REPORT OF AN ADVISORY MISSION TO
THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME,
AFRICA CENTRE
LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, 12 - 15 MARCH 1996

By:
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Regional Advisor on Gender and Sustainable Development
MRAG-ACW

Addis Ababa
April, 1996
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
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1. BACKGROUND TO THE MISSION

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre (CYPAC), located within the University of Zambia compound in Lusaka, Zambia, is an intergovernmental organization representing all African countries of the Commonwealth. CYPAC serves as a training centre for youth from these countries.

The CYPAC organized a workshop on Youth Initiative on Environment and Development in Blantyre, Malawi, July 17-24, 1995, which was attended by 43 participants, most of whom were representatives of the youth from 15 countries of Commonwealth Africa. ECA was represented by two regional advisors: Senior Regional Advisor on the Environment; and the Regional Advisor on Gender and Sustainable Development. The principal objective of this workshop was to explore how best the youth can be centrally involved in the care and protection of the biodiversity of African natural ecosystems. One of the recommendations arrived at in the workshop was on the need to establish a Regional Network for Young Environmentalists. Another related recommendation was on the need to ensure that all the activities of this Network, and of CYPAC as well, would incorporate a gender perspective. (See previous Mission Report on this Workshop, ECA/MRAG/95/94/MR.

As a follow-up to these recommendations, CYPAC initiated a Project Proposal on Tree Planting in selected countries as a measure towards environmental rehabilitation and protection. In the case of Zambia, CYPAC was even able to procure the support of the Government which set aside a piece of land for the implementation of the proposed project.

In February 1996, the Commonwealth Youth Programme requested for the assistance of the ECA Regional Advisor on Gender and Sustainable Development for:

(a) Developing a detailed project proposal on the Regional Network for Young Environmentalists:

(b) Giving proposals on how the gender perspective can be incorporated into the proposed activities of the Regional Network, as well as in the training programmes of the CYPAC.
II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE ADVISORY MISSION TO THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME, AFRICA CENTRE

The mission was undertaken from 12 to 15 March 1996. The following activities were undertaken:

(a) Participating in a preparatory and planning meeting for the mission with the Director of CYPAC and other members of staff at the Centre.

(b) Meeting and holding discussions with the FAO Representative in Zambia.

(c) Meeting and holding discussions with officials of the Zambia National Forestry Action Programme.

(d) Providing inputs into, and finalizing CYPAC Proposal on Flora and Fauna Extension and Management (FAFEM) for the Commonwealth Regional Network of Young Environmentalists.


(f) Holding informal group discussions on "Gender and Development" with the student youth-trainees of CYPAC.

1. Preparatory Meeting held at CYPAC on 13 March 1996

A meeting was held on the morning of 13.3.96 at CYPAC for the purpose of planning the activities to be undertaken during the mission. It was attended by:

Dr. Richard Mkandawire, Director CYPAC,
Mrs. Aganga Williams, Senior Programme Officer and Gender Focal Point, CYPAC,
Mrs. Charity Gathoni Wachira, Programme Officer, CYPAC,
Dr. Wanjiku E. Mwagiru, ECA Regional Advisor on Gender and Sustainable Development.

The meeting set the dates and times of the activities to be undertaken during the mission as described in the following sections.
2. **Meeting and Discussions with the FAO Representative in Zambia, Mr. G.K. Mburathi**

A meeting was held between the FAO Representative in Zambia, Mr. G.K. Mburathi, Dr. Richard Mkandawire, Director CYPAC, and the ECA Regional Advisor on Gender. The purpose of the meeting was to seek the views of the FAO on CYPAC's Project Proposal on Flora and Fauna Extension and Management. In particular, CYPAC was seeking FAO's approval on the proposal and if possible, some expression of commitment in support of the implementation of the proposed activities - in terms of funding and/or technical support.

During this brief meeting, information was obtained with regard to FAO's on-going programmes in the country. The FAO was mainly concerned with implementation of its Forestry programme under the overall umbrella of Agenda 21 and the subsequently delineated critical areas of sustainability of the Agenda. The FAO is responsible for Forestry as a critical area of sustainability. Its implementation is guided by Zambia's National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP). FINIDA and the European Union are collaborating closely with FAO.

A major objective of the on-going forestry activities is to give their ownership to the community. Community participation, especially of the women and youth is therefore a distinctive aspect of FAO forestry activities in Zambia. The FAO was using Zambia and Sri Lanka as country case studies for this approach. At all times, attempts are made to ensure that the chairperson of the participating community group is a woman.

Regarding CYPAC's proposal and the possible collaboration and support of FAO, Mr. Mburathi suggested that the proposal be finalised in close consultation with the Zambia Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. Zambia Forestry Action Programme. After this, the FAO Office in Zambia would be quite prepared to examine the proposal with a view to deciding if and how the office could be involved in its implementation. He suggested that CYPAC should arrange a meeting with both the Technical Advisor and the National Coordinator of the Forestry Programme.

