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MISSION REPORT

ON

**REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF
GENDER INDICATORS FOR MONITORING THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
OF WOMEN IN AFRICA**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1. As Africa prepares for the midterm assessment of the implementation of the Global and Regional Platforms for Action, it is important to put in place instruments to measure the achievements made and progress made in the implementation of the Platforms of Action for the advancement of women. One of ECA/ACW's program objectives is fostering the economic empowerment of African women, while the development and application of indicators for monitoring the economic empowerment of women is one of the activities programmed in the Regular Program of Technical Cooperation. It is in this connection that the African Center for Women, within the Regular Program for Technical Cooperation, requested for and was allocated funds under the 20/20 Priority activities to carry out a Regional Group Training in Development and Application of Indicators for monitoring the economic empowerment of women in Africa. (See the workshop report attached for detailed outcomes).
2. The Regional training workshop was conducted in Johannesburg from 4-13 October 1999. It was hosted by the Office of the Presidency, under the coordination of the Office on the Status of Women. During the opening session, the Minister in charge of gender in the Office of the Presidency represented the South African Government, while the UNDP Resident Representative represented the Executive Secretary of ECA. For the closing session, The Provincial Minister represented the Government and the FAO Representative to South Africa represented the Executive Secretary.

II. Workshop objectives and participants

3. The major objectives of the workshop were to: a) build the capacity of member states through training of gender experts in the development and application of gender indicators for measuring economic empowerment of women; b) develop and constitute a group of resources persons who would work closely with the African Center for Women to popularize and carry on the process of regular monitoring of the economic empowerment of African women; and c) to develop monitoring indicators that will be provided to member states for measuring the economic empowerment of women as provided within the Platforms for Action.
4. Eighteen participants from seven English speaking countries and four regional institutions, (from North Africa, West Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa) attended the workshop. The workshop is a first in a series of workshops planned to develop capacity in designing gender indicators among member states. In order to ensure that member states own the final product, it will be necessary to hold several workshops so that a critical number of states participate in the process of developing indicators.. Four more workshops planned are two for French speaking countries, one for English speaking countries and a final expert group meeting to validate, streamline and finalize the indicators.

III. Workshop organization and focus

5. Two gender specialists were recruited to facilitate the workshop process and were supported by the Regional Advisor and the Social Affairs Officer in the economic empowerment program who worked as resource persons during the preparation and workshop process. The process of the workshop was very participatory and included field visits to sites of women in business. During the ten days of the workshop, the following were covered:

- Review and definition of concepts such as women and economy, empowerment and women's economic empowerment;
- Identification of issues affecting women's empowerment in the economy
- Discussions on implications of economic arrangements on gender roles, status and relations.
- Definitions and development of indicators, using the Platform for Action as a guide on what is to be monitored.
- In a special session advocated to sharing the South African Experience on women's economic empowerment, Ms. Zanele Mbeki, South Africa's First Lady, and ten gender focal points as well as a representative of the NGO sector participated and made presentations on the strategies of, and achievements made in, empowerment of women.

6. The workshop report attached gives full details of the workshop process, issues arising from the daily proceedings, the gender indicators that were developed, participants' full recommendations and work plans as well as the full list of participants. This first part will therefore highlight the workshop achievements, major recommendations and the proposed ECA follow-up plan.

IV. Workshop Achievements:

7. The workshop brought together a total of 18 full time participants. The workshop achievements can be attributed to the fact that the participants who are gender focal points in their countries and institutions came with varied experiences as well as lessons that were used to keep the discussions focussed. In addition, there is now a high value placed on capacity to monitor, as well as on the availability of instruments to measure the advancement of women and elimination of gender inequality in most African countries. The program is therefore timely and fills an important gap. From the practical side, the workshop was able to achieve its objectives because of the excellent facilitation and logistical support provided by the Office of the status on Women in the Office of the Presidency. The major achievements can be classified as follows:

Short Term achievements:

- 18 participants were trained in the development and application of gender indicators for measuring the economic empowerment of women in Africa.
- Seven countries and four regional institutions have a reasonable level of capacity to initiate activities for building local capacity in developing local indicators.
- A draft set of indicators for measuring the economic empowerment of women has been developed and will be finalized for distribution.
- Because participants came from different countries, and institutions, the workshop provided a platform for building networks and as a result, ECA now has initiated a network of resource persons.

