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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**African Centre for Women**

*Meeting of the Committee on Women and  
Development*

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso  
2-5 April 1999

**REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF EXPERTS  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT**

## INTRODUCTION

1. The first meeting of Experts of the Committee on Women and Development was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 2 and 3 April 1999 at the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaore, President of Burkina Faso and current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It was organised by the African Centre for Women (ACW) in co-operation with the Government of Burkina Faso.

### Attendance and organization of work

2. Present at the meeting were eight countries members of the Committee: Algeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia, representatives of non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations as well as four resources persons (see attached for the comprehensive list of participants).

3. Also present were representatives of the host country Burkina Faso, OAU, the African Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

## ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

### Opening ceremony

4. The opening ceremony was presided over by Honourable Alice Tiendrebeogo, Minister in charge of women's advancement and was graced by the presence of Honourable Bernadette Sanou, Minister of Regional Integration of Burkina Faso; Honourable Aissatou Yaou, Minister of Women's Affairs of the Republic of Comeroon; Honourable Anne Marie Ngouyomba, Minister of Social and Family Affairs of the Central African Republic.

5. Three statements were made at the opening ceremony.

6. Ms. Bouthaina Gibraa, representative of the Minister-Counsellor in the office of the Prime Minister responsible for women and family affairs in Tunisia, thanked the host government and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for their efforts to integrate women in development.

7. She stressed that the current meeting of the Committee, was taking place after the review of its composition and mandate. Drawing on the lessons of the democratisation, the Committee now comprised civil society representatives and officials of subregional and regional organisations as well as women-in-development experts.

8. The meeting would be focusing on the institutional, legal, human and financial ways and means of speeding up the implementation of the regional and global platforms, mobilising financial resources and preparing the Sixth Africa Regional Conference of Women.

9. She wished the meeting every success, graced as it was by the presence of eminent persons and experts known for their active commitment to the cause of women's advancement.

10. On behalf of Mr. K.Y. Amoako, the Executive Secretary of ECA Ms. Joséphine Ouédraogo, Director of ACW welcomed participants and thanked the Burkina authorities for their hospitality and co-operation.

11. She recalled that the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) had been set up at the instance of the first Africa Regional Conference on Women specifically to assist and to advise ECA on the integration of women in development, to ensure the implementation of policy recommendations, to mobilise the resources required for the purpose, to follow up and evaluate subregional activities and to organise the Africa Regional Conference on Women.

12. Under ECA's new strategic directions, the name ARCC had been changed to Committee on Women and Development with an extended mandate. ACW served as the secretariat of the Committee and facilitated the implementation of its resolutions.

13. In spite of the capabilities available, the statistical data on the basis of which national priorities were set did not sufficiently take into account the objectives of the Beijing Platform. Those objectives were still being relegated to the back burner and national development programmes did not genuinely reflect the economic role of women.

14. For that reason, the Committee would have to influence the forthcoming Conference of African ministers of economic planning and development finance to shift more official development assistance and public resources into those sectors where the female work force was predominant. That would give direction to the strategies that affect the situation of women and, for that reason, benefit the most disadvantaged in society.

15. In conclusion the Director of ACW wished participants a fruitful exchange of views that would benefit the development of Africa.

16. Ms. Alice Tindrebeogo, Minister responsible for the advancement of women in Burkina Faso welcomed the participants to a pleasant stay in Ouagadougou and commended the Director of ACW for the appreciable work she was doing in the field to assist ministerial departments in charge of women's affairs and women's organisations to attain their set objectives.

17. After describing the objectives of the Committee, she underscored what was expected of the meeting. She recalled that the Committee on Women and Development had a specific role to consider progress achieved in the implementation of regional and global action plans.

18. In her view, if progress for women should result from their relentless struggle, it would neither be sustained nor sustainable without the support of governments convinced of the important challenge of improving the living and working conditions of women so as to benefit society as a whole.

19. She then declared open the First Meeting of Experts of the Committee on Women and Development and wished participants every success.

#### Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

20. The following agenda was adopted without amendment together with the programme of work attached as Annex II

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Presentation of the Programme of work and election of officers
3. Presentation of the members of the Committee
4. Presentation of the mission of the Committee on Women and Development within the

framework of the new strategic direction of the Economic Commission for Africa

5. Consideration of the Report on activities of the African Centre for Women and the Subregional Development Centres for the period April 1997 – March 1999 and the work-programme for the biennium 2000-2001
6. Review of the report on the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Commission on the status of women with special emphasis on African participation and the conclusions of the discussions on the Additional Protocol on CEDAW
7. Contribution of the Committee to the theme of the Conference of African Ministers of finance, planning and social and economic development to be held on 12-14 April 1999, 'Challenges of Financing Development in Africa'
8. Consideration of progress in the preparation of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women
9. Review of Modalities for renewal of membership of the Committee on Women and Development
10. Consideration of the following:
  - Report on the Campaign on violence against women
  - Report on Activities of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development
  - Report on the preparation of the "Women's Walk in the year 2000"
11. Review of issues to bring to the attention of the President of Burkina Faso, Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity
12. Any other business
13. Consideration and adoption of the report of the experts meeting

**Presentation of the members of the Committee (agenda item 3)**

21. Ms. Joséphine Ouédraogo introduced the members of the Committee who came from the following five categories:

- Government representatives
- Civil society organisations
- Specialised organisation and institutions
- Subregional and Regional IGOs
- Resource persons

22. The composition of the Committee is attached as Annex III

**Presentation of the mission of the Committee on Women and Development within the framework of the new strategic direction of the Economic Commission for Africa (agenda item 4)**

23. The Director of ACW described the context within which the Committee had been established in 1979.

24. The Committee, which brought together all member governments, was composed of women and men dealing with gender issues. She stressed that the Committee was a subsidiary organ of ECA and played the role of advising the policy organs and directing the thrust of development strategies in favour of women.

