting government efforts to mobilize funds. The setting of programme priorities has made it possible to place the advancement of women at the top of the list with poverty eradication and environmental protection.

85. These various strategies mainly seek to achieve coordination among the various programmes and donors and to set priorities in terms of needs justified under realistic indicators. The financing scheme used by most donors requires the country to allocate 20 to 50 per cent of national counterpart funds to the programmes. This principle has helped to mobilize national resources and to integrate women-targetted development projects into the national budget management structure.

F. Follow-up and coordination

86. Women's advancement projects are monitored by those institutions responsible for coordinating women's affairs on the one hand, and the national plan monitoring units on the other hand. Both mainly used the tool of reporting on progress achieved in women's programme activities.

87. In Tunisia for example, the progress report prepared by the Ministry of Women's Affairs is submitted to the National Council on Women and Family Affairs meeting every three months under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister.

88. In Egypt, the Women's Committee of the National Council on Family and Children's Affairs prepares progress report for submission to the periodic meetings of the Council held every six months. These meetings are presided over by the First Lady.

89. In Algeria, there is a follow-up committee which considers progress reports at periodic meetings.

90. In Morocco, as part of the national planning exercise, a national monitoring committee will assume this responsibility in coordination with the secretariat of the National Office for the Social Advancement of the Family and Children.

91. It could be concluded, in this regard, that the specific responsibility for monitoring women's programme is institutionalized in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Algeria and integrated in the national development planning exercise of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Sudan and Mauritania. Such monitoring is generally based on progress reports on programme activities. With specific regard to quality control, there is an obvious deficiency in terms of quality evaluation and impact assessment.

92. Within this context, it might be helpful to mention the effort of collaboration between the World Bank's Project Impact Assessment Unit and the Tunisian Ministry of Women's Affairs to assess the impact of development projects of women. This important exercise has not resulted in institutionalizing this impact assessment methodology despite the enormous need of all the countries in this area.

93. That said, however, the monitoring tool used by the national plan monitoring committees and commissions has an important impact on the rate of project implementation and the exceptional measures taken to facilitate the process. In the progress report submitted to the Committees in Egypt and Tunisia can be found proposals for overcoming the difficulties encountered. Once such proposals are approved by the National Council and submitted to the Head of States, they have a high likelihood of being implemented.

94. In addition to their monitoring role, the National Councils to women also play an important role in avoiding duplication at the level of project implementation. Indeed, looking at the cases of Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria, the Councils happen to play a major role in coordinating the efforts of the various players. This is how those institutions responsible for women's affairs come to implement like-minded project components such as women's NGO support, training in project preparation, sensitization campaigns and so on, while the sectoral institutions implement the technical components that fall within their purview.

95. It should be pointed out, however, that the various actors interviewed acknowledged that some duplication existed with several projects financed by various donors. They all affirmed that greater coordination would result in the achievement of economies of scale. Indeed, the plan of action for the advancement of women was one tool for strengthening such coordination and ironing out the difficulties encountered in the project implementation.

96. In addition to the problems of coordination, the national planning exercises run into specific implementation difficulties in the various countries. While the degree of those difficulties vary widely from country to country, mention could be made of:

(a) The inadequate institutional capacity for local development projects. In Morocco for example, the NGOs show a limited capacity to implement projects for rural women while in Tunisia the problem is more with the urban areas. In Algeria, this inadequacy is felt both by NGOs and small-scale private enterprises. To strengthen institutional capacity, most of the players stressed the need to programme institutional backstopping into every project for the advancement of women. Such specific project backstopping was more helpful, in their view, than general institutional support.

(b) The difficulties relating to disparities between the genuine needs of people and programme activities are caused by the lack of capacity to prepare project documents at the grass-roots level. The proposal put forward to address this difficulty consists of developing a two-phase feasibility and implementation methodology. The first phase would focus on defining the project guidelines under major headings and estimating the cost. This document would be used to secure agreement in principle while the second relating to project implementation would be based on a grass-roots participatory needs assessment involving such players as the beneficiaries and institutions. This study would make it possible to set project priorities and to control the implementation process more flexibly and effectively.

(c) Difficulties arising from lack of male interest in women's project arise from the fact that such project exclude men in the area or project zone and create tension even within families. The proposal to address this consists of eliciting the active participation of both groups within the framework of a gender approach ;

(d) Difficulties arising from the generalization of project activities at the expense of specific activities have mostly to do with the failure of the national planning machinery to take specific needs of local women generally into account. To address this, grassroots participatory planning tools need to be developed.

(e) The difficulties encountered by all the countries in terms of interface between national planning for women and national gender projects and activities can be described in three ways :

- (i) First, in the name of equality and non-discrimination, little importance is attached to programmes specifically targetted at women. Naturally, the substantial inequities that prevent women from benefitting equally with men from national development planning are overlooked ;

- (ii) Second, so much importance is accorded to projects specifically targetted at women that they become the only national programme for women, leaving the impression that the other common programmes only concern the men ; and
- (iii) Third, the need to take specific measures for the advancement of women should be weighed carefully against that of achieving more equitable sharing of national human resources and what is to be gained ultimately if women become integrated in the national fabric as a matter of policy and principle under gender supporting activities. Accordingly, gender analysis has been used in an attempt to devise the methodological and practical tools for making such integration choices with the help of specific support.

97. With all the difficulties arising from the financing of women's programmes, particularly in view of economic constraints, on the one hand, and the pressing needs that have accumulated on the other hand, gender-focused activities still show a striking dynamism.

98. In connexion with the guidelines for the implementation of the regional and global platforms for action of the African Centre for Women, there is a considerable degree of variation in respect of awareness within the various countries of the subregion. However, it seems to be greater in Tunisia, Egypt, the Sudan and Morocco than in Algeria, Libya and Mauritania.

99. The proposals derived from these mandates are based on the joint implementation support projects using the experience accumulated within the subregion, and replicating the success stories of the countries in the subregion, particularly those produced in Arabic.

100. The various actors find the guidelines very useful but would like to see more collaborative initiatives on the ground, with greater support to gender-focused programmes. The issue of coordinating the various women's advancement monitoring initiatives was raised particularly when it came to the international support machinery of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the League of Arab States and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. Indeed, follow-up activities are being conducted in all the countries at the initiative of the various parties although with little coordination.

101. Regarding the sensitization and mobilization of national players around the platforms, what was observed was that this is basically happening in connection with national programmes coming from international mandates and recommendations.

102. Indeed, there is a dynamic for the follow-up and preparation of specific programmes and plans in each country of the subregion. This has been strongly reflected in national consultations including :

(a) The meetings and seminars organized in Tunisia in 1996, 1997 and 1998 to prepare the national plan of action and the local, regional and nation-wide consultations on the women's programme component of the 9th Economic and Social Development Plan. The consultative machinery has now been institutionalized and activities on the ground comprise domestic and international cooperation initiatives. In March 1998, the Ministry of Women's Affairs organized an international Forum for the Maghreb region with a view to preparing for the regional conference. CREDIF is currently organizing an

exchange and training programme for development actors in the region and with UNFPA support, the National Bureau of the Census has established a subregional centre for training in reproductive and basic health care.

(b) In the Sudan, monitoring and implementation activities are being conducted simultaneously within the context of activities programmed by UNIFEM and ECA particularly since the Sudan participated in the Dakar meeting and happens to be a member of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. A workshop was organized in September 1995 and a forum during the Arab Family Day celebrations in December 1997. A technical preparatory committee was set up to draft an Action Plan and a national seminar on the action plan is being prepared. Institutionally, women's units have been established within the ministries and regions of the Sudan in cooperation with the Minister of Social Planning.

103. In Egypt, the consultative process took off with the establishment of a think-tank in December 1996 and working committees within the various ministries. The National Commission for the implementation of the Beijing Platform comprises 20 experts who propose national policy and regional commissions which are working towards the same objectives within the specific purview of each unit. The National Congress of March 1998 provided an occasion to make recommendations for strengthening the five-year development plan.

104. In the Jamahiriya, the recommendations and Global Platform activities are monitored under a UNDP support programme which commissioned expert to prepare a draft report on the Situation of Women in Libya and to devote a substantial part of the National Human Development Report currently being prepared to the concerns of Libyan women. The women's secretariat of each of the 330 People's Bureaux are making substantial efforts to programme gender issues into the grass-roots consultation exercise.

105. Algeria's committee was created by the Prime Minister to oversee the implementation and follow-up of the various platforms. However, the Ministry of National Solidarity and the Family is responsible for implementation and follow-up of the NPA at all levels. In that capacity, the Ministry issues periodic reports to the committees and agencies concerned with gender issues.

105. In Morocco, the National committee responsible for preparing the NPA is elaborating a programme of work to sensitize people on the implementation of the global platform. The National committee will be responsible for evaluation and follow-up of the NPA, in collaboration with the SEPSFE.

106. In Mauritania, the process is proceeding on the basis of the African platform; it involves inter-sectoral meetings, which are followed, when the implementation process is well-established, by a national strategy for women's advancement, which has been submitted to a broad-based consultative forum within the framework of national workshops.

107. Moreover, following the meetings that were held in Cairo within the framework of this report, with the unit responsible for women's advancement in the League of Arab States, a mechanism for follow-up of the implementation process, and an Arab platform, were put in place during the Amman meeting (September 1996), and following that meeting, a programme of action was drawn up, and a regional meeting is scheduled for late 1998.

CONCLUSION

108. What emerges from this report is that there is a new impetus at the subregional level towards broader dissemination of gender issues and towards a more action-oriented conception of programmes for the implementation of the proposals that have been made.

109. There are considerable possibilities for collaboration between various stakeholders in the subregion which can be actualized, and the African Centre for Women can play a key role if the subregional conference makes concrete proposals for building the capacity to implement the Beijing recommendations.

110. The experiences described in the section on obstacles encountered can be used to develop these priority areas into action proposals, and also to identify various implementation institutions and mechanisms.

111. We crave the indulgence of the various stakeholders in the subregion in respect of the aspects that have not been covered or mentioned in this report, reiterate our readiness to enrich this draft with corrections that will be made during the conference and thank all the institutional stakeholders for the assistance they afforded us. It was pivotal in the elaboration of the report.

E/ECA/ACW/SRMN/98/9

Annexe III

Page

OUTLINE OF A MODEL NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

Background

The model national action plan has been adapted from the one presented to the Sub-regional Conference of Senior governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Platform for Action in Central and Eastern Europe, held at Bucharest from 12-14 September 1996. It has been designed in a manner that allows national governments to adapt it to their particular circumstances.

As the **Guidelines for the Implementation of the African Platform for Action** (ACW, 1995), pointed out:

«Some of the difficulties which faced the implementation of the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the advancement of women were the failure to allocate responsibilities for the various aspects, sectors and levels of implementation, the absence of appropriate structures for undertaking implementation activities and the failure to identify the sources of resources for enhancing effective implementation.»

It was therefore agreed in Beijing that *«as soon as possible, preferably by the end of 1995, Governments in consultation with relevant institutions and non-governmental organisations should begin to develop implementation strategies for the Platform and preferably by the end of 1996, should have developed their strategies or plans of action. . . . These implementation strategies should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring, and include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation.»* (**Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration**, para 297, p.161)

Organising elements of the National Plan of Action

In producing the National Plan of Action government should at the very least have done the following:

- Prioritised objectives and actions
- Set specific time-bound targets for the objectives;
- Set benchmarks and established mechanisms for monitoring.
- Identified (named) actors in the implementation of the Plan

- Put in place clear structures and processes for consultations and clear institutional arrangements, as well as clear roles and responsibilities for different
- actors in the implementation
- Specified necessary legislative measures
- Specified resources to be allocated to the implementation of the plan and identified sources for these resources

The following section outlines and gives suggestions on how the national action plan could be structured:

Summary and overview of the model national action plan

This section should be limited to one or two pages, highlighting the main features of the National action Plan (NAP), including major accomplishments and new priorities.

Introduction

This section might include the following:

- an assessment of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Platform for Action from the country's vantage point;
- a brief presentation of those global or regional changes taking place that are relevant to the advancement of women from a national perspective,
- a statement on the most critical areas of concern to women in that country, including relevant social indicators,
- a reiteration of the commitments made at Beijing, and
- a brief description of the country's accomplishments thus far in the advancement of women, including institutional mechanisms established for the advancement of women and any post-Beijing follow-up measures taken for the implementation of the recommendations of the Platform for Action.

This would provide a framework for examining the priorities of the national action plan.

Strategic objectives and actions

The strategic objectives on women and poverty and those that follow at the beginning of each critical area are excerpted from the Beijing Platform for Action.

A. Women and poverty

- A1. *Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.*
- A2. *Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources.*
- A3. *Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.*
- A4. *Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty.*

For each of the above strategic objectives (and subsequent objectives), the Platform for Action suggests actions to be taken by Governments, in addition to actions to be taken by multilateral organisations and non-governmental organisations.

In preparing their Action Plans, Governments should:

- ✓ Review the objectives and actions in the Platform for Action;
- ✓ Decide upon those which are most urgent and feasible from the national perspective;
- ✓ Recall the commitments they made at the Beijing Conference
- ✓ Specify the targets to be met
- ✓ Name the government agencies and NGOs involved,
- ✓ Indicate the resources to be allocated
- ✓ Specify any necessary legislation and any measures already taken.

For example, if a poverty study or a living standards survey has already been conducted

with methodologies that take gender into account, this may be stated, with a note concerning the agency or agencies in charge, and any plans to extend gender-sensitive survey methods other agencies or sectors. If poverty-alleviation projects for women are in place or are planned, the description of these should specify the targets, institutions and resources involved. An action plan would specify time bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring the implementation of this commitment, and describe the resources allocated.

Social indicators available in various documents could help in the identification of priorities, time-bound targets, and benchmarks. For example, where female-headed households are a disproportionately large or growing proportion of all poor households, a government may establish a benchmark and specify the ways and means of meeting this goal. To help alleviate women's poverty, a benchmark could be established to narrow the gender-based income gap, with remuneration ratios and women's average wages monitored to assess progress.

