



Economic Commission for Africa

Gender Mainstreaming in National Poverty Reduction Strategies: Unexploited Sustained Growth Potential





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E/ECA/ACGD/NPRS/2001

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**African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD)
2001**

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December 2001

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	An Overview	1
1.2	ECA Role in the PRSP Process	3
2.	Challenges in Poverty Reduction in Africa	7
2.1	Gender-related Causes of Poverty	7
2.2	Challenges in Reducing Poverty	8
3.	Lessons Learnt from Implementing National Poverty Reduction Strategies	13
3.1	Gender-related Deficiencies in Poverty Reduction Strategies	13
3.2	Policy Implications of Gender Analysis in PRSPs	16
4.	A Framework for Mainstreaming Gender into National Accounts and National Budgets	19
4.1	Why Mainstream Gender into PRSPs	19
4.2	A Conceptual Framework for Mainstreaming Gender in National Planning Instruments	22
5.	Conclusion	27
	References	31
	Appendix I	33

Abbreviations

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACCS	African Centre for Civil Society
ACGD	African Centre for Gender and Development
ADB	African Development Bank
ADF	African Development Forum
CWD	Committee on Women and Development
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
NME	Non-Market Economy
NMW	Non-Market Work
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRSP-LG	PRSP Learning Group
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SNA	System of National Accounts
SPA	Strategic Partnership with Africa
SRDC	Sub-regional Development Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

I. Introduction

The Bretton Woods Institutions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) introduced the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in 1999, as a framework for developing nationally owned participatory poverty reduction strategies. The PRSPs have become the basis for all concessional lending and debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Due to their focus on broad-based participatory growth strategies, they also offer a significant opportunity to integrate gender concerns and add value and sustainability to the poverty reduction process. The PRSPs not only form an important entry point for mainstreaming gender into the sustainable development process but also enhance African ownership of these strategies.

1.1 An Overview

1. This background paper was submitted in 2001 to the Committee on Women and Development (CWD). Its objective is to enhance the visibility, recognition and support of decision-makers for the important role and contribution of women's non-market work (NMW) in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving poverty by 2015. Women's NMW is "unpaid" work or the "care economy" that includes domestic work, care of children, the sick and elderly, voluntary community work, participating in a family business, building a family house, or maintenance work. The paper also reflects the ECA stance and comparative advantage with regard to mainstreaming gender as a development goal, into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The paper introduces how ECA plans to tackle gender-related obstacles to poverty reduction using a conceptual and analytical framework it has been developing for engendering national planning instruments, especially national accounts and national budgets, as a first step in engendering PRSPs.

2. Rural women in particular are crucial partners in the agricultural and rural development of Africa, where an estimated 70 per cent of the poor are women. Yet, women contribute 70 per cent of the labour force in agricultural production and produce over 90 per cent of the food in Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The international consensus is that the motivating force for all African development partnerships is reducing poverty on the continent through broad-based growth, the genuine participation of all stakeholders (including men and women), and an accountable system of governance. This consensus brings with it a new development co-operation framework and aid relationship between African countries

and their external partners, which replaces the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s. The new relationship is characterized by a move away from fragmented, donor-driven programmes towards co-ordinated and synergistic donor support for an Africa-driven agenda. It is also a move from externally imposed conditionalities to mutual obligations and from a preoccupation with the volume of aid flows to practical steps towards improved aid effectiveness.

3. The PRSPs are the new country-specific policy frameworks and currently provide the mechanism for all concessional lending and debt relief from the World Bank and IMF to low-income African countries, under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The PRSPs also offer a significant opportunity for countries to deepen their focus on broad-based participatory growth strategies that fully integrate gender concerns, thus adding value to the poverty reduction process. As a result, PRSPs form an important entry point for mainstreaming gender into the sustainable development process and for enhancing African ownership of these strategies. Moreover, the process of drawing up a PRSP entails intensive consultations with broad categories of stakeholders at the national level, and also with external partners.

4. Several African governments endorsed the framework as an emerging new aid relationship at the Libreville Summit of African Heads of State and Government, 14-19 January 2000. This was followed by consultations in Addis Ababa and Abidjan (March 2000) with African government and civil society representatives, on a range of issues related to design and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies. The Addis Ababa consultation, hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the World Bank and IMF, included participants from Eastern and Southern African countries.

5. Both consultations concluded that PRSPs represent a major change in the way that Africans and their multilateral and bilateral partners will interact in the years to come. They also identified a number of challenges that African countries and their donor partners jointly need to address to ensure the success of the PRSP process. These included:

- Supporting processes and institutions that foster African ownership and participatory development;
- Designing and implementing national poverty strategies;
- Ensuring donor commitment to providing sustained support for such strategies over the long term;
- Enhancing national capacity to lead and own the PRSP process;
- Addressing the tensions associated with the PRSP link to the HIPC initiative; and
- Ascertaining the willingness of donors to adapt their aid policies and procedures to this process.

1.2 The ECA Role in the PRSP Process

6. The principles underlying the PRSP process - a focus on poverty reduction, supporting countries to achieve debt sustainability, national ownership and participatory development, and mainstreaming gender into PRSPs - are consistent with those that ECA supports in its work programme and policy recommendations. Drawing on its comparative advantage as a regional development actor, and one that is not a development-financing partner, ECA is uniquely positioned to play the role of an honest broker in the PRSP process. The Commission can add value to the process as the catalyst for ideas, action, capacity building, and for partnerships based on an Africa-driven agenda. Moreover, the ECA African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD), guided by CWD as a statutory organ and subsidiary of the Commission, is the only regional body with a mandate able to add gender mainstreaming value to the PRSP process. The ACGD programme embraces gender-inclusive policy analysis and advocacy, cross-cutting research, communication and information outreach, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

7. It is against this background that ECA launched a multi-country mission in August and September 2000 to initiate early dialogue with a sample of member States on how the PRSP process was unfolding and to gain their guidance and perspectives on how ECA could support them. The Commission also held similar consultations with key partners, including the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Bretton Woods institutions, and the Strategic Partnership with Africa (SPA). ECA staff also held bilateral consultations with representatives of African countries attending the September 2000 Commonwealth meeting in Malta. The findings of this mission, together with the experiences of some African countries in the PRSP process, helped inform the agenda of the first ECA “Big Table” meeting.