25. Following the review of the intergovernmental machinery of the Commission in 1997, the EC Conference of Ministers had decided to revitalise the Committee and changed its name from ARCC to the Committee on Women and Development.

26. She then described the terms of reference of the Committee within the context of ECA's new strategic directions as being:

- To undertake periodic reviews of progress in the implementation of regional and global plans of action;
- To harmonize and co-ordinate the subregional programmes on the integration of women and development;
- To mobilize the resources needed to implement programme activities at the subregional level;
- To facilitate the sharing of information and experiences relating to the advancement of women among the various member States.

**Consideration of the Report on activities of the African Centre for Women and the Subregional Development Centres for the period April 1997 – March 1998 and the work-programme for the biennium 2000-2001 (agenda item 5)**

27. The Committee examined document E/ECA/ACW/CWD.I/199/5 on the activities of the African Centre for Women April 1997 to April 1999. It was introduced by Ms Hannah Tiagha of ECA/ACW. In her presentation, she highlighted the context in which activities were implemented. She explained that the biennium under review was a transition period in several ways. ACW had to re-orient its activities in conformity with ECA's new strategic directions to be more focused to maximise impact and to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders. ECA had also decided to take gender as crosscutting issues that had to be reflected in all its programmes. ACW was to ensure this to play this role ACW needed to be strengthened and properly equipped.

28. Accordingly, ACW was placed directly in the Cabinet of the Executive Secretary and its head raised to the level of D 1, at par with other Divisions. A new Director was thus appointed to this position. Simultaneously, the ACW Programme of activities became a sub-programme similar to other Divisions, which also required that its budget is allocated separately. To culminate these changes, ACW was finally elevated to a level of a full Division with 12 professional posts, most of which are yet to be filled.

29. The changes also coincided with the evolution of the Africa Regional Committee (ARCC) to the Committee on Women and Development. One of the many changes that resulted in this evolution was that instead of meeting every year, CWD was to meet biennially.

30. The activities under review therefore cover two rather than one year, and reflect the transition while at the same time they reflect activities planned in the Medium Term Plan 1996-1999.

31. The activities implemented during this period are organized in five different categories as explained below:

## Meetings

32. Several meetings were organised as follows:

- An expert group meeting on gender networking aimed at discussing concrete strategies for networking and to explore ACW's role in the process :
- Four subregional follow-up meetings were organised in Dakar Senegal for West Africa, Bangui for Central Africa, in Rabat Morocco for Northern Africa and in Seychelles for Eastern and Southern Africa. The meetings focused on the state of formulation of National Action Plans as the implementation strategy : formulation of monitoring tools :
- and preparation of national reports to assess implementation of the Platforms for Action.
- A meeting of the Technical Preparatory Committee established by ACW for the preparation for the Sixth African Regional Conference had the first preparatory meeting of the Committee (January 1999):
- An international conference entitled « African Women and Economic Development: Investment for future », in which over 1,500 participants registered. The Conference, which created an opportunity for dialogue between stakeholders and policy makers about commitments, made to enhance the advancement of women through the Platforms for Action. A number of innovative actions and potential partners in all the 22 themes around which discussions were organized were recommended.

## Publications

33. Documents prepared during the period under review, included 53 **Country Brochures** on status of women, the **African Women Report: Post-conflict, Reconstruction: A Gender Perspective; The First Compendium of Good Practices; Guidelines for Mainstreaming Gender in ECA Conferences and Seminars and the Status of Ratification of CEDAW in African Countries.**

## Training

34. Training activities entailed gender-training workshops for the senior staff including gender focal points in Division and SRDCs in order to ensure that they had the requisite skills to implement the decision of making gender a cross cutting issue in all ECA programmes. A study tour was also organized for African women entrepreneurs to India and Sri Lanka to learn different ways of food processing, storage and marketing. A women leadership. Training workshop was also organized for women entrepreneurs.

## Surveys

35. The report also included two different surveys undertaken by the Centre which included the survey on the status of women's human and legal rights within family in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Senegal and Guinea) and the Survey on Women's Access to Land in two subregions: Eastern Africa (Uganda and Kenya) and West Africa (Burkina Faso, Senegal and Niger.)

## Policy initiatives

36. Activities undertaken were related to facilitating the establishment of the African Women Committee on Peace and Development as well as support to African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs.