3. **Meeting with Officials of the Zambia National Forestry Action Programme**

At the offices of the Zambia National Forestry Action Programme, in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, a meeting was held with the Chief Technical Advisor, Dr. Bekele, and the National Coordinator Mr. D. Nkhata. Also in attendance were the Director of CYPAC and ECA’s Regional Advisor on Gender. The Chief Technical Advisor and the National Coordinator provided the following information:

The Programme embodies a comprehensive endeavour to develop an integrated framework for the forestry sector and to formulate a national strategy for the envisaged activities. An attempt was made during its formulation to involve all the key actors. It was been demonstrated that orthodox approaches adopted for some global and regional forestry programmes have not achieved the stated objectives. Support is necessary from all sectors that influence forestry, e.g.,
agriculture, industry, livestock rearing, settlement, etc. These have to be integrated in a multi-
disciplinary and cross-sectoral framework. In addition, transparency and accountability are
necessary ingredients for a successful nationally based forestry activity. In the initial stages of
the programme formulation for Zambia, eleven critical areas were identified and isolated for in-
depth analysis of how they are linked to forestry activities. For each of these areas, an Issues
Paper was prepared to serve as a bench mark and reference point. A Task Force was also
to form to come up with the Issues Paper for each of the 11 areas; each Task Force was made
up of 3 people. A conscious attempt was made to make the Task Forces as representative as
possible of the various sectors, e.g., the community (women, youth), NGOs, the Private sector,
the donor community etc. An overriding concern was to forge a sense of ownership of the
Action Plan by the nationals. The component critical areas for the 11 Task Forces were:

- Land use
- Soil and Water Conservation
- Farm forestry/agroforestry
- Woodfuel energy and non-wood products
- Forest Management
- Ecosystems conservation
- Forest-based industries
- Forest economics
- Institutional framework and extension services
- Forestry Policy and Legislation
- Role of women in forest management.

Sixty per cent of Zambia is forested and the question of management of the forest resource
is a critical one. The last inventory was done 30 years ago and another one is urgently needed
to provide updated information and data on the country’s indigenous forest cover, with a view
to instituting sustainable management practices of the indigenous forests.

In response to this information, the Director of CYPAC and the ECA Regional Advisor on
Gender outlined the salient aspects of the CYPAC FAFEM project Proposal, with an emphasis
on those areas of the proposed activities that complemented and strengthened the National
Forestry Programme for Zambia. They expressed the view that the joint collaboration between
CYPAC’s Regional Network for Young Environmentalists, and Zambia’s Ministry of
Environment and Natural Resources, through the National Forestry Action Programme, would
have great value for demonstrative purposes and for replicability in other African countries.
CYPAC intended to initiate agroforestry activities as well as other environmental rehabilitation projects in a number of Commonwealth African countries. These projects would be run and managed by the youth, and it was envisaged that they would have income-generating components built into them. The CYPAC FAFEM Project Proposal represented the initial step in this direction. Plans were well advanced to start its implementation on a Pilot basis in Zambia, and the Ministry of Youth had already procured some land in the Kefue area for use by the Project. CYPAC was now looking for financial, technical and other collaborative support from various organisations in order to get the Project off the ground.

The Chief Technical Adviser requested that copies of the FAFEM Project Proposal be made available to them. They would review and give their comments on where it needed to be strengthened or modified. It was important that the proposed activities be community based and also be linked to the national framework for overall development.

The Director of CYPAC indicated that the Project was intended to reflect a strong training component while its overall thrust was towards integrated rural development.

4. **CYPAC Project Proposal on Flora and Fauna Extension and Management**

After these consultations and discussions on the CYPAC Project Proposal, some time was spent on recasting the proposal in order to incorporate the ideas, suggestions and amendments emanating from the FAO and the Office of the National Forestry Programme. The proposal was also modified to reflect a stronger, gender component. The final version is included with this mission report as Annex I.

5. **Inputs into the CYPAC Diploma Course on Youth Work and Development Programme**

(a) A paper entitled "Priorities in Africa’s Development: The Gender Perspective" was presented to the students and staff of CYPAC. This was an input into the training programme on Youth Work and Development, offered by the Centre as part of its Diploma Course. The session was attended by all the students attending the Diploma Course at CYPAC, including some of the staff. (Annexes II and III).

(b) Several informal discussions on "Gender and Development" were held in the evenings with groups of students. These discussions focused on a wide range of issues pertaining to gender. They were unstructured sessions and the subjects discussed were determined by the kinds of issues, problems and questions on gender and development raised by the students themselves.
ANNEX I

COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME
AFRICA CENTRE
COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT

FAFEM
FLORA AND FAUNA EXTENSION AND MANAGEMENT
COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL NETWORK OF
YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALISTS
PROJECT TITLE: Flora and Fauna Extension and Management

ACRONYMS: FAFEM


ORGANISATION APPLYING FOR FUNDING:

Commonwealth Regional Network of Young Environmentalists, C/O Commonwealth Youth Programme, Africa Centre (CYPAC), P.O. Box 30190, LUSAKA 10101, ZAMBIA.

Tel: 00 260 1 252733/252153
Fax: 00 260 1 253698
Tlx: ZA 40032
Cables: COMYOUTH

COORDINATOR: Bwalya Nondo

Contact points in which project is to be implemented (see back page).