Long term achievements:

- Depending on availability of further funding, the workshop has initiated a process of capacity building in development of indicators that will have impact on the type of instruments developed to measure economic progress and empowerment of women in different institutions and countries in the region.
- Several participants developed action plans that will guide the implementation of what was learnt during the workshop. If put into effect, the participating countries will be able to enhance local capacity for development and application of indicators.
- A framework for Key indicators has been developed. When finalized, these indicators will provide an effective instrument for ECA to fulfill its mandate and obligations to monitor the implementation of the Beijing and Dakar Platforms of Action.
- In the long run, the ability to measure national progress in empowerment of women and elimination of gender inequality will be important in designing effective and appropriate strategies for gender responsive economic development.
- In addition to the development of capacity and gender indicators, another very important achievement of the workshop is that it has defined a methodology that can be refined and used in further training in development of indicators for measuring progress and achievements in the implementation of the Platforms for Action.

V. Lessons learnt:

8. The workshop brought together women and men from different parts of Africa. Yet, through out the discussions, it was clear that almost all countries face similar challenges in the struggle for economic empowerment of women. The most important lesson learnt was that there is need to continue with advocacy, lobbying and sensitization in order to overcome the challenges to gender equality. Another lesson learnt is that there is very limited technical capacity for development of indicators. The major and most common challenges that must be addressed are:

- The lack of technical capacity, skills and policy guidelines for developing effective and realistic instruments to measure human development at micro level;
- In spite of affirmative and empowerment programs introduced by many governments, a lot has yet to be achieved at the level of individual women as well as support institutions. The lack of gender sensitivity at many levels was identified as a contributing factor to the slow progress in empowerment of women.
- The most common challenge is that the patriarchal systems and beliefs continue to define and limit women's opportunities.

VI. Workshop recommendations

9. Participants made recommendations not only on plans for follow-up, but on how different countries and institutions can translate the Platforms of Action into reality. The following general recommendations were proposed:

- ECA/ACW should set itself up as a resource center where information on all the critical areas of concern can be stored and disseminated.
- When the monitoring indicators have been finalized, they should be made available to all National Gender Focal Points who should ensure that they are used to track the economic empowerment of women. This also requires that monitoring indicators be developed for all the twelve critical areas of concern.
- As part of capacity building, National Gender Focal points should be given training skills in development of indicators.
- The gender focal points that have received training in development of indicators should aim at training at least 2-3 people in the country as a way of enhancing internal capacity.
- It is important to ensure that the social reproduction sector gets adequate emphasis in the development of indicators. In doing this however, it is important not to assume that it is women who need to be changed, but rather to recognize that the skills women have in the in this sector are important and should be enhanced and supported. It is therefore important to focus on policies that recognize the value women bring to the social reproduction sector and economic development in general.
- In developing empowerment indicators, the relationship between the cash economy and subsistence economy must be captured as this is the most effective way of reflecting women's productive role in the African economy where the subsistence economy supports the cash economy.
- Lack and/or inaccessibility of data are a critical issue. Institutions like the United Nations that produce data must continue using easily accessible means rather than disseminating electronically only. Access to electronically disseminated data is an important empowerment

issue. If this becomes the only means of dissemination, most women will not be able to access data that is produced.

- The field visits to different businesswomen illustrated how, all over Africa, lack of credit is still the most important concern for women who want to get into the private sector. Participants' recommendation that ECA should play an active role in identifying sources of, and lobbying for greater, access to credit for women as this will expedite women's economic empowerment. In addition, there is need to support business women's networks and identifying role models as these provide key support to prospective women entrepreneurs.
- Patriarchal systems and attitudes are still a hindrance to women's economic empowerment; therefore, measurement of changes in gender relations must be integrated in the monitoring indicators adopted in all the countries.
- The workshop focussed on identifying all the measurable changes in the process of economic empowerment of women. In finalizing the indicators, specific measurable and quantifiable indicators should be incorporated.