## **Advisory services**

37. ACW provided advisory services to member States in the area of economic empowerment around such activities as: designing a micro credit programme for women entrepreneurs in Mauritius; designing National Gender Action Plan in Mauritius; formulating National Gender Policy in South Africa; mainstreaming gender into programmes of IDEP; and the National Long Term Perspective Study (NLTPS) at ICRISAT.

38. Advisory services were also provided in the area of human rights. In Guinea and Niger assistance was provided in the promotion of appropriate strategies for improving women access to and enjoyment of women's rights provided for in CEDAW. Assistance was also provided in the design of legal framework for the advancement of women.

39. In conclusion, Ms Tiagha explained that based on ACW's Strategic Plan 2000-2005, the work programme for the biennium 2000-2001 would focus on 5 main areas of priority: gender mainstreaming within ECA and in the member States; support to member States in the implementation of the Platforms for Action through careful monitoring of progress with appropriate indicators; promoting women's leadership through training of parliamentarians and leaders of NGOs; improving communication and information base through creation of reliable data bases at ACW, identifying focal points with whom to communicate regularly and providing technical assistance in collection of gender desegregated data at the level of member States.

## **Report on activities of the Subregional Development Centre (W.A)**

40. The Committee examined the document SRDC-WA/5.4.2a/2/99 a report on Work Programme for Subregional Development Centre (SRDC) West Africa (WA) 1997-1999 and the work-programme for the biennium 2000-2001. It was introduced by Ms. Dorothy Iwuji, Gender focal point of the subregion.

41. The Committee observed that in a move to strengthen the Subregional Development Centres (SRDCs), ECA created a gender desk in each of the five SRDCs. The gender focal point in each SRDC addresses gender issues at the subregional and the national levels.

42. The work programme implemented between 1997 and 1999 included the following activities:

- a) Mainstreaming gender into the **"Survey of Economic and Social and Conditions in West Africa"**.
- b) Provided inputs in mainstreaming gender in food security and for sustainability, governance, peace building, reconstruction and rehabilitation.
- c) Launching of traditional bank for rural women.
- d) Workshop on training of trainers in leadership skills for women and youth
- e) Technical assistance in monitoring the implementation of the regional and Global Platforms for Action in the subregion.
- f) Liaising with ECA/ACW.
- g) Produced and circulated questionnaire of desegregated data on mainstreaming gender in social and economic development factors in West African member States.  
Training was conducted on the method of using the questionnaire in collecting data in Liberia.
- h) Introduced guideline for producing viable multi-dimensional project for women NGOs in Cape Verde, Gambia, Liberia and Niger.

43. The lessons learnt during the period included the need to:

- a) Enhance co-operation with the main economic communities (ECOWAS, UEMOA and MRU) for better services and promote the integration of gender issues in their legislative and administrative systems;
- b) Enhance co-operation with the government organs and NGOs in the sector of gender and development;
- c) Harmonise actions between SRDC and substantive divisions of ECA.
- d) Develop more operational activities to improve standard of living for the rural and urban women.
- e) Build stronger links with the UN Systems at the national level in order to maximise the use of human and financial resources and reduce duplication of efforts.
- f) Allocate adequate budget for gender development and enhance collaboration between ACW and SRDC gender focal points.

44. In connection with the proposed work programme for 2000-2001, the following activities were planned:

- a) Reports on mainstreaming gender concerns in development policies and programmes.
- b) Ad hoc expert group meeting on guidelines for enhancing information exchange and net working in the West African Website.
- c) Study on food security and sustainable development with special reference to women and vulnerable groups in West Africa.
- d) Training of trainers on the formulation and implementation of income generating self-help projects for women.
- e) Seminars on the management of interaction between population, agriculture and environment and gender as a cross cutting issue.

## **North Africa**

45. The representative of the SRDC for North Africa presented her report, stating that since the termination of the work of the women's programme co-ordinator in 1992, the Centre's women and gender activities had been somewhat placed on hold and had resumed only in 1998 when an ECA staff member was assigned to the SRDC to follow-up on gender activities.

46. In that regard, a specialist in social issues having particular expertise in women and gender issues was being recruited by the SRDC. These constraints notwithstanding, the Centre had conducted activities, which might be summed up as follows:

### **1997:**

47. Preparation of a study on policy measures for enabling women to play a greater role in the economic and social development of North Africa.

### **1998-1999:**

- Liaising and co-ordinating with ACW for the preparation and organisation of conferences and meetings within the context of monitoring recommendations and plans of action adopted by



international conferences, more particularly the 1994 Regional Conference in Dakar, the 1995 World Conference in Beijing and the May 1998 International Conference on African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our future, held in Addis Ababa.

- Introducing the theme of gender in North Africa into the agenda of the North African Intergovernmental Committee of Experts meeting held in June 1998.
- Preparing a draft document on the launching an essay competition on women and gender. Initiated in Morocco, this pilot literary and artistic event was designed to create the proper atmosphere for genuine and effective advancement of status and rights of women in the daily social life of countries in North Africa.
- Collecting and analysing information on women and gender issues at the SRDC.
- Preparing a study on gender equity and the economic and social empowerment of women within the cultural context of North Africa.
- Organisation of an ad hoc meeting of experts on gender equity and the economic and social empowerment of women within the context of cultural norms in North Africa (October 1999).
- Conducting a pilot project on the proposed essay competition on women and gender.