PRINCIPAL EXECUTING AGENCY:

The Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre, Commonwealth Secretariat, P.O. Box 30190
LUSAKA 10101 ZAMBIA
Tel: 00 260 1 252733/252153
Fax: 00 260 1 253698
Tlx: ZA 40032
Cables: COMYOUTH

REGIONAL DIRECTOR: Dr. R.M. Mkandawire.
I. Introduction

Out of a growing concern for the deteriorating state of the environment in Africa, the Commonwealth Youth Programme Africa Centre, in association with the Pan-Commonwealth Office in London Organised a five day workshop on Youth Initiative on Environment and Development at the Kwacha International Conference Centre, Blantyre, Malawi from 17-21 July, 1995.

About 37 young people from 16 Commonwealth countries in the Africa Region joined hands to map out a comprehensive blue print for action.

Cardinal amongst the resolutions and future action plans was the young people's desire to be incorporated in the initiation of Afforestation and agroforestry projects in order to help mitigate the negative effects associated with the depletion and exploitation of natural resources. In addition, it was felt that there should be an in-built component of income-generation, however small, in these projects.

The Africa Region is faced with serious environmental threats which are increasingly being manifested in the scarcity of the available natural resources. If this trend is not controlled, it will have devastating effects on the ecological parameters and consequently pose a danger to the food security, agricultural and other allied resources for the population of the region.
II. A Rationale for Youth Involvement in Afforestation and Agroforestry Projects

Environmental degradation in the African region is affecting countries with already fragile economies; it is also hurting food production among some of the poorest countries in the region. It is aggravating malnutrition among millions of young people in the region. It is hurting the poorest of the poor. The problems of environmental degradation have over the past decade been compounded by a continued decline in the performance of African economies.

Since the beginning of the 1980s Sub-Saharan African countries have witnessed a continued deterioration of their national economies. This has arisen as a consequence of both external events beyond the nations’ control as well as from ill-thought policy decisions of member governments. The past decade has seen escalating external debt, falling prices for primary raw commodities, and adjustment policies that have exerted a toll on the poor. For many countries in the region, economic development has either stagnated, declined or slowed down. Average incomes in Sub-Saharan African countries has fallen in the order of 20 percent during the 1980s. In many urban areas, real minimum wages have declined by as much as 50 percent. In several countries in the region the health delivery system is almost in a state of total disfunction. Not only are drugs not available but health structures are disintegrating and child immunization programmes are in disarray. The decline in infant mortality rates has stopped and has been reversed, and the incidence of malnutrition has increased.

Young people and other vulnerable social groups such as children have borne the brunt of this crisis. The services that are most required by young people are the ones that have been curtailed most by governments. Thus prestigious development projects, and military expenditures continue unabated. Yet services such as clinics, free education, food and fuel subsidies, services which the poor and most young people are most dependent upon have been curtailed.

The field of environment as a sector has also not received the attention it deserves among most member governments. Most governments in Africa are hardly paying attention to the management of their environment and natural resources. Yet there is increasing evidence that African nations are faced with a serious environmental threat. The danger is emanating from a combination of the degradation of local ecosystems and that of the global commons. This has affected food production on the continent resulting in serious food security among nations.
Drought, in particular, has been a recurring problem in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. Increased population pressure and inappropriate resource utilisation practices have also accelerated environmental degradation. It has been estimated that over the last 50 years or so, 65 million hectares of productive land in Sub-Saharan Africa alone have turned into desert.

In many countries environmental degradation has also been directly fuelled by inappropriate government policies. In the colonial period, for instance, it was a crime to cultivate on hillsides; soon after independence however, it was no longer a crime to do so. Many governments found themselves impotent to impose sanctions on their people for cultivating in fragile lands; in any case, many of the ruling elites had themselves claimed large tracts of land in the name of development from either the departing European sub-sector or from the small holder sub-sector. Many small farmers therefore, had no choice but to resort to cultivating in fragile lands such as hillside, and areas, swampy areas etc.
III. Young People's Responses to the Environment

The Commonwealth Youth Programme believes young people can play, and ought to play, an increasingly central role in the care and protection of their environment. Many governments and NGO's are barely utilizing the innate energy and potential of young people to participate in the management of their environment and natural resources, despite the fact that many young people in Africa are increasingly becoming aware and concerned about the state of the environment in which they live.

In Commonwealth countries there are many examples of grass-roots environmental programmes for the youth, such as forestry projects launched by school-going youth in Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. These and other programmes in other countries in Africa have seen the planting of millions of trees with high survival rates. Youth have planted them for fuelwood, for fruit, fodder and timber for building.

The Commonwealth Youth Programme in collaboration with a number of Youth NGOs in Africa seeks to establish a network of young environmentalists that are committed to establishing afforestation and agro-forestry projects in their countries. There is need for afforestation and agro-forestry projects in the barren hills of Kenya, Tanzania, and Malawi, in the disappearing rain forests of Ghana and Nigeria, in the avenues of Lusaka, Lagos, Nairobi and Kampala, in the sprawling deserts of Sahara and Kalahari. Young people from commonwealth countries in Africa can play and ought to play a leading role in afforestation projects given the right technical and financial support. The Commonwealth Youth Programme is consequently seeking technical and financial support for this initiative.
IV. Background to the Proposal

During the Malawi Workshop, central to young peoples views was the general recognition and recommendation on the need for their involvement in national tree planting and environmental rehabilitation activities and exercises. There was general agreement among workshop participants that youth participation in tree planting will offer in the long term, a community based approach to increasing plant resources and provide a leeway to reducing pressure on the ecological balance of the natural resource base. Besides helping to create Greener Communities, the project will stimulate local awareness, generate resources and contribute to the growth of community-based sustainable development.