An example of commitment is one by Lesotho which stated at Beijing that it would remove restrictions on women's ability to obtain credit and do business.

The Ivory Coast committed itself to create a special development fund to finance women's projects in agriculture and business; to create a women's bank of Ivory Coast to increase women's access to credit.

These commitments could be turned into action by national governments making specific and measurable objectives, specifying dates and targets, as well as the various actors to be involved in the implementation and the resources to be allocated to make the commitments a reality.

B. Education and training of women

B1. Ensure equal access to education.

B2. Eradicate illiteracy among women.

B3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.

B4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training.

B5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms.

B6. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

This section might begin with a statement and data on women's literacy, school enrolments, and educational attainment (in absolute terms and relative to boys and men), the quality of girls' schools and coeducational schools, access of rural girls to schools, and any other relevant information. The objectives would set a time-frame and benchmarks to be monitored, and specify the government agencies and other actors involved in achieving the goals, resources to be allocated, and any legislative changes.

Here it would be useful to specify existing barriers, the time-frame for realisation of the objectives, the resources to be allocated, and the agencies, organisations, and institutions involved in carrying out the objectives.

Ivory Coast committed itself to reduce fees and distribute free school books so that 100% of girls will be enrolled by the year 2000. The Congo committed itself to developing literacy and post-literacy programmes, paying special attention to the needs of the girl child. Ghana committed itself to increasing female enrolment in education, particularly in rural areas while Namibia committed itself to a goal of 94% primary school age enrolment and 80% literacy by the year 2000. Namibia also committed itself to continue efforts of the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture to remove all forms of discrimination based on gender.

Tanzania committed itself to increasing pre-school enrolment from 2% to 50%; increasing primary school enrolment from 80% to 100%; increasing primary school completion to 80% and reducing illiteracy rate by 50%, all by the year 2000. These commitments have clearly set targets and are time-bound but would benefit from having the actors/institutions involved in their implementation and monitoring named, as well as the resources for their implementation.

C. Women and health

C1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.

C2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health.

C3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues.

C4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health.

C5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

This section may also begin with relevant current and prospective social indicators, followed by the specification of objectives, targets, benchmarks, monitoring mechanisms, actors, and financing.

Mauritius committed itself to making reproductive health care a priority and implementing a country-wide breast and cervical cancer detection campaign.

Lesotho committed itself to institute specific programmes to improve women's health including care of sick family members, prevention of malnutrition and HIV/AIDS and safe drinking water.

In a National Action Plan, the above commitments should have measurable objectives, time-frames, targets, resources allocated and an identification of the actors/institutions to be involved in implementation.

D. Violence Against Women

D1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

D2. Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

D3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

An especially relevant recommended action may be paragraph 124 (e):

«Work actively to ratify and/or implement international human rights norms and instruments as they relate to violence against women, including those contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.»

Governments might specify whether this action has been undertaken, and the institutions involved in monitoring human rights compliance and violations, including the human rights of women and various forms of violence against women.

South Africa committed itself to creating national consciousness regarding violence against women and increasing the provision of shelters for battered women. Mauritius

committed itself to enact a domestic violence act. Again without measurable objectives, targets, time-frames, named actors/institutions, and resources, it would be difficult to monitor implementation of these commitments.

E. Women and armed conflict

- E1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.*
- E2. Reduce excessive, military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.*
- E3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.*
- E4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.*
- E5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.*
- E6. Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.*

Here it may be useful to specify the actions to be taken, including the consultative process and institution involved, the legislation required, and resources to be allocated.

The participation of women in conflict resolution, peace-making and peace-keeping is relevant objective.

Governments may also wish to specify, in their action plans, how they are reducing excessive military expenditures, and any plans to convert military resources to development, including social development for women in accordance with paragraph 143 (a) and (b) and paragraph 349. A national action plan may also specify a time-bound target for the realisation of Strategic Objective E2, establish a benchmark against which performance and outcomes will be measured, and identify how the military resources may be reallocated.

F. Women and the economy

- F1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.*

- F2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.*
- F3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, info particularly to low-income women.*
- F4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.*
- F5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.*
- F6. Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.*

A brief description of women's labour-market position, using information from the nation report and any other sources, may precede and put into perspective the time-bound targets and resources to be allocated.

Many countries have come to recognise women's contributions to economic development, reflected in the objectives and actions pertaining to women and the economy in the Platform Action. In Beijing, commitments were agreed upon to further women's economic rights and enhance their capacity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic growth. In its national action plan, a Government may wish to specify the legislative being pursued in such areas as defining and prohibiting sexual harassment at the workplace, banning basis of gender, eliminating gender bias in social security programmes, promoting the ability of women workers to balance employment and family responsibilities, extending protection to home-based workers, and protecting the rights of documented migrant workers. Governments may also wish to specify which of the ILO conventions they have already ratified, and when others will be ratified.

Partnership among government agencies, private sector businesses, banks educational institutions, and women's organisations may be specified in describing time-bound initiatives to promote the expansion of women-owned businesses, to narrow the income gap between men and women. to increase the number of child-care facilities, and to integrate a gender perspective in development plans and in project and programme formulations. Benchmarks may also be defined -for example, establishing a child-care facility at each government agency and public enterprise by the year 2000; increasing the proportion of women's co-operatives; reducing women's unemployment rates to a more reasonable level by the year 2000, and so on.

G. Women in power and decision-making

- G1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.*

G2. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

There is consensus that a critical mass of at least 30 per cent female is an appropriate benchmark, and that women's participation in political bodies is an appropriate area for monitoring. This will include monitoring women's presence in political parties, electoral lists, parliaments, cabinets, courts and police force, and influential government positions. Here partnership among governments, political parties, trade unions, women's organisations, human rights organisations, the legal profession, any regional organisations, and international organisations is crucial to the achievement of this strategic objective. The action plan should specify any new legislative measures to implement this objective, the resources allocated and the new institutions established to promote women's leadership and train them for decision-making positions.

Tanzania committed itself to increasing the number of women in decision-making to a minimum of 30% by the year 2000.

H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

H1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.

H2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.

H3. Generate and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

Some governments have established a State Ministry for Women's Affairs as a way of strengthening the national machinery charged with achieving the integration of a gender perspective across agencies (gender mainstreaming). Others have set up equality ombudsman-type offices. The Central African Republic made a commitment to create a network of women ministers and parliamentarians to follow up on Platform recommendations. While the Congo, among other countries, will establish national machinery for the implementation of the Platform. The action plans should include details, including time-frames and budgets. Many countries have committed themselves to developing gender sensitive social statistics. The plan should also include a section on the consultation process bringing as wide a cross section of relevant ministries, NGOs and other actors in civil society as is necessary for comprehensive elaboration and effective implementation.

In the Action Plan, it may be useful to specify the ministries involved in the gender mainstreaming process (whether for national planning or overseas development assistance), the resources allocated to the national machinery for women, and any

collaboration with NGOs and donor agencies.

I. Human rights of women

- II. Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*
- I2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.*
- I3. Achieve legal literacy.*

In Beijing, several countries made commitments in this area. Several countries committed themselves to implementing fully the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). For the purposes of the action plan, it would be useful to specify a time-frame and a national monitoring mechanism. Ethiopia, among others, committed themselves to improving laws and regulations for the protection of the rights and interests, of women. Gambia's commitments at Beijing included one to address violence against women in compliance with CEDAW. For the purposes of the action plan, it will be useful to describe the existing laws or any new legislative initiatives, along with monitoring bodies. If plans are underway to disseminate the human rights of women and promote legal literacy through various forms of media, the action plan may describe the initiatives.

J. Women and the media

- J1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.*
- J2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.*

In the action plans, Governments may specify the agencies and institutions involved (both governmental and non-governmental), the timetables, and the resources to be allocated towards the implementation of these objectives.

K. Women and the environment

- K1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.*
- K2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.*

- K3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.*

Lesotho made a commitment to establish an institutional framework, including research, to co-ordinate environmental issues among government, NGOs and women's groups; and to educate rural women about alternative sources of energy. In the action plans, Governments may describe how implementation of these objectives is consonant with the objectives of Agenda 21, including chapter 24. In describing any new institutions, policies, or legislative measures, Governments may specify the actors involved, timetables to achieve the targets resources allocated, monitoring mechanisms, and accountability procedures.

L. The girl-child

- L1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child in education, skills development, and training and in health and nutrition.*
- L2. Eliminate negative cultural and attitudes and practices against girls.*
- L3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.*
- L4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.*
- L5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.*
- L6. Eliminate the exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.*
- L7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child.*
- L8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.*
- L9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.*

Examples of relevant commitments made in Beijing are the commitment of the Ivory Coast to reduce fees and distribute free schoolbooks so that 100% of girls will be enrolled by the year, 2000, and Zambia's commitment to achieve gender parity in school enrolments by

the year 2005. Through a consultative process with non-governmental organisations, Governments will decide upon the relevant objectives, targets, time frames, and resources to be expended. In describing the implementation of relevant objectives, the action plan should specify the agencies and organisations involved (governmental, non-governmental, bilateral, and multilateral), timetables for achievement of targets, the monitoring mechanism, an accountability.

Conclusion

Here the action plan may conclude by reiterating the main priorities and targets listing the governmental and non-governmental bodies involved, and presenting a matrix presenting current social indicators pertaining to women, and time-bound targets, and funds to be allocated. An example of the implementation plan matrix is attached.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

For each of the priorities identified, a separate implementation plan matrix should be produced. If time is spent producing these, then the monitoring and progress report writing tasks will be made much easier.

We have included an example to show what the document could look like once completed. The figures we have used are arbitrary and are only presented here for demonstration purposes.

Critical Area: Women and Poverty

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Indicators	Critical Factors for Success	Measurement	Time frame	Resources required	Responsible persons/body
Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions	1. Establish a development fund to finance women's activities in agriculture and business	A \$1m Special Fund for Women's activities in agriculture and business established	300 women's projects in business and agriculture receiving grants/loans of up to \$500 each in 10 districts	Availability of funds Viable, fundable projects Women's awareness of existence of fund	Assessment by women users Records of transactions Assessment by the fund managers	Fund established December 1998 Operations begin January 1999	\$1m for establishment of funds 50 members of staff with qualifications	Ministry of Finance Ministry of Planning Women's Finance Trust

Checklist for Assessing National Action Plans:

Does the plan have:

- ✓ Clearly defined priorities?
- ✓ Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound objectives in relation to the priorities?
- ✓ Specified activities to meet the objectives?
- ✓ Named actors for implementation of activities?
- ✓ Clear division of labour, roles and responsibilities between the different actors?
- ✓ Resources allocated to the activities?
- ✓ A time-frame within which to implement the Plan?
- ✓ A clearly stated monitoring process
- ✓ An identified body to monitor the implementation process?

***A PRACTICAL KIT FOR MONITORING THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION
PLAN***

Monitoring the Implementation of the National Action Plan

Introduction:

This guide is an attempt to provide a practical kit for assisting member states to monitor their implementation of the Platforms for Action. After a brief discussion of what monitoring is, we have provided a matrix that should help member states present in a summary form their monitoring. The matrix is in two parts. The first part has been adapted from the 'monitoring commitments chart' produced by the International Women's Tribune Centre and broadly gives the state of play on some key issues. The second part of the matrix is a little more detailed and suggests a format for monitoring of specific critical areas. The suggestion is that member states adapt this to focus on the priorities that they have set for themselves. It is important to stress that without a properly elaborated national action plan, it will be very difficult for member states to monitor their progress. The monitoring exercise should also assist member states in production of their progress reports.

Monitoring to assess progress and take corrective measures

Monitoring, appraisal and evaluation are essential components of the National Action Plans. Monitoring is the continuous or periodic surveillance of the implementation of a programme. It should measure implementation against the short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, as well as general and specific objectives of the National Action Plans. For monitoring to be effective, the plan should have measurable indicators which are time-bound.

The national machineries have an important role to play in monitoring, compiling information and advocating for the implementation of the Platforms. They should also play a bridging role between the government and non-governmental actors.

Reliable and relevant information is vital for monitoring progress in implementation of the Platform for Action. Member States should encourage social scientists with expertise on gender to evaluate their progress.

Mechanisms for evaluation should be built in the National Action Plans from the outset so that baseline data can be collected and used as a basis for subsequent comparison. For example if a programme aims at improving the status of women, then it would be important to initially collect data on at least some portion of the intended beneficiaries' income levels, self-perception, and knowledge of relevant information.

Indicators of progress:

An indicator defines the performance standard to be reached in order to meet the objectives of the National Action Plans. Indicators determine how to measure to what extent the objectives have been achieved at different times. Measurements can be: quantitative, qualitative behavioural - eg increased use of legal services,

Indicators are crucial in providing a basis for monitoring and evaluation.

A good indicator is:

substantial:

It reflects an essential aspect of an objective in precise terms

factual:

each indicator should reflect fact rather than subjective impressions.

plausible:

the changes recorded can be directly attributed to the National Action Plan

based on obtainable data:

Indicators should draw upon data that is readily available or that can be collected with reasonable extra effort as part of the implementation of the programme

The following is a guide to formulating an indicator:

Objective: increased use by women of credit facilities

1. Identify indicator:

eg. increased borrowing

2. Specify target group:

eg female owners of sme's (operating a sme employing not more than 3)

3. Quantity:

1,000 women sme's owners increase borrowing by 50%

4. Set quality:

ensuring a loan repayment rate of 85%

5. Specify time frame:

Between January 1998-January 1999

6. Set location:

In 5 districts

Combine: 1,000 women entrepreneurs in 5 districts (employing 3 employees or less) increase their access to credit by 50% between January 1998-January 1999, ensuring a loan repayment rate of 85%.

When indicators are formulated, the sources of information necessary to use them should be specified i.e. what information is to be made available, in what form and where will that information be found?