48. With regard to the 2000-2001 biennial work programme, the activities planned have to do with the preparation of a series of studies and reports to be submitted to the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts. These documents would cover:

- Best practices in micro lending to women and young people (2001)
- Gender and cultural disparities in North Africa: issues and challenges
- Identification of productive approaches and strategies for reducing gender disparities
- Preparation of a technical publication on women's empowerment in North Africa
- Building of database on women and gender issues in North Africa

### **Central Africa**

49. The representative of the Central African SRDC introduced the report entitled "Contribution of the Central African Subregional Development Centre".

50. From 1997 to 1999, the Centre's gender activities had initially consisted of taking gender issues into account in the yearly survey of economic and social conditions in the subregion. Subsequently, efforts were made to integrate gender within the context of the SRDC's database.

51. The Centre helped to organize subregional meetings and to set up the Central African Women's Network (RESEFAC). One of RESEFAC's objectives coincided with the set goal of the Centre, namely to contribute to subregional integration. Both the establishment and operationalisation of the network were major concerns of the Centre, which had taken some measures accordingly.

52. The representative of the Centre also described the 1999 and the 2000-2001 biennial work programme with respect to the mainstreaming of gender in SRDC programme activities. The priorities in this area had to do with:

- The revitalisation of RESEFAC;
- The improvement of statistical data; and
- The pursuit of efforts to integrate the gender approach in SRDC studies and the database.

53. Those measures will help, on the one hand, to improve the status of women in the subregion and to contribute to objective gender analysis in the subregion.

54. The difficulty of securing gender sensitive data was emphasised as was the lack of gender disaggregated data at the various international and subregional for a. One of the causes of this was the lack of dialogue between the generators and the users of such data. In the current year, the Centre planned, among other things, to implement a programme that would initiate such a dialogue so that women (who happen to be the main users of gender sensitive data) will encourage the statistical services to produce such data.

55. In the discussions, which followed these presentations, participants pressed the need for enhancing communication between SRDCs and their member States on the one hand and between ACW and the member States. They also stressed the need to disseminate the many studies and research findings as well as the reports of regional and subregional meetings so as to promote the sharing of experiences.

56. The importance of statistical data was highlighted and the initiatives to improve such data commended. It was proposed that subregional and international meetings should be organized to consider improving the situation further. Member States were invited, in this regard, to respond to the questionnaires sent to them to collect data.

57. Given the diversity of work programmes from one SRDC to another and between ACW and the various SRDCs, not to mention the very deep performance gap between ACW and the SRDCs, participants proposed that the work programme should be harmonised in such a way as to improve performance at the subregional level.

58. It was proposed that ACW might consider co-operating with United Nations Agencies in setting up training programmes. Some clarification was sought about the role of ECA. The meeting was informed that the Commission's role was essentially one of advocacy, development of policy guidelines but not one of providing financial support as did some United Nations Agencies that operationalize projects and programmes at the national level.

59. In order to provide technical support to the various structures, ACW had recruited two Regional Advisers, one expert in the economic empowerment of women and the other in women's rights. The services of both advisers as well as of other ECA regional advisers were available free of charge to member States upon request. Participants were invited to formulate such requests.

60. Participants also underscored the importance of revitalizing the women's co-operative movement set up since the Beijing Conference and suggested that a Website should be created to discuss issues of gender.

**Review of the report on the 43rd session of the Commission on the status of women with special emphasis on African participation and the conclusions of the discussions on the Additional Protocol on CEDAW (agenda item 6)**

**Report on the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Commission on the status of women**

61. This agenda item was introduced by way of recalling the Commission's role of preparing the World conferences on women, monitoring the implementation of General Assembly resolutions relating to the advancement of women and formulating recommendations through the Economic and Social Council.

62. The session was held from 1 to 19 March 1999. Simultaneously with the session the proceedings of the open-ended working group set up to draft an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was conducted. From 15 to 19

March 1999, the Commission convened a preparatory committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly to be held in the year 2000.

63. The main items of discussion were:

- a) Follow-up of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Two key areas of the Platform were discussed, namely health and institutional machinery.
- b) Comprehensive review and evaluation of the implementation of the Global Platform for Action and the preparation of the Special Session of the General Assembly for the year 2000;
- c) Preparation of a draft optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- d) Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly, which would be discussing the role of women in the year 2000: gender equity, development and peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

64. With regard to health, the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to the Platform chapter on health, paying particular attention to specific issues like maternal mortality, sexual and reproductive health, STDs like AIDS, mental health, environmental impact and medical research. It also adhered to the idea that consensus on the critical area of women and health could not be secured without acceptance of the Platform recommendations.

65. With regard to institutional machinery, the Commission felt that such machinery should be strengthened and located high enough in the government structure to ensure that it had the clout to enable gender specific issues to be taken into account in every area of governmental action.

66. To become more effective, governmental structures for the advancement of women should institute transparent mechanisms and forge partnerships with civil society. They should be endowed with adequate financial and human resources, enjoy strong and sustained policy commitment and the support of the international community.