Flora and Fauna Extension and Management, (FAFEM)) as a youth initiative was consequently proposed, as a project that would stimulate community-wide action in enhancing and protecting environmental conservation in selected African countries.

Participating youth groups and Non-Governmental Organisations, it was proposed, would set their own goals and choose their own methods of achieving them. It is envisaged that FAFEM will be self sustaining after the initial donor support. This will arise mainly because the project is also perceived as a micro income-generating enterprise. Participating youth will be able to sell the fuelwood, fruits, vegetables or flowers to their communities once the trees and other crops mature. In addition members of the local community in each country will be encouraged to participate in the implementation of the project; initially local leaders will be consulted to make available land for the project, and subsequently parents and other members of the local communities will be invited to participate in such tasks as land clearing and the actual planting of the trees. However, the entire management of the woodlots will be left in the hands of the participating youth.

The involvement of young people in tree planting and related agro-forestry activities is part and parcel of CYPACs contribution in responding to some of the key issues that were raised at the UNCED EARTH Summit as reflected in Agenda 21.

The need for youth participation in environmental conservation has also been expressed at a number of Regional Fora within Africa. In 1993 the Commonwealth Africa Regional Advisory Board Meeting in Windhock, Namibia, expressed deep concern for the persistent chronic food shortages and environmental degradation facing most member countries in Africa. The meeting recommended that ministries responsible for youth affairs in Africa should endeavour to initiate the development and integration of agricultural related projects that could be linked to nature conservation and environmental protection such as Afforestation and Agro Forestry, where young people would be key participants. The meeting also recommended the formation of Youth Environmental Networks at both the national and regional levels. This project therefore, has the overwhelming support of national governments in the Africa region.
Target Group and Participating Countries

The primary clientele for the project will be young people, between the ages of 15-29. For each country, these will be identified through government ministries and/or their line departments responsible for youth affairs.

Other organisations to be associated with the project are those with specific links to youth programmes and development.

Already youth NGOs such as the Integrated Environment Development Foundation of Zambia, the Wild Life Conservation Society of Malawi, the Earth Watch in Botswana and the International Youth Development and Environment Network of Kenya, have committed themselves as partners in the initial phase of this project. These NGOs plus others that will be identified will mobilise young people in or out of school and other youth living in identifiable communities (e.g., village, township, or compound) and provide them with the necessary training in tree planting agroforestry management.

The FAFEM project will be implemented in three main phases. Phase one will involve the following seven countries where contacts have already been established with relevant youth organisations.

Phase I Countries

Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya and Namibia.

Phase II Countries

The second phase will involve the following additional six countries where contacts are being developed.

Uganda, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho.

The Final Phase will draw from the experiences of the two first phases and will focus on the following six countries.


At the end of the project it is anticipated that a total of 19 youth afforestation and agroforestry projects will have been developed at national levels in 19 Commonwealth countries in Africa.
Coordination of The Project

The FAFEM project will be coordinated through the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYPAC) Africa Centre. CYPAC shall take responsibility of channelling financial resources and technical support to all participating youth groups. A young environmentalist identified at the Malawi workshop, as the Regional Coordinator will work closely with CYPAC staff in the implementation of the FAFEM Project. CYPAC shall also work closely with ministries responsible for youth affairs in monitoring and evaluation of the unfolding experiences of the projects. Within the project there will be in-built community awareness/extension component. Government Agricultural and forestry staff will be consulted to provide technical expertise in the course of implementation of the project.
ANNEX II

PRIORITY IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT:
THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

PAPER PRESENTED TO THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH
PROGRAMME AFRICA CENTRE, YOUTH WORK AND
DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMA COURSE

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UNECA-MRAG

Lusaka, Zambia
15 March 1996
PRIORITIES IN AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT: THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

The late 1950’s and the 1960’s were the independence decades for most African countries and extending into the 1970’s, Africa enjoyed the unparalleled euphoria and optimism of liberation and hitherto unprecedented outburst of economic growth and expansion. But from the 1980’s and the first half of the 1990’s, the region has experienced recurrent crises which have combined with several other internal and external factors to impede overall economic and social development. Some of these factors have stemmed from many causes, but principally from political instability and ethnic strife; lack of resolute political will and commitment towards long-term and sustainable development; a poorly managed natural resource base; poor economic performance due to unfavourable terms of trade and ineffective policies; effects and impacts of SAPS, and heavy external debt burdens. In most sectors of development, Africa has stagnated especially in the critical areas that determine and enhance the advancement of African households communities and societies at large. This stagnation has affected the women probably more than any other group. Overall, the status of African women has deteriorated especially with regard to higher and technical education, health, employment, poverty levels, remuneration for their agricultural labour, income levels, decision making and economic empowerment.

Structural imbalances in society and inequalities between women and men lead to the subordination and marginalization of women. Constitutional and legal rights and international conventions and other instruments for gender parity are meaningless, unless they are accompanied by the active participation of women in key decision-making levels, in the efforts to bring about a world order free of gross inequities. Closing the gender gap through access to the means and benefits of production requires the evolution and development of a truly democratic culture and this process poses a major challenge to African countries.