It is important to check the usefulness of the indicator:

Is the information available from existing sources (statistics, records, etc)?

Is the information reliable and up to date?

Is special data-gathering required?

If so, do the benefits justify the costs?

Is the data disaggregated by gender

There should be one format for monitoring and reporting throughout the life of the programme. This will help provide a solid basis for analyzing trends and defining strategies.

If monitoring is done on a regular basis, it will enable member states to produce annual progress reports. It is recommended that there be periodic reviews of implementation of the National Action Plans in order to take corrective measures. It is also important to analyse any variances between the planned targets and goals and what the monitoring data indicates to be the actual implementation.

[illegible]

MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

This is a suggested format for monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan. This monitoring tool should be used in conjunction with the implementation plan produced with the National Action Plan. It is suggested that a separate sheet be produced for each of the priority areas.

Below is an example we have worked out to show how the sheet could be used. The correct filling out of the monitoring sheet should assist in producing progress reports.

Critical Area: Women and Poverty

Objective: Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions

Monitoring Period: January 1998-December 1998

Planned Outputs, Indicators, Activities	Achievements	Sources of Data	Constraints	Remarks/Corrective Measures
1. Establish a \$1m Special Fund to support women's activities in agriculture and business by December 1998	\$850,000 raised towards establishment of Special Fund Launch of Fund held nationwide and wide publicity generated	Records of fund managers Media monitoring	Slow start to resource mobilisation efforts	Increase fund-raising efforts to ensure total sum of \$1m is raised by January 1999.
2. Provide funds for 300 women's activities in business and agriculture starting in January 1999 in 10 districts	a. 200 viable women's activities identified and ready for funding in 8 districts. b. Documents for 100 viable women's activities in 2 remaining districts in last stage of preparation.	Fund Managers' reports Reports from Women's Finance Trust	Weak organisational and management capacities of women's organisations. Small number of people with gender analysis and feasibility study skills	In collaboration with ABANTU's Training Centre for Sustainable Management Development, develop training programme to strengthen the management and organisational capacities of women's organisations. In collaboration with the Gender Resource Centre, conduct four workshops for fund managers, extension officers in gender analysis and preparation of feasibility studies. Recruit consultants with skills in gender analysis and business development by January 1999.

Objective:

Monitoring Period:

[illegible]

**GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE NATIONAL
PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DAKAR AND BEIJING
PLATFORMS FOR ACTION**

The comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action, to be initiated in 1999 will provide an opportunity for an evaluation of progress made by member states on integrating a gender perspective in their development efforts.

It is hoped that member states will have developed national action plans focusing on a select number of critical areas of concern that constitute their national priorities. The National Report should give an account of progress in implementing these priorities.

Format of progress reports should be such that inputs, activities and outputs are monitored with reference to the immediate and long-term development objectives. Indicators should be used. Changes in the external factors which are relevant to the implementation of the National Action Plans should also be registered in the progress report.

The report should describe measures taken and the progress achieved in the implementation of the African and Beijing Platforms for Action. It should focus on the specific priorities identified by member states and should include activities by all actors involved in the implementation of the national action plan.

There will inevitably be an overlap between actions following Beijing and ongoing development activities for the advancement of women undertaken at the national level. The progress report could make reference to these. However, emphasis should be on actions stemming directly from the Platforms for Action.

Just as the period before Dakar and Beijing saw a greater involvement of NGOs in Member States and better communications between governments and NGOs, so the follow-up and implementation of national plans of action should provide an opportunity to deepen these relationships and this should in turn be reflected in the progress report.

The objectives of the national progress reports are to:

- a) *Evaluate* progress made in the implementation of the Platforms for Action
- b) *Demonstrate* concrete achievements in meeting the strategic objectives outlined to address the critical areas of concern in the Platforms for Action.
- c) *Identify* obstacles and constraints in realising the objectives of national action plans
- d) *Recommend* strategic actions to be taken at national, regional and international levels to realise the goal of women's empowerment.

The preparation of national reports should involve a cross-section of society: civil society organisations, the private sector, research and academic institutions. Just as in the preparatory process for Dakar and Beijing, member states should consider constituting national committees who should be involved in the

preparation of the national reports. Membership of the national committees could include representatives from:

- key ministries, departments and other government organs
- legal institutions
- civil society organisations
- individual experts
- educational institutions
- the youth and their organisations

The National Reports should be no longer than 50 pages and should feature the priorities and issues identified by each member state. In order to assist in the preparation of a synthesis report for the Africa region, it is recommended that all national reports be received at the ECA/ACW by July 30, 1999.

It is suggested that the National Report contain the following:

1. An overview:

This should be a highlight of the main features of the report, including major accomplishments and should be approximately one page long.

2. Introduction

This could include the following:

- ◆ a brief country situational analysis and the national and global contexts in which the implementation of the national plan of action has been implemented;
- ◆ an assessment of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Platform for Action from the country's vantage point;
- ◆ a statement of the country's priorities out of the Platform's critical areas of concern and,
- ◆ a brief description of the country's achievements thus far in the advancement of women, including institutional mechanisms established for the advancement of women and any post-Beijing follow-up, as well as measures taken for the implementation of the recommendations of the Platform for Action.

3. Evaluation of Progress in the Implementation of the Platforms for Action

In this section, member states should focus on the priorities they had identified for their countries and report on these. The report should relate closely to the objectives, actions, indicators, actors, resources and benchmarks elaborated in the National Action Plan. It should also relate quite closely to the monitoring exercise which should have taken place annually. As far as possible the report should provide concrete evidence of progress, including some assessment of the impact of actions outlined in the National Action Plan. Under each of the priority areas, the report should highlight the main constraints encountered in the implementation.

The purpose of reporting is to show what was planned, what actually happened, what the constraints were and what remained to be done.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion should include recommendations on the strategic actions to be taken at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels to realise the full implementation of the National Action Plan and the goal of women's empowerment. It would be a good idea to include appendices with statistical data representing the evaluation of progress made in the period under review.

E/ECA/ACW/SRMN/98/9

Annexe VI

Page

***THE GENDER APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE***

1. INTRODUCTION :

1.1 It is now recognised that gender (being a woman or being a man) is a critical factor influencing the way women and men relate to each other in society, the roles they play, the status they occupy and consequently, their needs. It is, therefore, not enough to plan for society without taking into consideration how these plans will affect the women or men differently. The debate as to whether development planning and management should continue to follow a Women in Development perspective or a gender and development perspective is an important paradigm shift, recognising the complexity of factors which contribute to the inequalities between women and men.

In the last ten years, the gender approach to development has been defined, redefined and refined not only by academicians, but also by development workers and international donor agencies. The contribution of African women to the debate and refinement of the concept and methodology has been acknowledged. Because it stems from real life experiences and understanding that in Africa, women's lives are closely defined and influenced by their relations with men in their capacities as husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, uncles, and other men in-laws.

1.2 The paper will focus on the general gender inequalities in Africa as well as gender and development methodologies. However, this is not to ignore the fact that social-cultural and religious differences, different economic, as well as geographical contexts will influence variations in gender relations and related gender inequalities. The specific variations in each country can best be identified in a participatory process with all the key players. In this context, some of the fundamental questions that should guide country specific discussions are:

- a. **What are the critical social cultural, political and economic factors which maintain the differences and inequalities between women and men?** (The answers to this will highlight the nature and causes of the persistent gender inequalities)
- b. **How have the different institutions tried to address the identified inequalities?** (In answering this, the parties concerned will be defining some of the characteristics of the gender approach in their development planning)
- b. **What concrete results have been achieved in the advancement of women in institutions at local and national levels, and how can these achievements be maintained?** (The results achieved will provide justification for integrating an effective gender approach in development.)

1.3 In order to set the context for more country specific discussions, this paper seeks to define **what** a gender approach is and how it differs from a women in development approach. The paper will also outline some of the reasons **why** a gender perspective must be integrated into development planning in Africa. Finally, suggestions will be made about **how to** integrate a gender perspective in development planning. A lot has been written and said about the what, why and how of gender approach. The paper has benefited from the wealth of research findings and writings that exist, on gender approaches in development.

2 *What are the key characteristics of a gender approach in development:*

A gender approach in development means that there is commitment to addressing women's and men's issues and concerns in an institution's activity. "Gender awareness is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for incorporating gender considerations into operational procedures. Institutional change occurs only when an organisation makes the conscious commitment to address gender issues in the course of doing business. **This commitment must increase the likelihood that benefits accrue as equally as possible to men and women.** In addition, commitment can ultimately lead to addressing gender issues actively by alleviating or removing constraints to women's access to resources and decision making. "

Source: Genesys, 1994. Prepared by Deborah A. Caro and Virginia Lambert.

2.2 Preconditions

There are several preconditions to adopting an effective gender approach in development. The starting point is a clear understanding of gender, both as a concept as well as the practical implications of gender.

a. What is gender? Many writers have tried to define the concept of gender and to apply it to local distinctions between women and men. Gender is usually used to refer to the social and economic distinctions between men and women, presumably associated with their physical differences. The practical implication is that in cases where gender distinctions are made, there is "an observable duality which 'sets off men and women under circumstances and conditions that prevent them from saying, doing, desiring and perceiving the same thing'¹.

Gender is socially constructed, where a society essentially uses the physical differences between male and female to create two social classes, that of men and women. The distinctions between men and women (Gender) is a result of a social process in which

¹Hilda Mary K. Tadria, Changing Economic and Gender patterns among the Peasants of Ndejje and Sseguku in Uganda, PhD Thesis, 1985.

women and men are assigned, and perceived to have different duties, attributes, privileges and positions. It is also this process which creates the basis for inequalities between women and men.

When it is understood that the differences between women and men are mainly socially constructed, it becomes clear that the bases of gender inequality can change from place to place, from time to time, and even according to context. For example, a division of labour between women and men, a difference in rights and privileges and even differences in access to resources are not determined by the biological characteristics of men and women on a permanent basis. The positive changes in the situation of women as well as in the division of labour in many sectors of development, in Africa, is proof for the changing nature of gender relations, roles and responsibilities as well as social perceptions about women's and men's position in society.

c. Gender awareness:

Another precondition for integration of a gender approach is a recognition that gender differences and inequalities mean that men and women will not benefit from development programs and policies equally. This recognition, commonly referred to as 'gender awareness', is an important step in institutionalising a gender approach in development. In Genesys, seven basic elements of a gender approach have been identified. These are useful practical indicators of whether development planning has a gender perspective or not. The elements are:

- i. awareness of the importance of gender issues for development outcomes;
- ii. commitment to addressing gender issues in activities;
- iii. capacity for carrying out gender and social analysis
- iv. capacity to formulate gender focussed questions
- v. capacity for applying the findings of gender and social analysis to the work;
- vi. capacity for systematic monitoring and evaluation of gender specific program impact;
- vii. systematic reporting of gender relevant lessons learnt, and subsequent program adaptation.

2.3 How does a gender approach differ from a women in development approach?

A gender and development approach does not mean that a women specific program cannot be developed as an intervention for eliminating gender inequalities. A gender approach simply means that a program has developed as a result of a systematic analysis of a situation, looking at the differences between women and men with regard to roles as well as privileges, access to resources etc. and how the social, political and economic

factors affect the women and men differently. On the basis of such an assessment, it may be found necessary to pay more attention to women, or to men.

The main reason that women seem to become the focus even in a gender approach to development is directly linked to the realities of most African societies. This reality is that when a gender assessment has been carried out, women are usually found to be more disadvantaged than men in the political, social and economic, and even religious arena. It is this nature of gender inequality that makes a gender approach seem to be a women in development approach.

Women focussed programmes can be understood as mechanisms for levelling the ground to enable women participate equally. For example, the practical effects of what is now known as the "feminisation of poverty" (for instance the fact that of the 1.3 billion people who live in abject poverty, 70% are women) can only be dealt with by addressing the causes of women's poverty. These causes may include cultural norms and practices that affect women's access to resources; they may also include unequal educational opportunities for girls, which has negative implications for women's employment.

Research has established that female-headed households tend to be poorer than male headed households; there is more limited access to productive resources and income. Obviously, this calls for programmes which address women's needs and constraints, hence the need for a women's programme. But at the same time, there is need to deal with the processes and underlying causes of the "feminisation of poverty". From this perspective, it is clear that a gender approach and a women's programme are not incompatible or in contradiction. . In some cases, it may be necessary to have a men only programme in order to deal with the underlying causes of gender inequality. For example, in a gender sensitisation programme for policy makers, it maybe necessary to target the men who dominate the policy and decision-making processes. The most important aspect of the approach is that an intervention is proposed on the basis of a full analysis of the nature and causes of inequalities between women and men.

2.4 There are clear distinctions between a gender approach and a women in development approach. The most distinctive nature of a gender approach is that it aims at understanding the underlying causes of the existing inequalities in gender relations, roles, and perceptions in all aspects of life. The ultimate goal is to use all possible means to remove the fundamental social and structural causes of the inequalities, even if this means that for the time being the focus maybe on developing programs for women.

On the other hand, in a women in development approach, the main focus is not to change the underlying causes of inequality but rather, to give women capacity to survive in the context of inequality.

In the Commonwealth vision for Women towards the Year 2000, The Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development provides a clear distinction between a gender and development approach and a women in development approach:

In the context of development, the conceptual focus over time has moved from Women in Development (WID) to Women and Development (WAD) and more recently and broadly, the Gender and Development (GAD). WID policies aim to integrate women into existing structures and address women's specific needs and concerns. The focus is on how women must change to fit into an essentially 'man-made' world. Women from the South who saw women's oppression as just another form of oppression initiated the shift from WID to WAD in the main. For women's strategic and basic needs to be met, therefore, the entire structure and oppression has to be dismantled. **GAD, on the other hand, tries to integrate gender awareness and competence into mainstream development to account for the different life courses and different impact of development policies on women and men.** It emphasises that all development activities affect women and men differently, and calls for appropriate 'gender planning' to address them. It also calls attention to 'outcomes' and the need to take the necessary steps to ensure that the resulting conditions and outcomes are equitable, rather than being preoccupied with giving only identical treatment. In effect, the concept of equality has evolved over the last decades from a 'rights-based' formal equality to a 'results-based' substantive form. In summary, the GAD approach focuses not only on the differences between men and women but on the inequalities that emanate from those differences: women and their allotted roles have been historically undervalued and continue to be so up to the present time. **Source:** A Commonwealth Vision for Women: The Commonwealth Platform of Action on Gender and Development; 1995, p.31.