67. Regarding the Convention, the Commission after four years of intensive negotiation unanimously adopted the draft optional protocol by the working group. The draft admits of no reservations and one draft to facilitate the formulation of resolution has also been adopted.

68. It was noted that in connection with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention, which would be celebrated in December 1999, the adoption by consensus of the supplementary optional protocol would have been desirable given the fact that 163 States were already signatory to the Convention.

69. Regarding the evaluation of the implementation of the Platform, the Commission noted the need to conduct the assessment of progress achieved by highlighting:

- Best practices, success stories, lessons, examples of the use of promising qualitative and quantitative indicators;
- Difficulties encountered and strategies pursued to overcome them, new initiatives and measures.

70. One major proposal had to do with the identification of fresh initiatives through the consideration of such major issues as:

- Globalization and the attendant economic problems;
- Women, science and technology in the information age;

- Access to leadership;
- Human and social security.

71. The discussion guides included:

- Policy commitment to creating an environment suitable for implementation of the Platform;
- Building capacities for the advancement of women and promotion of gender perspectives;
- The acceptance and pursuit of platform implementation;
- Cooperation and partnership arrangements for the implementation exercise; and
- Assistance to women and young girls living under discriminatory and other adverse conditions.

72. With regard to the preparation of the special session, the main idea was to propose an agenda, themes and format that would enable NGO participation. In this regard, the Commission agreed that the special session should consider:

- An assessment of progress made in the pursuit of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies with specific reference to the twelve critical areas;
- New initiatives for achieving gender equity in the next millennium.

73. The presentations and discussions on this item focused on:

- Building partnerships for the promotion of gender equity;
- Women and leadership;
- The need to highlight the adverse effects of globalization while teaching women better ways of seizing new opportunities;
- The need to include a gender perspective in budget analysis and decision making.

74. Regarding NGO participation in the special session, the Commission concluded that those NGOs, which had accreditation to the Beijing Conference and those having observer status with ECOSOC, could participate. Their modalities of doing so would be determined at the next session of the Commission.

75. During the ensuing discussion, participants were informed about the adoption of a new ADB lending criterion in which the implementation of gender sensitive development constitutes one of the elements that is used to determine the level of resource allocation to member countries.

76. The importance of national machinery was underscored as well as the need to create accountability and other instruments for measuring the degree of women's advancement.

77. An appeal was launched for countries to strengthen partnerships between their national machinery and the many civil society organizations.

78. Participants noted that member States should pay more attention to the issue of women's health, more particularly to their reproductive health since that affects their productivity. In that connection concrete action going beyond preventive health care should be taken.

**Contribution of the Committee to the theme of the Conference of African Ministers of finance, planning and social and economic development to be held in May 1999, 'Challenges of Financing Development in Africa' (Agenda item 7)**

79. The Director of ACW noted how important it would be for the Committee to contribute to the conference theme in order to mark the presence of women.

80. The ministerial conference would address the key challenges of (a) development financing in Africa and (b) the effectiveness of official development assistance.

81. Both were inter-linked to the extent that the Conference had to think out strategies for enhancing the impact of development financing in Africa whether from the standpoint of lending or that of grants.

82. The input of the Committee on Women and Development into this exercise assumed major strategic importance to the extent that the Dakar Platform (forming as it did an integral part of the Beijing Platform) devoted a whole chapter to the issue of financial implications and stated that 20% of ODA should go into human development programmes.

83. A working group was set up to fine-tune the proposals, which the Committee would be submitting to the ECA Conference of Ministers in May. The idea was to delve into details of resource mobilization and allocation in order to better appreciate the assistance given to women's advancement or in support of their productive activities.

84. The following recommendations were adopted:

1. Establish a culture of a developing and using sex disaggregated statistics generally and particularly in the ministries of Finance and Planning.
2. Allocation of budgets should be made in such a way to reflect gender equity issues/balance based on participatory and actual needs assessment.
3. Budget and time allocation must be made for training policy makers in gender aware and gender sensitive planning.
4. At regional level, members of the Committee of Women in Development should be included, as experts, in the ECA Conferences of Ministers of Finance and of Economic and Social and Development Planning.
5. Given the existing commitment to the implementation of the platforms of action, we recommend that to monitoring mechanism within the ministries be put in place to ensure timely implementation of these commitments especially with regard to budgetary allocations.
6. Coordination of external aid must be effective in order to ensure that the percentage of aid allocated to women's projects and gender concerns is honoured. In addition, governments should institute a mechanism to match donor funds allocated to women's programmes.
7. A mechanism for negotiating debt cancellation against national funds allocated to addressing women's concerns and gender inequality should be instituted.

#### **Consideration of progress in the preparation of the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women (agenda item 8)**

85. Ms. Josephine Ouedraogo introduced this agenda item. In her presentation, she explained that the Sixth Regional Conference on Women had two main objectives:

- To assess the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action

- To prepare the participation of Africa in the High Level Review of Beijing + 5 in the year 2000

86. The first preparatory meeting of the Sixth Africa Regional Conference on Women which had been held in Addis Ababa last January had established a Technical Preparatory Committee composed of the CWD Bureau, OAU, ADB, some regional institutions and UN agencies at the regional level. SRDC Gender Focal Points were also members of this Committee.