Equitable development should be one of the objectives of long-term sustainability, which broadly defined is the satisfaction of needs and the attainment of sustained and overall well-being of all peoples. Lopsided distribution of the means and benefits of growth fosters resentments and conflicts. To a large extent, the conflicts and civil strife being witnessed in certain parts of Africa today are the result of inequities and real or perceived marginalization of large segments of the population in their pursuit of the means and benefits of development. Inequalities breed conflict and disrupt development in a much as a peaceful and stable environment promotes development and equitable distribution of the benefits of growth and guarantees peace and sustainable development. Equality, development and peace are therefore inextricably intertwined and mutually reinforcing.
During the last two decades, people's consciousness about women's issues, problems and inequalities has been slowly but inexorably raised. Emphasis has been on the vast contribution that women can make, the contributions they have made to society and development, and the necessity of ensuring that women also benefit from the development process. Regional and national plans of action have come up with compelling evidence underscoring how critical the advancement of African Women is. It is the centre-piece of overall social and economic development, as well as sustained livelihoods in the continent.

"...The problems faced by women everywhere lie at the heart of the global agenda. Until the rights and full potential of women are achieved, enduring solutions to the world's most serious social, economic and political problems cannot be achieved. In many cases, efforts to improve the lives to women offer the most immediate means of changing entire societies for the better".

(Boutros-Boutros Ghali, United Nations Secretary General, at the World Social Summit, Copenhagen, March 1995.)

The International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, adopted by the General Assembly in 1990, identifies important directions in the current views on how to bring about equity in global development initiatives, chief among them being:

- equality between women and men as both a goal and a means of development;
- significant improvement in the human condition in the developing countries and a reduction in the gap between poor and rich countries;
- enhancement of the participation of all men, women and youth in economic and political life, protection of cultural identities and assuring to all the necessary means of survival.

A major goal of the strategy is "a development process that is responsive to social needs, seeks a significant reduction in extreme poverty, promotes the development and utilization of human resources and skills, and is environmentally sound and sustainable". The Strategy implicitly embodies the idea that while accelerating economic growth is a major objective, economic growth by itself does not ensure that its benefits will be equitably distributed or that the physical environment will be protected and improved. Consequently, the alleviation of poverty, the development of the human resource and the protection and management of the environment should be priority aspects of development in all countries developed, developing or newly industrialised.
2. BACKGROUND TO THE CURRENT SITUATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN

African women in their multiple roles as home managers, economic producers, caretakers and community mobilisers are, and should be, beneficiaries, agents and promoters of socio-economic development. However, attainment of their full potential is impeded by the prevailing socio-economic and political environment within the continent as well as by some cultural factors. Despite phenomenal social and economic progress by African Governments between the 1960s and 1970s, the 1980s were characterized by economic and political decline and crises, and these severely restricted national capacities to sustain the erstwhile forward momentum of social and economic change. It is now an acknowledged fact, that women and girls who constitute 51 percent of the African population, and who are a crucial multifaceted resource, have borne the brunt of these setbacks and their repercussions. They are only marginally integrated in the development process and are often constrained by socio-cultural practices.

In Sub-Saharan Africa for instance, women ensure 90 percent of household food sufficiency and security and account for 80 percent of stock-raising. Yet they receive ever-diminishing returns on income, health, nutrition, education, etc., culminating in a low political and social status. In addition, they are the most vulnerable to the impacts of armed conflict and other forms of social instability.

The myth of "women's work" is another critical aspect of the socio-economic status of African Women. Development planners and policy makers in Africa frequently neglect or undervalue the importance of women's work (domestic, food production, environmental management responsibilities and roles), particularly in the rural subsistence sector. This has marginalised women by negating their productivity and control over resources and by shutting them out of development processes while at the same time increasing their workload. In Africa the traditional division of agricultural labour disproportionately assigns women specific and laborious tasks yet all this labour is statistically invisible to policy makers and planners, and is only marginally reflected in labour and income statistics since these discount work performed outside the 'market system'. This exclusion of subsistence food production renders invisible the bulk of women's work.

Another key factor has been the replacement of subsistence farming with cash crops thus changing the traditional systems of labour and social organization. This "modernisation" process has also partly disrupted the complementarity of the roles of the two sexes and the sharing of responsibilities. Women have taken over tasks traditionally outside their domain while men have not done likewise, or have been unwilling to do "Women's Work".
Implementation and introduction of certain activities and policy measures could remove some of the major obstacles that impede the advancement of women, among them access to education, fair labour remuneration, social protection and a fair share of the national cake. By their labour, women keep their families from misery, contribute to GDP formation and are therefore entitled to recognition for their economic and income generating activities.

The 1994 UN World Survey of the Role of Women in Development reports that when examining poverty, women are not victims of their circumstances, and more often than not it is women who cope with poverty. Moreover, if women are given access to resources, they increasingly provide the way out of poverty for their families. This observation probably holds even more true for African women.

We have therefore to examine with the use of "gender lens", the role played by African women in development and to juxtapose it to the role played by men, within the context of development theory, policy and practice.