A gender approach in development planning is a multi-pronged approach emphasising gender equality, human well being and economic development; it is therefore an important step, which all African countries must take. In the next sections, it will be shown that gender inequality affects

Gender and Development indicators negatively. It will also be shown that when a human well-being approach is emphasised there is better economic growth trends. This is an important basis for integrating a gender approach in development planning in order to ensure that gender inequality does not continue to lower the countries' human well being and consequently, the economic development of African countries.

3. *Why is a gender perspective necessary in development planning within Africa?*

3.1 Nature and Pervasiveness of Gender inequality in Africa.

Women make up 51 percent of Africa's population; in most countries, they dominate food production. Research and experience prove that investing in this large productive group is the best way to promote social and economic development in general. Overall in Africa, however, significant gender gaps persist in access to social services. On the continent, more girls than boys die before they reach age five. African women suffer greater incidence of morbidity than African men do. School enrolment for girls is less than those of boys. More than half of the women in Sub-Saharan Africa over 25 years of age is illiterate.

Source: Economic commission for Africa: Forging Partnerships for Africa's Future, 1997

3.2 The compelling reasons:

There are many compelling reasons why Africa must adopt a gender approach in development planning, given the statistics on the situation of women and men in Africa. The Human Development Report of 1995 stated that no country treats its women as well as it treats its men. . It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that every aspect of life in Africa has a gender dimension, typically characterised by inequalities between women and men.

a) ***Pervasive inequalities:*** The first and most compelling reason for a gender approach therefore is that, gender inequalities are still pervasive in all aspects

of African existence. Further, the fundamental characteristic of this inequality is that of exclusion whereby the majority of women continue to be poor and powerless, economically marginalised since they do not own the important means of production, but playing significant roles in economic production and family welfare.

In the paper (Gender, Growth, and Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa) prepared for ECA 40Th. Anniversary conference, the writers² highlight the nature of gender inequalities that predominate in most African countries. (See attachments 1 & 2). First, women and men experience poverty differently because of differences in access to and control of key assets. Differential time allocation was also stated to be a major gender issue, with women reported to work longer hours than men do. Most revealing are the statistics of education which show that there are gender differentials at all levels of education, with girls' enrolment rates lagging behind those of boys, and that these differentials widen at higher levels.

²Gender Team, Institutional and Social policy unit, Africa Region, World Bank, 1998

b) ***Gender Insensitive Policies:*** In many African countries, it is still possible to find official policy and cultural barriers that determine differential access to resources, legal and human rights as well as participation in public spheres. Although many governments have, since Beijing made policy changes and developed action plans to facilitate the advancement of women, in Africa, policy and cultural constraints still largely account for the persistent inequalities between women's and men's participation in formal employment, education, as well as policy and decision making institutions. In most African countries, budgetary allocations continue to ignore the gender differences and to date, very few countries have made any substantial budget allocation for the implementation of the commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action.³

c) ***Impact of economic restructuring:*** Integrating a gender approach into development planning is imperative as a first step in eliminating gender

inequalities which is itself a necessary condition for establishing sustainable human well-being and economic growth. In their report, Mapping Progress WEDO shows that, by committing themselves to the Beijing Platform of Action, governments have committed themselves to a gender approach and that this has influenced "the incremental progress towards women's equality" that the governments reported. In addition, the report best summarises the reasons why a gender approach must continue to be integrated into all development planning:

" the debilitating impact of economic globalisation and restructuring programs on women's lives, as reported by a number of women's organisations, cannot but raise concerns that even while the building blocks of Beijing are going up, the edifice is on shaky ground. The gender impact of such macroeconomic policies may not be uniformly negative across countries, classes and economies. Nor can their impact be allowed to obscure the fact that the record of many developing countries in social sector spending has been dismal prior to structural adjustment . *What is undeniable is that economic restructuring has exacerbated -even legitimised- governments' lack of will to address women's concerns in policies and budgets.* As a result, it is women who, as workers, producers, and consumers, mothers and caretakers, are the shock absorbers of adjustment efforts and bear a disproportionate burden of the cost of transition. The evidence is inescapable from the reports of women in Africa."

Executive Summary, Mapping Progress, 1998, p. 4

d) ***Gender equality is an important indicator of human well being:***

³In Mapping Progress, Assessing Implementation of the Beijing Platform, 1998, the Women's Environment and Development organisation (WEDO), analyses the extent to which governments have accomplished their commitments made in Beijing. Out of the 88 countries analysed, 18 are African countries.

Another reason for adopting a gender approach in development is that it is a practical means of creating gender equality. In the 1998 UNDP Human development report, the negative impact of gender inequality on a country's Human Development Indicator (HDI) is made clear. A Gender Development indicator (GDI) measures achievements in human development, but captures inequality in achievement between women and men. The report clearly shows that "*the greater the gender disparity in human development, the lower a country's GDI, compared with its HDI*". (See attachment 3 & 4).

The Africa Competitiveness Report of 1997 further demonstrates (see attachments 5, 6, 7) the strong correlation between competitive economies and human development. In this report, it is shown that even when using different data, as was the case for the UNDP Human Development Report and the Africa Competitiveness Report, there was a strong correlation between the Competitiveness Index and the Human Development Index. Strong performers like Mauritius and Tunisia, for example, were shown also to have a high human development index. The conclusion from this was that there are "strong benefits in human well being of a national competitiveness (and no doubt, the contribution of human development to the achievement of a competitive economy.)"⁴

e) ***The Human Development report*** is a global report. But it makes important conclusions from well-established data. Many of these conclusions have very pertinent implications for the African countries. First, the reports of 1995 and 1996 show very clearly that "no society treats its women as well as its men". (See the attachment 8: **Regional aggregates of human development indicators and 9: African women in development.**) According to the data, no society was able to score the maximum achievement with regard to gender equality and for all the regions, the GDI is lower than the HDI.

It is particularly revealing to note that removing gender inequalities is not dependent on having high-income levels. **The gender empowerment measure (GEM) used in the Human Development report to measure gender inequality in economic, political participation and decision making, further shows that the creation of opportunities for women does not depend on the income level or economic growth rate of a country.** The fact that the Human Development Report shows data to prove that some developing countries have outperformed richer countries in gender equality in political, economic and professional activities, proves this. Morocco is perhaps one of the few countries whose GEM ranking is exactly the same as its HDI ranking, with an even higher GDI ranking. What all this

⁴Jeffrey D Sachs, The Africa Competitiveness Report, 1998, page 19. This report measures the competitiveness of 23 countries in Africa, based on : openness, government, finance, labour, infrastructure and institutions. The UNDP Human Development Report measures general human welfare, based on life expectancy, literacy, school enrolment rates and real percapita GDP.

means is that *establishing gender equality is dependant on good development policies and methodologies that focus on human well being, equality and economic growth, as well as leadership commitment to gender equality and women's advancement.*

3.3 In Africa, gender inequality has negative impact on economic growth.

Policies that do not take explicit account of the differentiation of economic agents by gender are likely to worsen the situation of both women and men, and therefore contribute to greater economic inefficiency and inequity as well as to diminished economic efficiency.

Source: Mark Blackden and Elizabeth Morris -Hughes, Paradigm postponed: Gender and Economic Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1993, page 29.

It has already been shown that gender inequality is pervasive in Africa and that this inequality is mainly characterised by greater deprivation for women than men, and that women's achievement is lower than that of men. **That no society treats its women as well as it treats its men has been demonstrated by all the studies quoted in this paper, this alone is reason enough for adopting a gender approach.**

In this section, using data obtained from one such study, we will demonstrate another reason: that improving women's productivity and eliminating gender inequalities can contribute to growth, efficiency and poverty reduction.

- a) Differential access, of girls and boys, to education is a major aspect of gender inequality in Africa. Yet studies have also shown that female education has positive impact on development from several perspectives. First, the education of women has direct impact on reduction in population growth, because it is related with low fertility. Secondly, women's education contributes to child and family well being. Women's income, it has been shown is spent mainly on improvement of the family and less on personal luxury goods.
- b) The most important relationship between growth and gender inequality is best illustrated in the agricultural sector, where women's production is concentrated. The persistent neglect of gender issues in agricultural production is directly linked with the poor performance of agricultural sector, especially in the food sector where women's labour is concentrated. In almost all African countries, women and men have different access to and control over basic economic production resources, especially land. This inequality has also been shown to affect labour supply, labour productivity and access to resources, with direct negative impact on growth. **(See attachment 1: Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction and 2).**

Recognising the role women play in agricultural production, family management and maintenance by providing the necessary support at policy and basic support services level is one giant step towards raising economic growth in Africa.

c) In other studies, it has been shown that women and men have different time allocations to productive, reproductive and community management activities. It has been shown that in almost all African countries, the division of labour is such that women have longer working hours than men. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women's economic role is greater than in any other region. In all cases, women spend most of their time on social reproductive activities that are not monetised or recorded. That women are an over-utilised rather than under-utilised resource is an important but little appreciated aspect of gender inequalities which will continue to have negative impact on the economic growth of Africa.

3.4 Finally, integrating a gender approach is necessary, even if it is not sufficient, as one of the most effective ways of creating a just and democratic society in which development goals, policies and programmes take into account the diversities of women and men in order to enhance growth and development. By committing themselves to the African Platform for Action and the Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration, African governments accepted that women face 'barriers for full equality and advancement'. This acceptance further commits the governments to the methodologies advocated in the Platform for action which calls on all governments to "promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective, inter alia, in the monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programs" (Platform for

Action, p.160). This commitment alone gives sufficient reasons why a gender perspective must be integrated into development planning. The major issue is, how can this be done effectively?

4 *How can a gender approach be integrated into development planning?*

In April 1998, more than fifty ministers attended the UNECA conference on "African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future". During the conference, the ministers pledged to "develop at the highest level of government ' a veritable political will favourable to the advancement of women and responsive to gender disparities and gender issues. ... Among their recommendations, the ministers said quotas should be institutionalised to increase women's participation in decision making, and that post Beijing national plans of action should be integrated into development planning. Structural adjustment programmes should be harmonised with the specific social and gender conditions of individual countries, and decision -makers especially planners and those involved in preparing national budgets, should be sensitised to gender and development issues."

Source: African Recovery, United Nations Department of Public Information, Vol. 12 No.1, and August 1998

In the United Nations Economic Commission conference on African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future, practical ways of addressing the existing gender inequalities were discussed. Key aspects of how to integrate a gender perspective in different sectors of development were recognised and even committed to by the ministers representing their countries. For example, affirmative action principles needed to increase women's participation, addressing specific constraints against women's participation, enhancing gender awareness, gender analysis skills and gender data are all part of the recommendations made by the ministers. These are all aspects of the methods of integrating gender in development planning like; formulation and utilisation of gender policy; development of gender analysis capacities; allocation of resources adequate for eliminating gender based discrimination; gender sensitisation to change attitudes; developing and utilisation of appropriate monitoring policy and process indicators; developing gender sensitive institutions. In this last section, some practical examples will be introduced to illustrate different ways in which a gender approach can be integrated into development planning.

4.1 *How is a gender approach integrated?* In a discussion paper on how to increase capacity of organisations to take women into account, Anne Litwin⁵ distinguishes two important categories of the gender approaches. The first, which she calls the "mechanical measure", relates to adoption of gender policies and procedures; opening opportunities for recruitment and changing institutional structures and practices. The second aspect, are the cultural measures and these focus on changing perceptions, attitudes, values and norms

⁵ Anne Titwin and associates, Valuing Diversity: A system Change Model in Reflections and Learnings, Gender trainers' workshop report, 1993.

and ultimately, the whole system. In a gender approach it is always more effective to combine the mechanical measures with the cultural measures.

The mechanical measures, for example a gender policy or an affirmative action that facilitates more recruitment of women, are meant to create a more gender sensitive environment. A cultural measure, for example gender awareness and sensitisation training is meant to enhance positive attitudes in any setting. The two are complementary aspects of a gender approach and must be combined to ensure effective integration of gender concerns and issues into any development process. Together, they provide steps needed to create the appropriate (a) institutional framework (for example establishing a national or sectoral gender policy), (b) conditions (for example more opportunities to employ and retain women), (c) attitudes (for example more gender aware men and women), (d) values (for example respect for equality between women and men) and (e) practices (for example allocation of more resources to improved food processing technologies, for enhancing gender equality}.

A gender approach can be integrated, at different levels in the following manner:

4.1.1 Carrying out gender analysis to establish gender data: The first step in integrating a gender approach is to establish the actual situation of

women and men in any given sector of interest. In the area of concern, whether in a sector of development or an institution, establish gender data, that is establish whether and in what way women and men differ, and how these differences contribute to distinct types of inequalities and needs. Gender analysis is the tool which is used to examine the position, situation as well as roles and responsibilities of women and men at any particular time and place. In this kind of assessment, the factors that determine the different positions, roles and responsibilities of women and men are also examined.

What is important is not simply to understand the situation of women and men, but the factors contributing to these different situations. Gender analysis is what produces gender-disaggregated data, as well as better understanding of gender issues. For example, if gender data is collected, it is possible to know in which activity women and men spend most of their time. Women's social reproductive activities are usually not recorded in national statistics. Because of this, it is not easy to know women's time allocations and their real contributions as well as needs in the economies of their countries. A proper gender analysis of any sector should give information on who does what, how they do it, what resources they have and what constraints they face. The resulting information is 'gender data' because it informs us about the situation of both women and men. It is when such information is used for development planning that we can say that a gender approach has been adopted.