87. At that meeting, ACW had proposed that NGOs would include rural and urban women associations, representatives of youth, at least one journalist per delegation, etc. Altogether, 27 participants per delegation had been proposed to make a total of 2000 participants.

88. ACW had further proposed that NGOs and government representatives participate at the Conference equally instead of NGOs organizing an NGO Forum separately.

89. Ms. Ouedraogo had also explained that the Sixth Regional Conference was a statutory meeting and as such, participants were expected to finance their participation. Recognizing however, that NGOs may have difficulties financing themselves, ECA would urge donors to assist the participation of NGOs at the national level. However each participant was encouraged to contact the donors directly. The Preparatory Committee had also proposed to institute a registration fee of \$ 50.00 per individual and \$100.00 per subregional or regional institution. Funds generated from registration fees would go to defray hosting expenses in Addis Ababa.

90. With regard to the programme of the Sixth Regional Conference, Ms. Ouedraogo explained that the Preparatory Committee had agreed on the following agenda:

91. Day one: Presentation of reports from governments (synthesis of national reports to be submitted to ECA) NGOs: OAU, ADB, UN agencies.
92. Day two: Thematic evaluation of the 12 critical areas of concern in workshops, one critical area per workshop
93. Days three and four: Presentation of thematic evaluation reports in plenary
94. Day five: Formulation of Adjusted Plan of Action 2000-2005 and Formulation of the Declaration of the Sixth Regional Conference

95. The second meeting of the Preparatory Committee was planned in Tunis on 15 and 19 June 1999. Participants would have to finance their participation because ECA did not have the resources to do so, unlike the first meeting. She suggested that members of the Committee contact donors for assistance particularly for the cost of transportation since Tunisia had offered to assume the cost of boarding and lodging for members.

96. Ms. Ouedraogo also informed the participants on the different reactions to the above proposals. The Africa Group that participated at the 43rd Session of the Committee on the Status of Women in New York in April had objected to:

- The large participation of NGOs in the Technical Preparatory Meeting in relation to government participation
- The suggestion that NGOs attend the Sixth Regional Conference as full participants as opposed to being observers as in the past.

97. A on its part felt that a Conference of 2000 participants would be too large particularly because the cost implications of the logistical arrangements had not been budgeted.

98. In conclusion, Ms. Ouedraogo invited participants to deliberate on the following questions:

- Should the NGOs attend the Sixth Regional Conference as equal participants or as observers?
- Should NGOs have a separate forum from the Government?
- What should be the size of delegation per country and what proportion should the NGO constitute?
- Who should be invited to the second Technical Preparatory meeting in Tunisia?

99. In response to the presentation, some participants felt that the size of 27 participants per delegation was reasonable considering that all the 12 critical areas of concern had to be evaluated in workshops in which each country should be adequately represented. Others felt that the 10 that ACW had proposed after ECA's request to reduce the size was adequate. Others thought that ECA could finance the 10 members per delegation while donors financed an additional 2 per delegation. The issue remained to be settled.

100. With regard to the participation of NGOs at the Sixth Regional Conference, while most agreed that the model of the International Conference during ECA's 40th Anniversary should be emulated, others cautioned that having NGOs participate side by side with government representatives might reduce the meeting to a confrontation forum, each group against the other.

101. Participants also asked questions about the different guidelines provided by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in New York and ACW on the preparation of national reports on the implementation of the Platforms for Action. They wondered whether two reports had to be prepared one for each institution and whether NGOs needed to prepare a different report as well.

102. In response to the questions, Ms. Ouedraogo clarified that each participant would meet their own participation costs. ECA's responsibility was limited to logistical costs in Addis Ababa and the cost of translation and interpretation. With regard to the national reports, ECA expected only one report. Each country could choose to follow the guidelines of DAW or ECA. The lack of harmonization was regretted even though ECA had sent the guidelines earlier than New York to member States. As for the deadline, ACW had communicated the wish of some African States that the date of 31 July be accepted as opposed to the New York deadline of 30 April. New York was reluctant to accept the proposal. ECA also proposed that the national report reflect the views of both the Government and NGOs.

103. The preparatory Committee had suggested that the members of CWD constitute part of the national delegation.

104. Finally, the participants constituted a committee of seven participants to look further into the questions of NGOs representation in the Technical Preparatory Committee and their participation at the Sixth Regional Conference. The members are Burkina Faso (3), Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Rwanda.

#### **Review of Modalities for renewal of membership of the Committee on Women and Development (agenda item 9)**

105. Ms. Françoise Wege recalled the reform of the intergovernmental machinery of ECA within the context of the restructuring exercise. The Committee on Women and Development had been maintained as a forum for expert decision-making to guide ECA in matters of the advancement of women.

106. She stressed that the composition of the Committee and its modalities for replacing members had had to be reviewed in order to ensure that all-governmental civil society and other partners could participate.