The year 1975 was the mid-point of the Second United Nations Development Decade and a review was undertaken to appraise and evaluate results achieved and to examine the extent to which women had been "integrated in the total development". Out of that appraisal and evaluation, a decision was taken to declare 1975 as International Women's Year, and the UN urged that the year be devoted to the intensification of action to promote equality between men and women, to ensure the full integration of women in the total development effort, and to recognize "the importance of women's increasing contribution to the development of friendly relations and cooperation among States and to the strengthening of world peace".

All member States were urged to take steps to ensure "the full realization of the rights of women and their advancement on the basis of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women".

A new era for women can therefore be said to have began actively and globally in 1975, when the first world conference on women was held in Mexico City. Almost ten years before in November 1967, the UN had unanimously adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In Mexico, 1976 to 1985 was declared as the Decade for Women. The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted in 1979; the Second World Conference on Women was held in Copenhagen Denmark in 1980, and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS) were adopted in 1985, at the Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi, Kenya.
Some important elements of the preamble to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women are worth highlighting namely:

- Discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and with the welfare of the family and of society; it prevents their participation, on equal terms with the men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity.

- Women have made and continue to make great contribution to social, political, economic and cultural life and they play crucial roles in the family particularly in the rearing of children.

- The full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the inclusion and active participation of women.
3. THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE

The first World Conference on Women in 1975 laid the initial global milestone in large-scale mobilization of the world Community for actions towards the advancement of women, within the framework of the World Plan of Action. Subsequent global and regional conferences have periodically reviewed and appraised the condition and situation of women, and their prospects for attaining equality, development and peace. In 1994, the UN's Economic and Social Council emphasized that the advancement of women should be an integral part of the economic and social development process within the main global issues such as women's participation in: the peace process, national and international governance, sustainable development and gender equality.

A retrospective bird's-eye-view of the nature, evolution and development of women's issues and programmes reveals three important shifts in the conceptual and operational framework. Between the 1940s and 1950s, early programmes on women focused on women's rights. In the late 1960s, a shift occurred and emphasis was on women's roles in development and there was a proliferation of women in development (WID) activities and writings. In the 1980s, and 1990s, a further, and probably more marked shift has occurred: In an attempt to look at women not as separate entities, thereby isolating them from the mainstream of society, the current approach is to look at women through 'gender lens' and to focus on the socially constructed roles and relations between men and women. The core of the gender approach is to examine the status of women in relation to men. The analysis views both the practical and survival needs of women and men in terms of the socially constructed and assigned roles they play in society, and the strategic gender needs which emerge as a result of women's subordination to men.

The gender approach is predicated on the tacit acknowledgement that development, and many other issues related to spiritual, social and political well-being, would be handled and proceed better if women were part and parcel of the endeavour.

The conceptual shift from the women in development (WID) to the gender and development (GAD) focus is somewhat complex, but the extent to which women have been consumers, or rather victims of bad decisions affecting their lives can be clearly demonstrated. Half of the world's intelligence and experience is held by women. But because of gender differentiation and discrimination in the past, and in many places still on-going, women's experience and knowledge are regarded as being inferior or at best functionally different from that of men. In a world of finite resources, we cannot afford to squander, cast aside or suppress half the world's human resources.
In Africa in particular, gender gaps are prevalent in most sections of society. They stem from the subordinate position of African women, despite their crucial roles in reproduction and family care, food production, environmental and natural resource management and overall household support and maintenance. Achieving sustainable economic growth and development in Africa depends heavily on promoting the welfare and productivity of women.

The gender perspective is an important denominator in any analysis of the linkages between women, men and sustainable development. A gender perspective looks at how and why women and men interact differently with the different socio-cultural, political, economic and physical environments, and how their experiences of this interaction also differ. A gender perspective might therefore change the way the concept of development is understood and articulated.

It has therefore become increasingly acceptable to formulate women’s issues, problems and concerns in terms of gender. This approach shifts the emphasis from women as a homogeneous or problematic group to an emphasis on relations between the sexes. Gender relations are the social, economic and political expressions between men and women that determine gender identity and roles. They are therefore social constructs in any given society. These relations determine women’s access to resources and their work opportunities. They set the limits of what a woman may or may not undertake at the work place, in the family and household, or in public life. Similarly, they delineate male behaviour, responsibilities and entitlements thereby affecting social, economic and political functioning at all levels. Relationships between spouses, children and parents, managers and employees and among community members are all influenced by the dominant model of gender relations. In turn, gender relations are influenced by class, ethnicity, power and economic relations between countries, religious, political and other factors. Gender relations therefore function like a “silent code” that regulates how men and women should behave towards each other and in their respective societies, households and communities. The relations are not static, but evolve in response to economic opportunities and obstacles, or become fashioned in their traditional form to fit a chosen strategy.

The complexity of gender relations must be taken account of when analysing trends and policies for socio-economic and political development. The gender analysis seeks to define a rational, organized distinction between men and women in their productive and reproductive roles. This approach is applicable to women and men, irrespective of their age group - to young and old alike.
However, if long-term change in the conditions of African women is to be achieved, the actions and attitudes of men must change, and it is important that men be brought along in the process of change. The gender approach is about equalizing men's opportunity and access to resources. It is a holistic view which seeks to change and enhance the status and position of women in society vis-a-vis the men. Changing women's status implies changing gender relations and roles in which women play a subordinate role relative to men. Gender responsive development therefore implies development styles and practices which systematically take into account the roles, the needs, and the impacts on women and men, and on the girl and the boy-child.