4.1.2 Training in gender awareness and analysis skills: For a gender approach to be integrated into development planning, it requires that individuals who are involved have the appropriate technical skills, knowledge and attitudes. Planners must have the gender analysis skills as well as knowledge of gender issues. At another level, policy makers may not have gender analysis skills, but they must have both the gender awareness and sensitivity necessary to judge whether a policy being advocated will enhance or diminish gender inequality.

In a gender approach, gender training is used as an effective tool to change attitudes and perceptions about gender equality; to increase knowledge about the situation of women and men; and to develop skills in analysing the factors underlying the unequal relations of women and men. When individuals involved in development planning can illustrate that they have acquired gender analysis skills through gender training, and that they are applying the tools to design the plans, then we can say that a gender approach has been integrated into development planning.

4.1.3 Formulating and implementing gender policies: A gender policy, whether at national, sectoral or organisational level, is a very strong statement of commitment to provide the necessary and conducive framework for eliminating gender inequalities. A gender policy will state the values of gender equality; the procedures and mechanisms for dealing with gender inequality and; the indicators for measuring progress in eliminating inequalities and the resources (human and financial) available for implementing programmes and activities which are addressing gender inequalities.

A gender policy must use the gender data and statistics to identify and set benchmarks for measuring achievement of gender equality. All these should be clearly spelt out in an action plan, clarifying who should be responsible for monitoring implementation, and the time frames for achieving what targets. When a government, an institution, or a sector has an active gender policy that is used as a guide in designing development plans, then it is using a gender approach. However, as it has already been pointed out, it is necessary but not sufficient to adopt a gender approach at the policy (mechanical) level alone. Gender policies, technical skills and awareness, must be combined with changed attitudes for an effective gender approach to be in place.

4.1.4 Clarifying indicators: It is possible to have a gender policy as well as gender analysis capacity in place but still fail to integrate a gender approach in development planning. Gender sensitive monitoring indicators are therefore an indispensable mechanism of tracking the gaps between practice and rhetoric. By general definition, an indicator measures change in a condition or situation over time. Gender sensitive Indicators are used to monitor and evaluate changes in the situation of women and men over time and from place to place.

A gender approach is said to be integrated into development planning if changes in the situation of women and men, according to the indicators are used to improve the development plan to focus on these changes. For example, if a policy states as a principle that there will be an increase of women at decision-making levels, the indicators for this policy statement must be the number of women who are to be brought into decision making structures within a given period. If at the end of the period, the numbers of women in decision-making positions are below the stated number, the reasons for this must be stated. The development planners should then use this information to design programmes to deal with the constraints.

There are many types of indicators. There are policy indicators, which can be used to measure whether a gender policy will have the desired impact. These indicators should measure whether the policy is making adequate provision for resources, institutional mechanisms, and accountability in implementation. A major indicator of implementation of a gender policy, for example, is the number of gender sensitive programmes that are put in place.

In a "Guide to gender sensitive indicators", the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which has long experience in development work, defines several other types of indicators especially at programme level.⁶ These are described as risk indicators, as well as input, process, output and outcome indicators. The table in attachment summarises the different type of indicators.

4.1.5 Involving women in development planning: It is well known that because of their different social, political and economic experiences, women and men also tend to have a different perception of the world. In any context, the dominant group will define the rules and values to be used. In the same way, development planning, if dominated by men or women will reflect the needs and values of the dominant group.

The **problem of women's invisibility** is not just limited to the fact that their work is not reflected in national statistics, or that their needs are not reflected in the national allocation of resources, or even that they are mainly unpaid labour. Another major problem is that women's invisibility partly emanates from but, is also partly maintained by, their exclusion in development planning process, right from grass root level, to community and national level. Involving women in the development planning process is one way of ensuring that their viewpoint, experiences and needs are reflected. When women are directly involved in a development planning process with men, then it can be said to have a gender approach. The Platform for Action to which all governments are committed reiterates this:

"Absolute poverty and the feminisation of poverty, unemployment, the increasing fragility of the environment, continued violence against women

⁶ Canadian International development Agency, Division of Women and Development and Gender Equity: Guide to Gender Sensitive Indicators, 1996.

and the widespread exclusion of half of humanity from institutions of power and governance underscore the need to continue the search for development, peace and security and for ways of assuring people centred sustainable development. **The participation and leadership of the half of humanity that is female is essential to the success of the search.”**⁷

In summary, a gender approach is integrated into development planning when the following supportive approaches are adapted:

- Collect gender data and statistics through gender analysis and use the data as tools for planning.
- Develop gender analysis skills, knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity.
- Establish gender policies with clear guidelines on values, resources, structures and monitoring indicators.
- Develop and use policy and implementation gender sensitive indicators to track change and progress.
- Involve women in the development planning processes at all levels.

⁷ United Nations, Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration, 1996.

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United Nations Department of Public Information, Africa Recovery, Vol. 12 No. 1

Gender, Growth, and Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa

Box 2.1: Gender and Growth: Missed Potential

Burkina Faso: Shifting existing resources between men's and women's plots within the same household could increase output by 10-20 percent.

Kenya: Giving women farmers the same level of agricultural inputs and education as men could increase yields obtained by women by more than 20 percent.

Tanzania: Reducing time burdens of women could increase household cash incomes for smallholder coffee and banana growers by 10 percent, labor productivity by 15 percent, and capital productivity by 44 percent.

Zambia: If women enjoyed the same overall degree of capital investment in agricultural inputs, including land, as their male counterparts, output in Zambia could increase by up to 15 percent.

Education: Countries in which the ratio of female to male enrollment in primary or secondary education is less than 0.75 can expect levels of GNP that are roughly 25 percent lower.

Sources: Udry et al 1995; Saito et al 1994; Tibaijuka 1994.

Gender Team
Institutional and Social Policy Unit
Africa Region
World Bank

Box 1 Efficiency Arguments For Gender-Aware Economic Analysis

*Research on agricultural productivity in Africa shows that reducing gender inequality could significantly increase agricultural yields. For instance, giving women farmers in Kenya the same level of agricultural inputs and education as men farmers could increase yields obtained by women farmers by more than 20% (Saito and Spurling, 1992).

*Research on economic growth and education shows that failing to invest in education lowers GNP. Everything else being equal, countries in which the ratio of female-to-male enrolment in primary or secondary education is less than 0.75 can expect levels of GNP that are roughly 25 percent lower than countries in which there is less gender disparity in education (Hill and King, 1995).

*Research on gender inequality in the labour market shows that eliminating gender discrimination in job opportunities and pay could increase not only women's income, but also national income. For instance, if gender inequality in the labour market in Latin America were to be eliminated, not only could women's wages rise by about 50 percent, but national output could rise by 5 percent as a result of more efficient allocation of labour (Tzannatos, 1991).

*Research on structural adjustment in sub-Saharan Africa shows that gender inequality hampers a positive supply response by reducing women's incentives to produce tradable goods and increasing women's time burdens (Brown, 1995).

*Women's time burdens are an important constraint on growth and development - women are an over-utilised, not an under-utilised resource. The benefits of weakening this constraint can be considerable. For instance, a study in Tanzania shows that reducing such constraints in a community of smallholder coffee and banana growers could increase household cash incomes by 10 percent, labour productivity by 15 percent, and capital productivity by 44 percent (Tibaijuka, 1994).

*Reductions in gender inequality improve the well-being and productivity of the next generation - boys as well as girls. The probability of children being enrolled in school increases with their mother's educational level and extra income going to mothers has more positive impact on household investment in nutrition, health and education of children than extra income going to fathers (World Bank, 1995).

Source: University of Manchester Graduate School of Social Sciences;
Gender Aware Country Economic Reports:
Working Paper No.1

*The creation of
opportunities for
women does not
depend on a
country's income
level or economic
growth rate*

TABLE 1.12
Gender disparity—GEM, GDI and HDI ranks

GEM rank	GDI rank	HDI rank	GEM rank	GDI rank	HDI rank
1 Norway	3	5	53 Thailand	29	41
2 Sweden	1	8	54 Ecuador	47	47
3 Denmark	6	16	55 Iraq	69	67
4 Finland	5	6	56 Brazil	39	45
5 New Zealand	9	13	57 Cape Verde	66	75
6 Canada	2	1	58 Bolivia	61	69
7 Germany	16	17	59 Chile	36	29
8 Netherlands	10	4	60 Greece	21	20
9 USA	4	2	61 Indonesia	55	62
10 Austria	12	12	62 Swaziland	60	68
11 Barbados	15	23	63 Burundi	88	99
12 Switzerland	18	14	65 Mauritius	38	43
13 Italy	20	19	66 Haiti	81	92
15 Australia	8	10	68 Paraguay	48	56
16 Belgium	14	11	69 Cameroon	72	80
17 Trinidad and Tobago	30	32	70 Fiji	40	37
18 United Kingdom	13	15	71 Maldives	58	65
19 Bahamas	17	24	72 Ghana	71	81
20 South Africa	53	61	73 Gambia	87	98
21 Cuba	44	54	74 Kuwait	42	40
22 Hungary	24	36	75 Sri Lanka	46	58
23 Ireland	23	18	76 Morocco	70	76
24 Portugal	26	31	77 Bangladesh	84	91
25 Spain	19	9	78 Korea, Rep. of	27	26
29 China	57	66	79 Algeria	59	50
30 Costa Rica	28	27	80 Egypt	62	64
31 Mexico	37	38	81 Zambia	75	86
32 Guyana	56	63	82 Sudan	85	93
33 Botswana	41	51	83 Burkina Faso	92	102
35 Lesotho	73	82	84 Tunisia	49	53
36 Colombia	32	39	85 Malawi	86	97
37 Japan	11	3	86 Ethiopia	90	101
38 Panama	33	34	88 United Arab Emirates	43	33
39 Philippines	50	60	90 Iran, Islamic Rep. of	54	48
40 France	7	7	91 Mali	91	103
41 Poland	31	44	92 Turkey	45	55
42 El Salvador	63	72	93 India	74	85
43 Mozambique	89	100	94 Papua New Guinea	68	79
44 Singapore	25	30	96 Zaire	79	90
45 Zimbabwe	65	77	97 Central African Rep.	82	94
46 Malaysia	35	42	98 Nigeria	78	87
47 Guatemala	67	70	100 Togo	80	89
48 Dominican Rep.	51	57	101 Pakistan	77	84
49 Uruguay	22	28	102 Mauritania	83	95
50 Honduras	64	71	103 Comoros	76	88
51 Peru	52	59	104 Niger	93	104
52 Venezuela	34	35			

Balance sheet of human development—Arab States

PROGRESS

DEPRIVATION

HEALTH

- In 12 of the 19 countries in the region life expectancy is more than 65 years, compared with an average of 45 years in 1960.
- Only half the people in rural areas have access to safe water, and only a third have access to basic sanitation.

EDUCATION

- During the past two decades the adult literacy rate almost doubled—from 30% in 1970 to 54% in 1992.
- Between 1960 and 1990 the primary enrolment ratio more than doubled, from 38% to 77%, and the secondary enrolment ratio nearly tripled, from 18% to 51%.
- About 60 million of the region's 240 million people are illiterate.
- Nine million children are out of primary school, and 15 million are out of secondary school.

INCOME AND POVERTY

- Between 1960 and 1993 real per capita income grew by nearly 3% a year.
- In 1980–90 the agricultural growth rate was nearly 5% a year—the highest among the developing regions.
- About 73 million people still live below the poverty line, and more than 10 million are underfed.

WOMEN

- At the secondary level the number of girls per 100 boys rose from 47 to 77 between 1970 and 1990, and at the tertiary level it rose from 34 to 65.
- Of women enrolled at the tertiary level, about 50% are in natural or applied sciences.
- Only 25% of Arab women participate in the formal labour force, compared with 39% in the developing countries as a group.
- Women hold only 4% of parliamentary seats, well below the 10% average for the developing world.

CHILDREN

- Between 1960 and 1993 the infant mortality rate declined by more than three-fifths—from 167 per thousand live births to 66.
- More than three-quarters of one-year-olds are immunized.
- At 73 per thousand live births, the under-five mortality rate is still more than four times as high as that in industrial countries.