Specific recommendations for ECA:

10. The first workshop was an important first step in designing the methodology for developing instruments that will be used in monitoring the implementation of the Platforms for Action. Given its mandate to support and monitor the implementation of the Platforms for Action, the ECA was requested, and needs, to intensify the work in capacity building for development and application of monitoring indicators in all the member states. The following recommendations, if implemented, will facilitate the necessary process of capacity building and development of indicators.
 - A Training of trainers program, to develop training capacity of regional institutions in development of indicators, should be initiated in collaboration with the sub-regional institutions that participated in the first training activity.
 - There is need to assess the capacities of national machineries to establish whether they are able to use the gender sensitive indicators as a starting point for designing an appropriate capacity building program. In the participation should be extended to include key partners like Statistical officers, Ministry of finance, and policy makers like parliamentarians.
 - The participants pointed out that collaboration between ECA and member states would be enhanced if ECA Gender Focal Points liaise with government when they go to work in a country. In addition, ECA should provide the National Gender Focal Points with the terms of reference of the ECA Gender focal Points.
 - Participants requested that ECA should provide technical assistance to member states to carryout impact assessment of National machineries. The ECA team explained that ECA provides technical advisory services to all member states on request.

Follow-up plans

11. The workshop which was organized in Johannesburg from 4-13 October must be seen as a first in a series of workshops that will be needed to develop valid and appropriate indicators for the African region to track progress in the advancement of women, in all the priority areas of concern, as provided in the Platforms for Action. The exercise started with training, for a few selected countries, in the development of indicators for the economic empowerment of women focussing on two critical areas of concern, "Women and Poverty" and "Women and the Economy". The validity and wide ownership of the indicators developed during this training will be enhanced if a critical number of countries in the region participate in the exercise. A follow-up program that has been proposed is to widen participation and ownership but it is also a necessary strategy for finalizing the Gender indicators for monitoring the economic empowerment of women. Ultimately, the same exercise must be carried out for all the twelve critical areas of concern, if ECA is to play its role of monitoring the implementation of the Platforms for Action effectively.
12. The final session was advocated to participants' development of National and institutional action plans to ensure effective follow-up and utilization of the skills that were developed during the workshop. The individual country and institutional action plans are incorporated into the workshop report that is attached to this report.
13. The ECA team developed and presented a follow-up work plan. The Executive Secretary, who had made time to participate in the workshop for one session, informed the participants that the ECA is putting resources into developing instruments for monitoring and measuring progress in Africa. This is an important component of setting goals for eradicating poverty in Africa. The training workshop on Development and applications of Gender indicators, he said, fitted in with ECA's work program. The follow-up action plan presented below builds on ECA's strategic objective of integrating gender in all its programs, as well as on what has been achieved in the workshop and it also incorporates the participants' recommendations.

ECA's Follow-up Plan:

Assumptions	What is to be done	How it is to be done
<p>1. Most countries within the region do not have effective/appropriate tools and instruments for keeping track of changes in economic empowerment of women.</p>	<p>Finalization of workshop report.</p>	<p>Work with consultants to finalize report: (immediate)</p>
<p>2. National gender focal points need to become more familiar with existing statistics on women and methodologies for collecting and processing data and for measuring changes in the status of women.</p>	<p>Disseminate the results of the workshop.</p>	<p>Send reports to participants and SRDCs,</p> <p>Electronic dissemination of report: develop list serve for continued debate.</p> <p>Incorporate into discussions during the Sixth Regional workshop.</p>
	<p>Organize follow-up workshops to finalize gender indicators.</p>	<p>2 Regional workshops for selected French speaking and Lusophone countries. (2000)</p> <p>1 Regional workshop for selected English and Lusophone speaking countries. (2000-2001)</p> <p>1 workshop for technical experts to finalize and validate the indicators. During this workshop, participants will merge the indicators developed in different workshops and incorporate statistical measures for the indicators. (2001)</p>

Conclusion

14. The Regional Training Workshop in Development and Application of Indicators for Measurement of Economic Empowerment of Women was a big challenge mainly because none of the participants had had any training in development of indicators. However, at the end of the workshop, the participants felt that they can now develop general and qualitative indicators. The participants also regard themselves as a pool of resource that can be used for further training at national level. The workshop report that is attached reflects the process as well as results of the workshop. It is important to emphasize that the indicators that have been developed are in very draft form. The follow-up workshops, especially the final workshop of experts, will be important in reviewing streamlining and concretizing the indicators into quantitative and qualitative indicators.