The gender concept can be used as a basis for planning with a view to bringing about a more equitable system for undertaking development and for formulating policy, programmes and projects.
4. CRITICAL GAPS IN THE SITUATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN

Women play a dominant role in agriculture and the informal sector in Africa, but women participating in these sectors have little or no basic education and their earned income is much lower than that of their counterparts in other sectors. Feminization of poverty is therefore widespread in the region.

4.1 Women’s Education

Educating females could yield a higher rate of return than any other investment in African countries.

It is now an accepted fact that education has strong and sustained impact on female productivity, especially in agricultural productivity, in family and community health, and in women’s participation in decision-making, politics and leadership. In Kenya for instance, it has been estimated that if all women received just one year of primary schooling, women’s socio-economic outputs would increase by 24 percent. Similarly, the social benefits of educating African women far outweigh the costs, e.g.

- improved birth and mortality indicators;
- lower fertility rates;
- healthier babies and lower infant mortality;
- better prospects for employment and higher wages;
- enhanced well-being of future generations - children are better educated when their mothers have acquired some level of education.

These benefits must be seen against the prevailing reality and figures of women’s education which is:

- Women’s education in many African countries is concentrated at the lowest level. Only about 23 percent of female primary school graduates enter secondary institutions, and less than 3 percent of those who leave secondary school continue to tertiary levels of education.

- The adult female literacy rate in Africa is less than 50 percent and is the lowest in the world. In 1990, Sub-Saharan Africa had a male literacy rate of 61 percent while that of females was only 39 percent. Thus more than half the women in Sub-Saharan Africa, over 25 years of age, are illiterate.
4.2 Women’s Health

African women experience a greater incidence of morbidity than African men. Due to the numerous and heavy burdens, women are more vulnerable to physical weakness and infections than the men.

Women are the health care agents of the family and community. Increasing and improving the health status of women has many positive spin-offs and advantages. Their own health improves and they can live longer and productive lives. The health status of the whole family improves and this triggers off numerous other positive linkages related to nutrition, sanitary conditions, reduction of maternal and infant mortality, etc. Studies have indicated that a combination of improved women’s health with higher education levels does accelerate economic development. Healthy women workers are more productive, they enjoy greater opportunities to obtain better paying jobs and higher remuneration activities. Good health also increases the attendance of children in school and makes them better able to learn. It frees resources that could otherwise have been spent on treating illness for alternative uses. Investments in women’s health improvement can raise the productivity of other inputs.

4.3 Women’s Poverty

There is now wide acceptance that for Africa, reduction of poverty should be the overarching goal of development. Poverty in the region is manifested in a myriad ways - lack of incomes; inadequate food and nutrition; marginalisation and exclusion from social and political life, low levels of education, low life expectancy; high maternal and infant mortality; etc.

More than one-third of the African people live in absolute poverty and cannot meet their most basic needs. The heavy burden of poverty falls disproportionately on women as they have principal responsibility in fending for their families and in providing back-stopping requirements to preempt sinking into abject poverty, particularly in relation to food availability. Women in Africa, as the main providers and traditional managers of food at the family and household level must be empowered to play a key role in the equitable distribution and redistribution of scarce resources. Strengthening women’s potential for the management of food resources can guarantee that women’s priorities and the well-being of their families are assured. Increased food security at household level would contribute to the aim of national and regional food security.

Ultimately, however, interventions for poverty reduction must be tied up to development agents and institutions, e.g., government, private sector, NGOs, IGOs etc. Poverty is not created by the poor, nor is it sustained by them. The roots of poverty lie in institutions, concepts, theoretical frameworks and inappropriate and inequitable activities for development.
4.4 Women, Environment and Natural Resources

The majority of the African population are wholly dependent on primary resources derived directly from the environment: water, fuel, subsistence and cash crops, livestock, medicinal plants and so on. Relationships between communities and their environment and natural resource base are therefore direct. People’s activities for livelihoods and sustenance also impact directly on the natural ecosystems.

In nearly all African countries, women are at the forefront of these environment/resource/people linkages and interfaces. They link households to the environment; they obtain raw materials from the environment and convert them into domestic resources and usable products. Throughout history therefore, women have operated as integrators, connectors, converters and managers of limited resources.

The environment in Africa is the single most important reservoir of all the people’s needs for survival. Women provide the link between the fulfilment of these needs and their source. The knowledge that women have of the environment and the techniques of utilization and management that they have acquired over time are of great value to African communities, be they rural or urban. Women are at the beginning of the food production chain that sustains rural and urban populations.

It is therefore of utmost importance to involve women in decisions on environmental and natural resource management and in the implementation of sustainable development activities.

4.5 Women, Conflicts and Peace

Ethnic and civil strives impact most negatively and disproportionately on women and children in Africa through violence, involuntary displacement and creation of refugees. Out of an estimated global refugee population of about 20 million, nearly 35% is in Africa, with women and children constituting about 80% of this population. Most of them are found in countries facing major economic and political problems. Displaced people in Africa number about 16 million viz: 1 million in Ethiopia; 3.5 million in Angola; 2 million in Mozambique; 2 million in Somalia; half a million in Uganda; 4.2 million in South Africa; 2 million in Rwanda; and under 1 million in Sierra Leone.