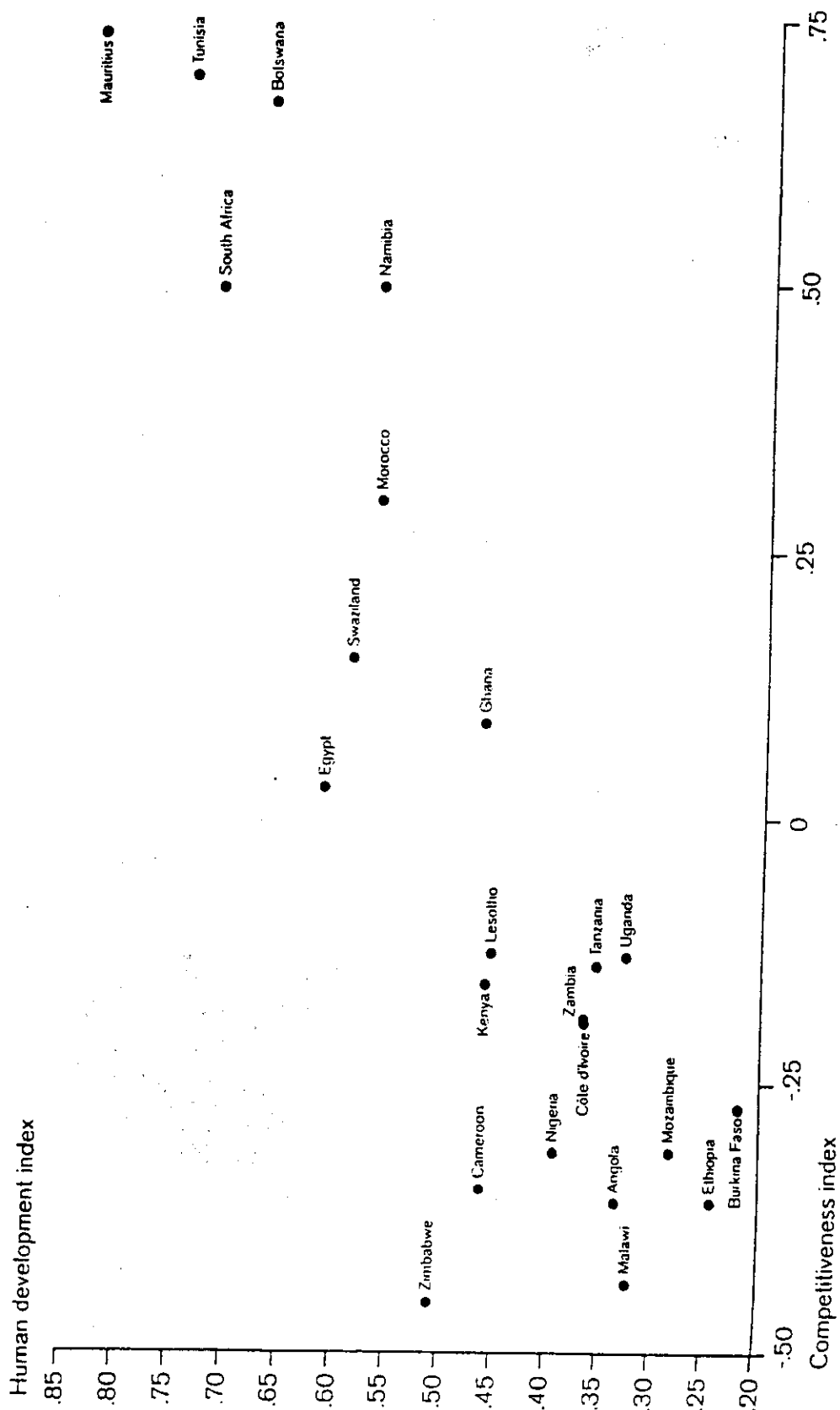
ENVIRONMENT

- Between 1963 and 1991 energy use per \$100 of GDP declined by two-thirds, from 228 kilograms of oil equivalent to 76.
- With less than 1,000 cubic metres of water per capita available each year, about 55% of the population suffer from serious water scarcity.

POLITICS AND CONFLICTS

- During the past two decades six countries have held multiparty parliamentary elections, and since 1990 there have been 18 general elections.
- In 1994, 250,000 refugees in the region returned to their country of origin.
- At the end of 1994 more than one million people were refugees.

Figure 2: Competitiveness Index and human development



Source: UN Development Report 1997 and ACR

Figure 1: High, middle and low performing economies according to the Competitiveness Index

Attachment 6

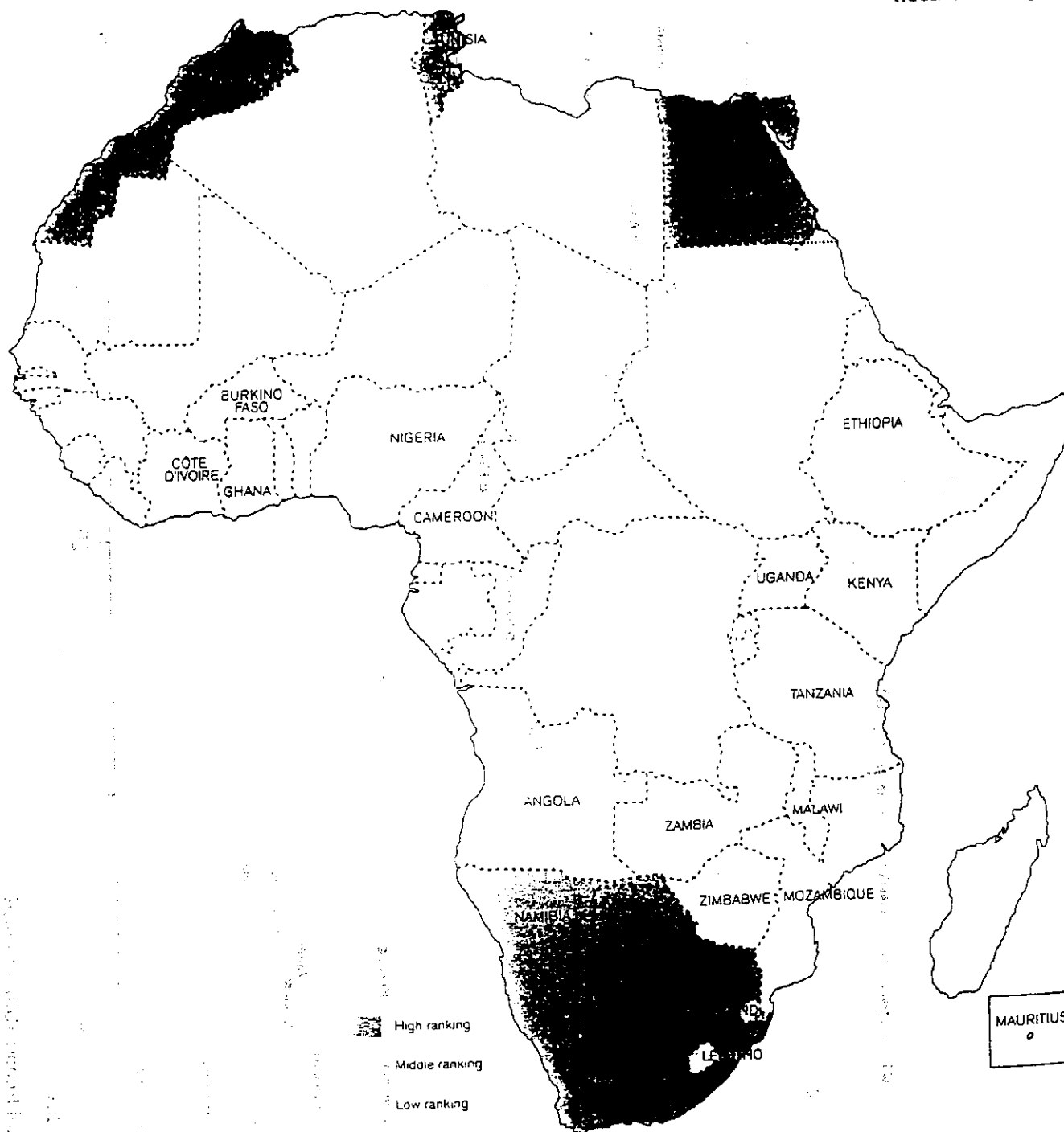


Table 1: Competitiveness Index

1	Mauritius		0.87
2	Tunisia		0.79
3	Botswana		0.54
4	Namibia		0.43
5	Morocco		0.4
6	Egypt		0.38
7	South Africa		0.34
8	Swaziland		0.22
9	Ghana		0.09
10	Lesotho		0.06
11	Côte d'Ivoire	-0.09	
12	Zambia	-0.09	
13	Kenya	-0.15	
14	Uganda	-0.16	
15	Burkina Faso	-0.21	
16	Tanzania	-0.24	
17	Ethiopia	-0.25	
18	Mozambique	-0.32	
19	Cameroon	-0.38	
20	Zimbabwe	-0.4	
21	Malawi	-0.43	
22	Nigeria	-0.48	
23	Angola	-0.79	

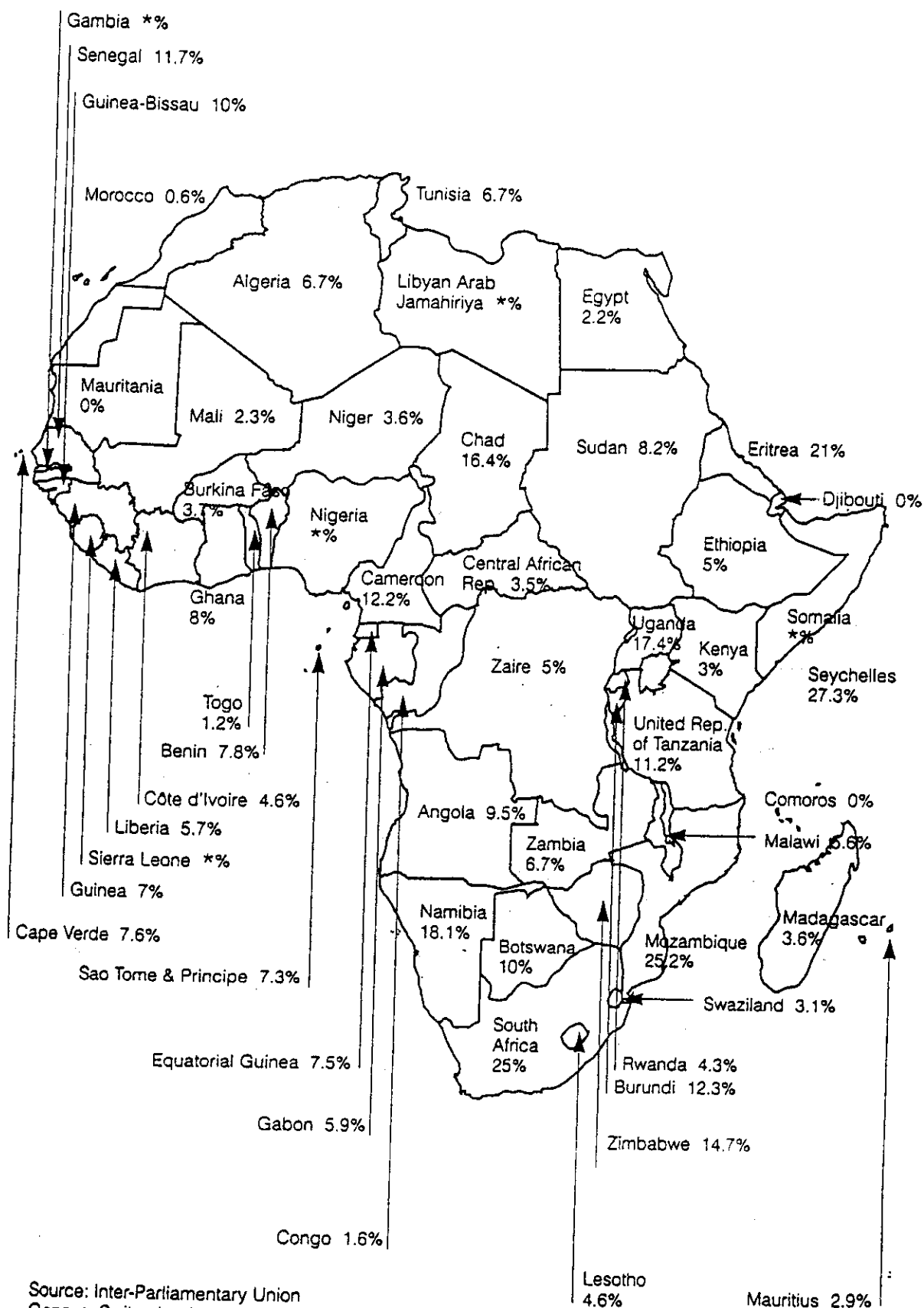
47 Regional aggregates of human development indicators

	Sub-Saharan Africa	Arab States	South Asia	East Asia	East Asia excl. China	South-East Asia and Pacific	Latin America and the Caribbean	Least developed countries	All developing countries	Eastern Europe and CIS countries ^a	Industrial countries ^a	All countries
Table 1: Human development index^b												
Life expectancy	50.9	62.1	60.3	68.8	71.3	63.7	68.5	51.0	61.5	69.2	74.3	63.0
Adult literacy rate	55.0	53.0	48.8	81.0	95.9	86.0	85.9	46.5	68.8	97.6	98.3	76.3
Combined 1st, 2nd and 3rd level enrolment	42	56	52	58	78	59	69	34	55	74	82	60
Real GDP per capita (PPP\$)	1,288	4,513	1,564	2,686	8,336	3,216	5,756	898	2,696	4,164	15,136	5,428
Human development index	0.379	0.633	0.444	0.633	0.877	0.646	0.824	0.331	0.563	0.773	0.909	0.746
Table 2: Gender-related development index												
Life expectancy	52.5	64.1	60.5	70.8	74.8	66.0	71.2	52.1	62.9	74.2	78.6	64.6
Female	49.3	61.5	60.1	66.8	67.8	62.2	65.9	50.0	60.3	64.2	71.2	61.4
Adult literacy rate	45.4	40.4	35.0	71.9	94.3	82.6	84.2	36.1	59.8	98.7	98.5	69.6
Female	64.7	65.6	61.7	89.1	98.3	91.4	87.0	57.5	77.6	98.9	98.7	82.5
Combined primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment	37.2	51.0	43.2	55.0	75.5	58.1	68.2	29.5	50.6	76.5	84.3	55.6
Female	45.9	63.4	59.6	61.0	82.1	60.9	68.9	40.1	59.7	72.4	81.8	63.0
Share of earned income	35.6	20.0	23.9	37.5	27.3	35.0	26.1	32.8	31.0	40.2	37.0	32.4
Male	64.4	80.0	76.1	62.5	72.7	65.0	73.9	67.2	69.0	59.8	63.0	67.6
Gender-related development index	0.366	0.513	0.410	0.610	0.808	0.621	0.722	0.318	0.530	0.868	0.868	0.600
Table 3: Gender empowerment measure (% women)												
Seats in parliament	9.9	5.2	6.5	19.3	2.0	8.2	11.6	7.7	10.8	12.5	14.5	12.2
Administrators and managers	10.2	13.0	3.0	11.3	..	14.7	20.4	8.5	10.0	..	27.4	14.0
Professional and technical workers	27.9	30.0	21.3	45.1	..	46.6	49.4	23.6	36.3	..	47.8	38.9
Earned income share	35.6	20.0	23.9	37.4	27.3	35.1	26.0	32.9	31.0	40.2	37.0	32.5
Gender empowerment measure	0.279	0.290	0.234	0.471	0.282	0.386	0.416	0.269	0.351	0.453	0.569	0.391

Source: Human Development Report 1996

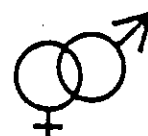
African Women in Parliament

(as of 30 June 1995)



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union
 Geneva, Switzerland
 *Figures unavailable

GUIDE TO GENDER-SENSITIVE INDICATORS



Definitions of indicators	
Risk/enabling:	measure the influence of external factors on the project of program
Input:	concern resources devoted to the project or program
Process:	measure delivery activities of the resources devoted to a program or project. They monitor achievement during implementation, serving primarily to track progress towards the intended results.
Output:	identify intermediate results, for example at a point when donor involvement is close to complete.
Outcome:	relate directly to the longer-term results of the project, and after donor involvement is complete.
Numbers of indicators can be quite small, and a rule of thumb is that up to six indicators should be chosen for each of the above types.	