107. Among the innovations introduced, emphasis had been placed on :

- Introducing associations of rural women so that they can defend their interests themselves;
- Including resources persons selected on the recommendation of ACW and on the basis of their knowledge of and experience in the major areas of concern to African women. They will have to bring their technical expertise to bear on matters before the Committee;
- The abolition of the subregional committees and the designation of new members by a system of alphabetical rotation every other year;
- The introduction of civil society, NGO, regional and subregional representatives taking into account the need for stability, dynamism, innovation and participation in the meetings of the Committee;
- The selection of members bearing in mind the principle of linguistic and geographical balance;
- The renewal of the membership by two-thirds in order to secure a degree of continuity.

108. The discussion focused on:

- Subregional representation by quota rather by size of female population or linguistic factors. No decision was taken;
- Updating the list of NGOs and evaluating results achieved and their impact;
- The current bureau's term of office which expires in the year 2000. The Committee recommended the governmental and bureau members should be replaced on the occasion of the Sixth Regional Conference (Addis Ababa November 1999);
- The proposed changing of the name of the Committee to Gender and Development. This proposal would need the approval of the ECA Conference of Ministers;
- The importance of the role that SRDCs would now have to play as mechanisms for ECA outreach. That role should be strengthened.

109. The meeting decided to replace the bureau during the Sixth Regional Conference, which will be held in Addis Ababa in November 1999.

## **Consideration of agenda item 10**

### **Report on the Campaign on violence against women**

110. Ms. Aster Zaoude, Regional Director of UNIFEM, introduced the report on the above subject.

111. At the instance of her organization, the global campaign to combat violence against women had been launched at Beijing in 1995. In Africa, the regional campaign had commenced with Pan-African women's day on 31 July 1998, intensifying with the media blitz which marked the two-week period of commemoration from 25 November to 10 December 1998, the date coinciding with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



112. The 8 March 1999 Global Video Conference organised on the last Women's Day of the millennium had made it possible for the international community to renew its commitment to the respect of women's human rights.

113. This issue had never assumed such high profile nor aroused as much interest from African governments, United Nations Agencies and NGOs as it did on this day. Significant headway had been made in terms of educating the public, training juries, the police, community and religious leaders through the commitment of the media which placed the issue on the national agenda.

114. The UNIFEM report described many initiatives that African countries had taken with its support.

115. Among them was the regional seminar organised in Dakar in 1998 to review legislation on violence against women. About 10 African countries were able to share views on their national legislation and to recommend law reforms focussing in particular on rape, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, sexual harassment, forced and early marriages.

116. A comprehensive report on the regional campaign was being prepared and would be sent by UNIFEM to all participants.

117. In the ensuing discussions, participants stressed the importance of the campaign and the need to build on the achievements.

118. In that respect, proposals were made to simplify the procedures for securing UNIFEM funds and enhancing its national outreach.

119. Participants noted the lack of resources for following up the campaign with a view to strengthening and consolidating support and advisory services to women victims of violence and, especially, for keeping society informed.

120. A proposal was made to conduct a survey of those countries, which had reformed their criminal laws, and those whose campaign strategies deserved to be widely publicised following the regional seminar organised by UNIFEM in Nairobi on 8 March 1999 on best practices.

121. In order to maximise the impact of UNIFEM operations in this area, OAU's advocacy and the financial support of The Global Fund for Women could be used to reinforce the commitment of governments and civil society organisations working in the field so that African women can enjoy their human rights free from economic, political and social inhibitions.

122. Ms. Kavita Ramdas, President of the Global Fund for Women commended the work of UNIFEM and availed herself of the opportunity to present her Organization and to propose its assistance in financing activities for combating violence against women.

### **Report on Activities of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development**

123. Due to time constraints, this document was not introduced in plenary for discussion. Participants were encouraged to read the contents and address any questions they may have to the ECA members of the secretariat.

124. The document had traced the historic context in which the Peace Committee was established. Following the recommendation of the Kampala Action Plan on Women, Peace and Development of 1993, ECA and OAU set out to operationalize the proposed mechanism that was to facilitate women's active participation in the peace process at the highest level. To this end, they

organized the Women Leadership Forum on Women in Johannesburg in November 1996 in which the terms of reference of the Committee and modalities for selecting membership were discussed. Thereafter, member States were invited to nominate their representatives while ECA and OAU selected the NGO representatives as well as those selected in their own individual capacity. The Committee was finally established in May 1998 as announced by Dr Salim Salim, the Secretary General of the OAU, at the ECA International Conference on the occasion of its 40th Anniversary.

125. The newly established Committee had held its inaugural meeting in December 1998 during which it adopted its TOR and Rules of Procedure. It also elected its Bureau and formulated its Work Programme for 1999-2001. During the meeting, the Committee reaffirmed that its objective was to ensure women's effective participation in the peace process by working in an advisory capacity with OAU and ECA. Its functions were therefore reaffirmed to include:

- Facilitating and ensuring effective participation of women in all peace initiatives
- Promoting and supporting networking among those working for peace
- Articulating women's specific experiences in conflict
- Ensuring that the needs of refugees and displaced women and children were articulated
- Building capacity for the peaceful resolution of conflicts
- Documenting root causes of conflict in different situations
- Monitoring the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action in the area of Peace
- Establishing a collaborative relationship with ECA and OAU

126. In order to operationalize its establishment with immediate effect, the Committee appealed to ECA and OAU for assistance. OAU had donated \$100,000 from its Peace Fund to this end. ECA in turn offered to donate office space and basic equipment to the Committee and offered to finance an interim Coordinator for the Secretariat for six months.