The indirect tolls of these displacements are far heavier on women and children than on men. They disrupt basic social and health services, infrastructure and communication; and they divert scarce human, financial, scientific and technological resources to the machineries of war and destruction. Traditional family structures and extended family and community support systems break down or become disrupted resulting in all kinds of psycho-social stress. Female headed households increase, as do abandoned and orphaned children.
Women are obvious victims and targets of war, ethnic and civil strife and they should be included in processes and decisions for conflict resolution and management.

The Girl Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines the "Child" as every human being below the age of 18. Children's rights are granted to such persons in terms of their civil, political, social, economic and cultural lives.

Girl children in Africa suffer relatively greater deprivation and neglect than their boy-children counterparts. The girl-child is forced to perform as an adult long before she is physically or biologically ready-performing household chores, playing "mother" while she herself is still a child and in need of mothering; Gross School enrolment ratios for the girl child are still very low at 18%, while the drop-out rate is 47.8% (1992).

Girls also suffer greatly from being subjected to harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriages.

A fundamental challenge facing the African continent is how to mobilize and enhance its total human resource. The girl child is the women of tomorrow and investing in her is a prime priority.

5. CONCLUSION

The improvement of women's lives in relation to the critical areas outlined above is further tied up with women's invisibility in political leadership, in decision-making and in economic empowerment. The well-being of women is inextricably tied up with the well-being of entire families and communities. Thus, ultimately, the focus is not wholly or exclusively on women but on gender. Gender is a cross-cutting issue in all African endeavour for improved lifestyles and livelihoods. Focusing on gender is therefore not merely a matter of justice but more so a matter of choosing more effective development strategies. The wider recognition of women and girls as assets helps to create more sustainable development and provides an imperative for gender-based development.

6. ISSUES RAISED DURING THE DISCUSSION ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE COMMONWEALTH YOUTH PROGRAMME, AFRICA CENTRE

- The jump from WID to GAD was too big too soon. In some rural areas, where women are struggling very hard to overcome poverty, perhaps the WID approach is still applicable. Women still need to be upgraded to certain minimum levels before focusing on the all inclusive gender concept.
• Concepts for the analysis of social change and for development planning must be derived and developed locally. African countries should not be too quick in adopting some of these frameworks because they cannot be easily applicable to the African situation with regard to women. A lot of these concepts are imported from elsewhere and Africans must question and analyze them first before adopting and applying them wholesale.

• Development cannot be analyzed through the use of only one or a few conceptual frameworks. Social change and social advancement are multifaceted and multi-sectoral and several concepts must be used in an attempt to understand the dynamics at work. However, these concepts are not mutually exclusive. Some apply to certain situations, sectors or social groups, others apply to yet another set of factors. It is a question of deciding, as objectively as possible, which concepts to apply to who, when, where and how.

• The advancement of women, especially their empowerment through education is the single most important investment in the development of African societies. The discussion or application of concepts such as WID, WAD or GAD is irrelevant until and unless the lives of African women and girls are improved through eradication of illiteracy, provision of education, enhancement of health and nutrition, etc. It is a futile exercise to attempt to use gender analysis and the gender perspective before a commitment is made and concrete actions are taken, and financial/technical allocations earmarked, to change the lives of women and girls at certain critical levels. Gender and development cannot interact in a vacuum.

• African countries are not all at the same level in their understanding or analysis of WID or GAD. Advocates of GAD should be aware of this. Country-specific strategies should therefore be developed that take account of this distinction.

• In some other African countries, it is not the women who suffer more or are marginalised; it is the men, particularly the young men and boys. This applies particularly to those countries that have been experiencing internal wars and ethnic violence. In these situations, there ought to be more emphasis and focus on the plight of the men-folk. Women seem relatively well-off in the on-going crises and more attention should be directed to the men, especially the boy-child and the boy soldiers.

• Social conditioning, cultural traditions, practices and attitudes, and religious beliefs can be powerful forces and factors against the use and application of the gender concept in social change and development planning. The advocates of gender should be aware of these forces and how they operate in different countries.
• In some African countries, structural adjustment programmes (SAPS) have had a very negative impact on the lives of women. Alleviation of poverty and realistic economic policies should be a priority in terms of choosing the most appropriate interventions targeted at women. SAPs should incorporate a strong gender component that would accommodate the interests of women.

• The African youth have a very important role to play in the development of their countries. They comprise about 60 percent of the total population in the continent (the 15 to 24 age bracket) and investments targeted at them and their subsequent mobilization would catalyze development and bring about a definite positive change in the lives of families and communities. A conceptual shift within GAD that incorporates Youth and Development (YAD) should be contemplated. For the long-term, sensitization of the youth on gender and development issues would yield greater dividends in terms of more equitable and sustainable development.
ANNEX III

CYPAC PARTICIPATION AT THE PRESENTATION ON:
"PRIORITIES IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT:
THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE"

Addis Ababa
April, 1996
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<td>1. Abo, Ahabor Peters</td>
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<td>11. Humphrey, Bernadette (Ms)</td>
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<td>13. Jiyan, Ellen (Ms)</td>
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<td>14. Julie, Marie Alice (Ms)</td>
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