Source: Canadian International Development Agency: Guide to Gender Sensitive Indicators

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Annexe VII

Page

**GENDER AND LAW IN NORTH AFRICA IN
RELATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
CEDAW**

1. The North African countries have made many efforts in terms of legislation to promote the advancement of women with a view to expiring them to modern life and democratic ideals while keeping faith with their Arab and Islamic culture. While North African women do, in public law, have the same rights as men, they cannot practically enjoy those rights since they do not have the legal capacity to do so under private law. This is the issue that must be thought out and addressed because it seriously limits the access of women to positions of responsibility and decision-making.

2. This much is clear from the study prepared by Mrs. Hassania Chelbi and Mr. Mongi Bedoui on the Post-Beijing situation of women in North Africa: Realities and Prospects. While there are country-specific differences, the study shows that women are still far from achieving the gender equality proclaimed in the international instruments that have been ratified by countries of the subregion and incorporated in their basic laws. Such discrimination is certainly to blame for the economic invisibility of women mentioned in the report. The visible contribution of women to economic activity remains modest in comparison to their real contribution to the economy and that degree of invisibility substantially influences the perception of their actual participation in public life, becoming the most poignant expression of their status.

3. The fact that women are not seen to be active in economic and social development is due, among other things, to the rules and regulations governing society and which have the effect of keeping women away from activities and positions which would give them material security, power and influence in public as well as private life. For years now, the development debate has been focusing increasingly on the issue of rights, their interpretation and application and on the inclusion of a gender perspective.

4. Realizing that men and women approach legal issues from different perspectives, the women's movement has, in recent years, been fighting relentlessly for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all human rights instruments.

5. The basic rights of women form an integral and indivisible part of all human rights and liberties. In its first paragraph, the June 1993 Vienna Declaration affirms that all human rights and basic freedoms are universal in character and inviolable and that all States have a legal obligation to promote universal respect for, the guarantee and protection of all human rights and basic freedoms for all.

6. This obligation is further prescribed for all States in conformity with the United Nations Charter and other human rights instruments. Member States are obliged to promote and protect the basic rights and liberties of all citizens without any distinction. The idea is to eliminate every form of discrimination based on gender and to guarantee the participation of women, on an equal footing, in the political, civil, economic, social and cultural life of their society whether it be at the local, national, regional or international level.

7. The promotion and protection of all the rights of women listed above, particularly regarding their personal status, is of crucial importance to the democratic management of public affairs and sustainable development.
8. Indeed, for women, the right of citizenship has no meaning so long as they are not in control of their future within their own family and are considered as minors all their life, subject to a custodian who contracts their marriage or to the authority of their spouses in securing permission to exercise a profession, obtain a passport or a loan. What meaning can the right to education have when the marriageable age of women is set at 15 in some countries? What meaning too can the right to health, civil and political freedom have when women are subjected to the duty of obeying their spouses?
9. The follow-up of the implementation of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms for Action provides an excellent opportunity to discuss this issue which touches on the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights. In the Beijing Declaration, member States committed themselves to ensuring that women and girls would fully enjoy all human rights and fundamental liberties and to taking effective measures to punish violations of those rights and liberties. They also considered lack of respect for the basic rights of women and deficiencies in the promotion and protection of those rights as the priority areas in which urgent action must be taken and called upon Governments, the international community and civil society (including private-sector non governmental organizations) to take strategic action within this context.
10. Their primary objective was to promote and protect the fundamental rights of women through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

11. The Beijing Conference placed particular emphasis on the Convention because of the place it occupies among international human rights instruments. The Convention analyzes the significance of the concept of equality and ways of achieving such equality. It also spells out a programme of action whereby States parties to the Convention can guarantee the enjoyment of those rights. The monitoring mechanism, the Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) plays the role of following up on the degree to which member States implement the various provisions and give it greater effect, since the State parties can be held internationally accountable for the protection and promotion of the rights set forth in the Convention.
12. What is more, the optional protocol being drafted as part of the Convention will enable individuals and groups of individuals to inform the Committee about eventual

human rights violations and provide genuine protection for women against discrimination.

13. Except for Mauritania and the Sudan (according to the most recent documents available to us) all countries of the subregion have ratified the Convention. The ratification dates vary from country to country.

Accession of countries in the subregion to CEDAW

Country	Date of signature	Deposition of instruments of ratification
Algeria		22 May 1996
Egypt	16 July 1980	18 September 1981
Libya		16 May 1989
Morocco		21 June 1993
Mauritania		
Sudan		
Tunisia	24 July 1980	September 1985

14. Although they have signed the African Charter for Human and People's Rights which proclaims egalitarian principles in Article 18 which states that the State must see to the elimination of any form of discrimination against women and to the protection of the rights of women and children as stipulated in international declarations and conventions, both Mauritania and the Sudan are lagging behind in the ratification process.

Reservations

15. Most of the States in the subregion believe in the ideals of the United Nations Charter but their commitment has yet to be demonstrated fully and completely. Indeed, all of them have used the proviso in article 28 to express reservations about the Convention. Even Tunisia which is known to be in the vanguard when it comes to the status of women and which had not expressed any reservations when ratifying many conventions which directly or indirectly affect the status of women, interprets the Convention in a restricted sense. The 1980s were particularly marked by the rise of religious fundamentalism and problems of ethnic identity. The provision in the article stipulates, however, that no reservations incompatible with the purpose and objective of the Convention will be allowed.

16. Of the 30 articles of the Convention, four have been the object of reservations, except for article 29 on the settlement of disputes which is not concerned with the main purpose of the Convention. These are articles 2, 9, 15 and 16:

***Article 2** generally defines national obligations under the Convention and measures to be taken to eliminate discrimination against women. Reservations to

this article have been expressed by Algeria, Egypt, and Libya while Morocco has made a declaration;

*Article 9 which deals with nationality has been limited in its scope by the reservations of Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia;

*Articles 15 and 4 which compel all States to accord equal right to men and women in the matter of free movement and right of residence has drawn declarations from Tunisia and Morocco and Algeria;

*Article 16 which raises the issue of discrimination against women within the family is completely rejected by Algeria, Egypt and Morocco which have expressed reservations about all the provisions therein:

Tunisia expressed reservations about subparagraphs (c), (d), (f), (g) and (h) of paragraph one;

Libya has expressed a reservation concerning article 16 paragraph (1) and subparagraphs (c) and (d).

17. The countries of the subregion expressed no reservations about articles rejected by other countries, in particular article 7 concerning the participation of women in public life, article 11 on employment and article 13 on family allowances and credit allocated to women. Apart from Morocco which went on to make a declaration regarding succession to the throne, they all showed their specific differences by focusing on the family and justified their attitude by invoking religion and sharia law (except for Algeria which invokes its family code that happens to be principally derived from sharia law).
18. Since the reservations expressed by States of the subregion limit the rights of women within the family, it can be wondered while this is so. The family has always been considered as the custodian of ethnic values and customs and the traditional distribution of gender roles on which patriarchal society is based. Therefore, in spite of the progress made in promoting the advancement of women, the countries of the subregion are ambivalent about the status of women and this is what can be found reflected in the family codes which discriminate against them and the public law which is egalitarian.
19. The national constitutions which advocate equality among all citizens are sometimes contradicted by laws or even by ministerial bye-laws or circulars which discriminate against women in terms of their legal status. If women cannot be the equals of men in the private domain, they cannot possibly be so in the public domain and cannot exercise their political, economic, cultural and other rights enshrined in most of the constitutions.

Strategies for removing expressed reservations

20. With regard to the basic issues, such reservations maintain the laws which discriminate against women within the family and keep them from becoming fully integrated in the development process. It would therefore be necessary to pursue strategies that enable the removal of the reservations at least and, in the short-term, those which do not arouse major resistance in terms of religious belief. A case in point is the attribution of the mother's nationality to her children. The limitations here are currently creating many tragic situations. Indeed, given the mobility of citizens of the subregion many mixed marriages have been contracted as a result of which widows, divorcees and abandoned spouses are facing hopeless situations because they cannot transmit their own nationality to their children. Since this issue has nothing to do with religious sanctity, it might be possible to develop more egalitarian legislation in this respect.
21. Some countries are already beginning to do this. In reply to questioning about the reservations expressed about article 9, the representative of Egypt announced to the Committee during its consideration of the second periodic report in February 1990 that discussions were underway to withdraw that reservation. The representative of Tunisia stated during the submission of that country's initial report and subsequent period it report in January 1995 that in spite of the reservations expressed, many legal reforms promoting the advancement of women have been adopted in 1993 in pursuance of the reforms that date back to 1956. These included the transmission of mothers' nationality to their children and other reservations were going to be withdrawn in the near future.
22. Moreover, those provisions that are currently stirring controversy will require the pursuit of strategies that enable religion and culture to play a more positive role in promoting the protection of the basic rights of women. This effort has already begun in some countries and must be sustained and replicated in others. Such gender equality promotion refers specifically to the religious and cultural values which uphold the principles of respect for human life, the equality of all human beings, the need for social order and protection against arbitrary decisions.
23. It is necessary, pending these structural reforms which might take time and given the urgency of the situation to consider other ways of going around these cultural constraints and achieving equality. Such alternatives have always existed in Muslim society and must be made known because of the large number of women who do not know of them. Marriage contracting is a case in point that is recognized under sharia law and enables the bride-to-be to stipulate certain personal and material conditions. One other common practice in some families is to endow the bride, at the time of marriage, with gifts that compensate for the inequality of succession. Innovation can also be made by creating practices suited to modern life.

24. It is also important to educate women about their basic and legal rights and the machinery for protecting those rights in order to make it easier for them to be understood and accepted by the family and community and to claim them in their own right.
25. Governments, NGOs, development agencies and individual men and women should all be involved in this effort aimed at doing away with the inferior legal status of women and correcting an unbalanced and destabilizing social system so as to bring it into line with international norms and principles of universality and indivisibility.

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- Conference on African Women and Economic Development 28 April-1 May 1998/Summary Notes.
- CEDAW reports : 9th and 14th sessions.

DISTRIBUTION OF TASKS

DISTRIBUTION OF TASKS : PRESIDING OFFICERS, FACILITATORS AND RAPORTEURS

Agenda Items	Presiding Officer	Facilitator	Rapporteur
<i>Tuesday 27/10/98</i>			
1. Opening ceremony	Princess Lalla Fatima Al Zahraa		Ms. Hannah Tiagha
i. Ms. Joséphine Ouédraogo, Director African Centre for Women			Ms. Zazie Schaffer, PNUD Maroc
ii. The Representative of UNDP			
iii. Princess Lalla Fatima Al Zahraa			
iv. Mr. Said Saadi			
v. Ms. Nozha Chaleroni			
vi. Ms. Belarbi Aicha			
vii. Ms. Zoulekha Naciri			
2. Presentation of agenda and programme of work	Ms. Khadija Raki		
3. The post Beijing political climate in North Africa: country presentations	Ms. Khadija Raki		Ms. Jamila Alaoui Ms. Zineb Benjelloun UNFPA
4. Presentation of summary document on the implementation of national plans of action in countries of the subregion (by Ms. Hassania Chalbi-Drissi)	Ms. Lamina Mint Mouna		Ms. Aïmée Andrianasolo Mr. Mohamed Ould Zeïda

Agenda Items	Presiding Officer	Facilitator	Rapporteur
5. Presentation of a model national plan of action (by Joséphine Ouédraogo)	Ms. Lamina Mint Mouna	Ms. Chalbi-Drissi Hassania	Ms. Aïnée Andrianasolo Ms. Jane Wright, Unesco, Rabat
Working group 1			Ms. Aïnée Andrianasolo Ms. Diana (Maroc)
Working group 2		Mr. Mongi Badoui	Mr. Mohamed Ould Zeidat Nouakchot, Mauritanie
<i>Wednesday 28/10/98</i>			
6. Presentation of a tool for monitoring and evaluation (by Hannah Tiagha)	Ms. Kleira Ouiguini	Ms. Hilda Tatria	Mr. Mongi Bedoui
Working group 1			
7. Guidelines for the preparation of country reports on progress achieved in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action presented (by Hannah Tiagha)	Fatma Ahmed		Ms. Zazie Schaffer, PNUD
8. Presentation of the recommendations made by the International Conference on African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future, Addis Ababa, 28 April- 1 May 1998* (by Joséphine Ouédraogo)	Ms. Khadija Abu El Gasim		Ms. J. Jamila Alaoui
9. Presentation on the various stages of preparation for the Africa Regional Conference on Women (by Joséphine Ouédraogo)	Ms. Khadija Abu El Gasim		Ms. Nawal El Guenouni