127. For the coming two years, the Committee planned to engage in preventive diplomacy and dialogue through peace missions; network with other peace organizations, support other national peace initiatives, and carry out in-depth analysis of causes of conflict in different situations.

128. The Committee will also invite other institutions working in the area of peace to apply for an observer status within the Committee in order to facilitate access to information for the OAU Early Warning System.

129. The Committee's most urgent need is to mobilize adequate resources to facilitate the implementation of its activities.

### **Report on the preparation of the "Women's Walk in the year 2000"**

130. The idea of global walk against poverty and domestic problems comes from the experience of the women's movement in Quebec. In June 1995, the women marched 200 kilometres in ten days to present nine petitions of an economic order to the government of Quebec.

131. The objectives of the global walk would be to:

- a. Promote gender equity;
- b. Stimulate a vast movement of grassroots women's groups so as to make the walk an affirmation of the rights of the world's women; and
- c. To denounce male domination and the current neo-liberal capitalism and to promote egalitarian and fair alternatives.

132. The walk is a peaceful demonstration from beginning to end and participants will commit themselves to celebrating the diversity of their movement.

133. It will take place in four phases:

- A national event to be organised at the discretion of each country;
- A regional event to be organised by each continent;

134. Participating countries can freely choose the date of their national event. The continental walk in Africa should take place before the 15 October 2000 deadline, and should be the culmination of the success of the national events.

135. Participants stressed that the idea of the proposed walk is to mobilise women in their unique capacity, and appealed for discretion to be exercised in making the event a success.

### **Review of issues to bring to the attention of the President of Burkina Faso, Current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (agenda item 11)**

136. This item was included on the agenda with a view to identify concerns to which the Committee might wish to draw the attention of African Heads of State attending the forthcoming Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU.

137. After explaining the nature of recommendations that the Committee might wish to formulate, the Director of ACW noted initially the ideas brainstormed. Subsequently she suggested that a working group should be set up to deepen the thinking on the issue.

138. When the working group submitted its report, the Committee recommended the following:

#### **1. Women and politics:**

- Gender-based quotas should be reserved in governments, parliaments, political parties, economic, social and municipal councils in countries members of OAU;
- Countries should report on their implementation of the above recommendation to the 2005 Summit.

#### **2. Women and Law**

- Laws should be drafted in conformity with international conventions for the protection and promotion of women where loopholes exist;
- Countries should ratify the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- National legislation should be harmonized with international conventions on women's rights ratified by States, more particularly those relating to the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and all reservations removed by 2005 at the latest;
- The establishment of national machinery for the protection of women's rights should be facilitated.

#### **3. Women in OAU mechanisms**

- To make sure that women participate in OAU fora, each national delegation should include at least one woman;

- Women should be appointed to posts in the OAU Secretariat in accordance with the principles of geographical distribution:
- The women's unit in OAU should be attached to the Cabinet Office of the Secretary-General.

#### **4. Gender and development in national and international policies**

- Training of national leaders in the gender approach should be encouraged
- The post of presidential advisers in gender and development should be created

#### **5. Policy dialogue between Heads of State and Civil Society**

- A framework for direct and sustained policy dialogue between Heads of State and women should be established.

#### **6. Status of national departments responsible for the advancement of women**

- The status, human and financial capacities of departments responsible for the advancement of women should be enhanced by providing them with the resources they need to follow-up the implementation of the Beijing Platform
- Specific provision should be made within departmental budgets to cover the implementation of the Beijing Platform

#### **7. Women and the economy**

- Special funds should be set up to facilitate the access of rural and urban women to credit.
- Care should be taken to place HIV-AIDS control high among the priorities of the governments.
- The implementation of the Beijing Platform should be speeded up so that in the 2005 global review Africa's image would be positive.

#### **Any other business (agenda item 12)**

139. No issue was raised under this agenda item.

#### **Consideration and adoption of the report of the experts meeting (agenda item 13)**

140. Subject to the amendments proposed by participants and accepted by the Committee, the draft Summary Report was adopted for submission to the Meeting of Ministers.

## ANNEXE 2

### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF COUNTRIES BY SUBREGION

Eastern Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa	North Africa	Central Africa
Burundi	South Africa	Benin	Algeria	Cameroon
Comoros	Angola	Burkina Faso	Egypt	Central Africa (RCA)
Congo (DRC)	Botswana	Cape Verde	Libya	Congo
Djibouti	Mauritius	Côte d'Ivoire	Morocco	Gabon
Eritrea	Lesotho	Gambia	Mauritania	Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia	Madagascar	Ghana	Sudan	Sao Tome & Principe
Kenya	Malawi	Guinea	Tunisia	Tchad
Uganda	Mozambique	Guinea Bissau		
Rwanda	Namibia	Liberia		
Seychelles	Swaziland	Mali		
Somalia	Zambia	Niger		
Tanzania	Zimbabwe	Nigeria		
		Senegal		
		Sierra Leone		
		Togo		