Agenda Items	Presiding Officer	Facilitator	Rapporteur
10. Presentation on the areas of activity of the African Centre for Women (by Joséphine Ouédraogo)	Mr. Jugessur		Ms. Souad Abdennebi
11. Strategies for the integration of gender issues in development planning (by Hilda Tadría)	Ms. Nezha Ben Yedder, Tunisia	Ms. Hilda Tadría	Ms. Aïmeé Andrianasolo, Tanger, Morocco
Working group 1			Ms. Asier Zaoude (UNIFE
<i>Thursday 29/10/98</i>			
12. Gender and law (by Souad Abdennebi)	Ms. Saadia Bouguettoucha	Ms. Souad Abdennebi, ECA	Mr. Mongi Bedoui
Working group 1			
<i>Friday 30/10/98</i>			
13. Adoption of the report and closing of the meeting (by Zohra Ben Romdhane and Saadia Bouguettoucha)	Mr. Saad Al Said		Conference Secretariat

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

***SUBREGIONAL FOLLOW-UP MEETING ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DAKAR AND BEIJING PLATFORMS FOR
ACTION - NORTH AFRICA***

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ALGERIA

Mme Kheira OUIGUINI
Sous-Directeur au Ministère
des Affaires Etrangères
Tel : 50 44 20
ALGER -ALGERIE -

Mme Saâdia BOUGATOUCHA
Députée
Assemblée Nationale Populaire
ALEGER -ALGERIE -
Tel: 02 73 86 00

Melle Leila CHIKHI
Association indépendante pour le triomphe des
Des droits des femmes
C% LESBET - 26 Bd Md V
16 000 . ALGER -ALGERIE -
Tel: 00 213 251 72 06
Fax: 00 213 292 35 37

Melle Hadda TOUATI
Chef de Bureau au Ministère
des Affaires Etrangères
ALGER -ALGERIE -
Tel: 50 44 20

M. Rachid BOUKAABENE
Responsable des Etudes
et des résumés du C.E.N
à l'Assemblée Nationale Populaire
Tel: 02 73 86 00
ALGER -ALGERIE -

EGYPT

Mme DRAZ NADA
Diplomat Ministry of foreign Affairs
Tel : 57 49 677

Mme Fatima EL GOUNDI
Directeur au Ministère des Affaires Sociales
Tel : 33 24 17

MAURITANIA

M. Mohammed Ould ZAIDANE
Secrétaire Général de l'Association
Nationale des Etudes scientifiques de la population
Noukchot Mauritanie B.P 844
Tel : 2222 5017

Mme Mounina MINT ABDELLAH
Conseiller Technique
B.P 4472 Nouakchout Mauritanie
Tel : 222 257 139
Fax: 222 259 010

Mme Fatimatou MINT LEKHLIFA
Directrice de la Cooperation de la
Planification des Projets
Secrétariat d'Etat à la Condition Féminine
Nouakchott Mauritanie
Tel : 222 23133 53860
Fax: 222 271 56

TUNISIA

Mme Neziha BEN YEDDER
Membre de la Commission de la législation
Générale et de l'organisation générale de
L'administration
Tel : 564 899
Fax : 510 511

Mme Zohra BEN ROMDHANE
Directrice générale chargée de l'information de la
Communication et des Relations Publiques au Ministère
des Affaires de la femme et de la Famille
Tel : 33 24 17
Fax : 34 99 00

Mme Najette TRIMECHE
Secrétaire Générale de l'Union Nationale de la Femme
Tunisienne - UNFT-
Tel : 561 845 TUNISIE
Mme Siham NEJJAR
CREDIF TUNISIE
Tel : 885 322

Mme Neila CHEBANE
Attachée Culturelle à l'Ambassade
de Tunisie à Rabat

SUDAN

Mme Khadija ABU EL GASSIM HAG HAMAD
Directeur général des Affaires Féminines
Ministère de la Planification Sociale

MOROCCO

Mme Jamila ALAOUI
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
Tel : 67 0057

Mme Naoual EL GUENNOUNI
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
et de la Coopération
Tel: 00 57

Mme Khadija RAKI
Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé de la Protection
Sociale de la Famille et de l'Enfance
Tel : 67 47 66

Mme Rabea NACIRI
Coordinatrice du Plan National
Pour l'I.F.D

Mme Naïma SENHAJI
Chef de Division, de la Coopération
Internationale au Ministère
du Développement Sociale de la Solidarité
de l'Emploi et de la Formation
Tel : 212 77 65 21
Fax : 212 77 63 44
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Halima BOUKHARI
Ministère de l'Education
Nationale MEN
Ex la Saft rue Laous imm 11 n°6
Tel: 77 43 59
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Rajae IBN KHAYAT
Administrateur Principal
Ministère du Développement Social , de la Solidarité, de
l'Emploi, et de la Formation Professionnelle
2, Rue Trabless Appart 4
Place Pietri
Tel : 20 11 46
Rabat - Maroc-

M. Ahmed DRIOUCH
Ministère de la Justice
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Naïma BEN WAKRIM
Ministère Chargé des Droits de l'Homme
Tel : 67 10 16 / 17
Rabat – Maroc

Mme Fatima ALAOUI
Présidente, Agence de Recherches d'Information
pour les femmes Ariff - CFMD- FMED
2 Rue Zahla
Tel : 72 74 06
Fax : 212 7 72 74 06
Rabat - Maroc-

M. Abdeslam ARIFI
Direction de la Coopération
Multilatérale
Tel : 66 00 04 / 58
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Latifa TOUJANI
Présidente de l'Organisation « FEMART »
3, Rue Sanaa Apt 13
Tel / Fax : 212 7 70 17 77
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Fatima EL MAGHNAOUI
Membre du Bureau Exécutif de l'Union
de l'Action Féminine
425, Avenue Bin Windan, imm B, app 13 Agdal
Tel: 212 77 73 77
Fax: 212 7 72 72 22
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Malika BENMAHI
Topographe et Présidente de l'Association
Marocaine pour la promotion de la Femme Rurale
Secteur 13 S1 n°3 Hay Riad
Tel : 212 7 71 31 69
Fax : 77 67 03
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Leïla SALMI
Adjoint du Secrétaire Général
d'Association féminine
100, Avenue Fal Omeir n°13 Agdal
Tel : 67 28 15
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Fatima DAHBI
Vice-Présidente de l'U.N.F.M
Complexe sportif
Tel : 79 93 79 / 80
Fax : 79 91 89
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Latifa MAROUFI
Administratrice principale
Secrétaire Générale du
Mouvement National
des femmes « MNF »
Avenue Tarik Ibn Ziad
Hassan B.P 2558
Tel : 76 06 90 / 75
Fax : 66 06 89 / 70
Rabat - MAROC-

Mme Touria RHARBAL
Présidente Adjoint
de l'Union Nationale
de la femme Démocratique
18, Rue Tunis Hassan
Tel : 07 79 69 01
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Zhor RACHIQ
Présidente Femme Action
6, Rue Aman
Tel: 77 26 86
Fax : 73 48 59
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Naïma EL AYAUBI
O.N.G Femme Action
6, Rue Aman
Tel: 75 82 40
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Hada KECHOUN
Ligue Nationale des Femmes Fonctionnaires du secteur
Public et semi-public
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Rahma BOUAANANE
Association Joussour
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Farrida Benaïssa
Association Joussour
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Rabiaa BOUHIMA
Ingénieur Agronome
Ministère de l'Agriculture
Direction de l'Enseignement,
de la Recherche et du Développement
Tel: 07 77 69 24/25
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Malika BENRADI
Faculté de Droit
Tel : 71 34 50
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Khadija BAKKALI
R.T.M. Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Mounia BEL AFI
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Rabia MALIK
Rabat - Maroc-
M. Mohamed AZHAR
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Mafraha AZIZ
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Nadia BEZAD
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Latifa HALIM
Professeur Universitaire
Avenue Ocba N° 66 app.8 Agdal
Tel : 77 93 32
Fax : 77 93 32
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Khadija MOSLIH
Enseignant - Chercheur ENA
Tel : 79 84 64

Mme Aouatif DRIHEM
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Lella BELKZIZE
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme Fouzia RHISSASSI
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme AMITI Khadija
Professeur Chercheur
13 Avenue Madagascar
2 ème étage
Tel: 212 07 72 11 45
Rabat - Maroc-

Mme BELQAID Lalla Aicha
Professeur de Droit Membre du Conseil
Consultatif des droits de l'Homme
C 9 Secteur 12 Rue Allaysia Ryad
Tel: 7 71 18 5 9
Rabat - Maroc-

M. ALLALI HENNOU
Medecin (OFDS)
31, Rue de Sebou Agdal
Tel: 07 68 20 69
Rabat - Maroc-

M. Abdelilah QUAQUAQ
Chef de la Division du Budget Economique
Ministère du Plan
Tel 76 45 76
Fax: 76 45 37
Rabat - Maroc-

Madame KERRICH EZZINE Fatima
Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé de la Protection
Social de la Famille et de l'Enfance
Tel : 67 47 66

Mme EL BOUKILI Nezha
Secrétariat d'Etat Chargé de la Protection
Social de la Famille et de l'Enfance
Tel : 67 47 66

Subregional and International Institutions

UMA

Mme Medili Saida
UMA - Maroc
Tel : 77 26 82
Fax : 77 26 60

CAFRAD

Mme LIZETTE MICHEL
Programme de formation et de consultation
Tel : 94 22 52 / 94 26 91
Fax : 94 14 15

ALECSO

M. Abbas ASSOURI
B.P 290 Rabat
Tel : 77 24 22 / 23

USAID

Mme Nina ETYEMEZIAN
Tel : 75 23 67

AATPO

BADOUILILIANE
Expert
B.P. 23 Pavillon International
Tanger
Tel : 21932 44 65

United Nations

PNUD

Mme Zazie SCHAFFER
PNUD Maroc
Tel : 70 35 55

FNUAP

Mme Zineb BENJELLOUN
FNUAP - MAROC
Tel : 70 35 55

UNESCO

Mme Jane Wright
Spécialiste du Programmer
Bureau Régional de l'UNESCO
B.P. 1777 Agdal -Rabat - Maroc
Tel : 67 03 72/74
Fax : 67 03 75

UNIFEM

Mme ASTER ZAUDI
UNIFEM DAKAR
Tel : 82 35 20 7
Fax 82 35 00 2

CEA

Mme Joséphine Ouédraogo
Directeur, Centre Africain pour la Femme
B.P. 3005
Tel: 25 151 12 63
Fax: 251 151 27 85
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

Mme Hannah Tiagha
Centre Africain pour la Femme
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

Mme Souad Abdennebi
Centre Africain pour la Femme
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

Mme. Hilda M.K. Tatria
Centre Africain pour la Femme
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

M. Alemayehu Haile
Centre Africain pour la Femme
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

Mme. Almaz Zenebe
Secrétaire
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

Mme Sanna Metkis
Translator
UNECA Box 3001
Tel : 2511 517200
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

M. EBENEZER FIRSTQUAO
Translator
UNECA Box 3001
Tel : 2511 517200
ADDIS ABABA
ETHIOPIE

M. Etienne KABOU
Traducteur
UNECA Box 3001
Tel : 2511 517200
ADDIS ABABA
CEA ETHIOPIE

M. SOODURSUN JUGESSUR
CHEF P.I
CEA -CDSR
B.P: 316
Tel: 09 322 346 322347
TANGER

Mme AIMEE ANDRIANASOLO
CEA -CDSR
B.P: 316
Tel: 09 322 346 322347
TANGER

Mlle ZOHRA BEN BOUBKER
CEA -CDSR
B.P: 316
Tel: 09 322 346 322347
TANGER

CONSULTANTS

Mme Hassania CHALBI DRISSI
Consultante
6, Rue Ali Ibn Abi Taleb Menzah VI Tunis
Tel: 213 1 754907
Fax : 216 1 766767

M. BENDAOUI MONGI
Consulting en Développement Communautaire C.D.C
Bureau C.D.C. Cite Auberge du Lac Résidence
du Lac. Mi. C. 34 C.P. 2045 Tunis
Tel : 00216 1 862 171
Fax : 00216 1 830 382

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Annexe X

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PRESS CONFERENCE

The following article was published on the front page of AL ITTIHAD AL ICHTIRAKI, a daily in Rabat and was entitled:

“In a press conference of the Secretariat of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children : the necessity to integrate women in development ”

Mr. Mohamad Said Al Saadi, the Secretary of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children, has held, jointly with Mrs. Joséphine Ouédraogo, Director of the African Center for Women, a press conference, on Friday 30 October in the Conference Hall of AL Tayeb Benhima, at the Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rabat.

This event is taking place when our country is currently formulating a National Plan to integrate women in development. This plan is actually in its final stages and includes measures aimed at improving the status of women in various areas in accordance with a plan based upon conformity and partnership between the various national actors working in the area of women.

The importance of this press conference stems from the fact that it coincides with the Subregional Meeting for the Follow-up of the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms, held in Rabat from 27 – 30 October 1998.

In his statement, Mr. Al Saadi emphasized the necessity to be aware of the political climate in the African States and its influence on the advancement of women, to evaluate the National Action Plans to integrate women in development, following Dakar and Beijing conferences, and to include the issues of gender and its relation to developmental planning.

The Secretary of State added that the African States are facing numerous challenges on all levels. They are also witnessing significant changes dictated by the transition period and the New World Order. This situation has had a compounded effect on women, thus leading our country to structure its programs and projects and rationalize its potentials in order to develop women resources and expand their areas of activities.

On her part, Mrs. Joséphine Ouédraogo described the African women situation in light of the current human condition, the economic development and human rights. She particularly emphasized the necessity to adhere to the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action, and to take into consideration the gender dimension in development. This is particularly in view of the fact that Africa is witnessing a blatant violation of gender equality as well as social and cultural disparities.

Interventions ensued thereafter from reporters raising questions regarding social justice and democracy in the light liberation of women and their equal rights and responsibilities especially during the last two decades when a growing concern with gender issues has been witnessed.

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A question was also raised concerning the Model National Action Plan, after Beijing, which the Secretariat of State in charge of Social Protection, Family and Children, intends to follow. Other questions raised concerned the implementation strategy of the Platform of Action, and the associations and organizations with which partnership shall be established in order to continue deliberations on the status of women which has become an area of critical governmental concern.