8. On the basis of these consultations, ECA identified three broad areas in which it can leverage its position of comparative advantage and forge partnerships to assist African countries with the PRSP process. The first area relates to facilitating consensus and promoting ownership of the Africa-driven agenda - a core mandate of ECA that is fully integrated in its work programme. ECA is uniquely positioned to facilitate the setting of priorities on a regional development agenda, build consensus on the policies and approaches that feature on this agenda, and promote partnership for co-ordinated, long-term support for the PRSP process. It can achieve all this through its leverage as a convening power, its proximity to African policymakers at the highest levels, its Ministerial meetings designed to facilitate informed high-level discussions on selected development themes, and through the regional mechanisms it has set up, such as the African Devel-

opment Forum (ADF). Similarly, through its African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS), which is housed in the Commission, ECA promotes the opening up of space for the broad participation of civil society in setting and implementing a national agenda and in developing committed leadership at various levels in African countries.

9. Furthermore, through CWD, ECA offers the opportunity for Ministers of Women Affairs in Africa to use the ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance and Planning as an effective advocacy vehicle. Their participation increases ministerial-level information and understanding of how inclusion of gender concerns will add value to the PRSP process and stimulate sustained growth through the participation of the majority of its citizens. Already, African leaders recognize that poverty reduction cannot be achieved without gender perspectives and the participation of both men and women, and that gender equality in the PRSP process adds value by increasing growth, economic efficiency and welfare.

10. In the second area, ECA is the main United Nations organ for development in Africa and is involved in the recent initiative by African leaders called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). ECA is working on several priority sectors of NEPAD, including poverty reduction, as requested by Organization of African Unity (OAU) member States at their Lusaka Summit in July 2001. The long-term objective of NEPAD is to eradicate poverty in Africa and to promote the role of women in all activities, including in poverty reduction strategies. When the PRSPs and gender concerns are integrated within the framework of NEPAD - Africa's own development agenda - there will be more opportunity to capture the full potential of the continent's productive labour force (i.e. both men and women) in reducing poverty. In the future, NEPAD could facilitate significant transformation of the African economy, and one means with wide impact is gender mainstreaming, a new factor of change and value added in African economic development.

11. The third area includes a set of activities designed to facilitate systematic exchange of experiences among African countries. Towards this end, ECA created the PRSP African Learning Group (PRSP-LG) in 2000 as an annual forum for exchanging experiences, lessons learnt and best practices in PRSP processing. It brings together African policymakers, development practitioners and a range of national stakeholders to address issues arising from PRSP process and content over the preceding 12 months. Each annual forum focuses on a specific theme germane to the PRSP. Invited participants include government officials and national experts directly involved in the PRSP process, representatives of civil society organizations, key individuals that are well placed to influence and contribute to this process, and representatives of national think-tanks. Senior external African Advisors and representatives of multilateral and bilateral organ-

isations serve as resource persons at PRSP-LG meetings. These annual PRSP-LG meetings are also enriched with the experiences of countries in other regions that have undertaken PRSPs through the participation of representatives from non-African PRSP/HIPC countries. The overall PRSP-LG aims are:

- Helping countries to build capacity in the design and implementation of national poverty strategies;
- Fostering articulation of African PRSP perspectives at an early stage in the process; and
- Helping to ensure that these perspectives are taken into account in refining the PRSP process and in shaping the new aid relations.

12. ECA complements the PRSP-LG meeting with the PRSP Experts Group Workshop that draws on analytical work including gender analysis, which has been done in African countries. It also draws on relevant work being done by SPA Task Teams. ECA co-sponsors this workshop with the SPA Technical Group. The first PRSP-LG was held in November 2001. During that meeting, strong recommendations were made to step up efforts to mainstream gender into PRSPs and to develop tools for this process.

13. This paper articulates this role in accordance with the requirements of the PRSP process and the needs identified by ECA member States through a continuing series of consultations to mainstream gender into PRSPs. It also examines the policy challenges facing African countries including the challenge of how ECA can use its comparative advantage to address poverty issues.

2. Challenges of Poverty Reduction in Africa

2.1 Gender-related Causes of Poverty

14. Africa's poverty scenario is characterized by a poor record of economic growth, high inequality in income and assets ownership, and inadequate access to basic social services, resulting in low levels of human resource development and low agricultural productivity. Although the economic performance of many African countries has improved significantly since the mid-1990s, the required sustainable growth rate of 7% to reverse the growing poverty in the continent remains uncertain. In SSA alone, about 50% of the population live in absolute poverty as compared to 20% in North Africa. Of this population, about 80% comprise women. To be able to reduce this poverty on a sustainable basis, policymakers need to know its root causes. One way of investigating the causes of poverty is to examine the dimensions highlighted by poor people, as is attempted below:

- Firstly, inadequate income and assets to attain the basic needs of rural households - food, shelter, clothing, and acceptable levels of health and education - are indicators of poverty. As countries grow richer, so on average are poor people in these countries better paid. With economic growth, income poverty should fall, as opposed to economic contraction, when income poverty rises.
- Secondly, basic subsistence is sustained mostly by women and girls' labour, but they do not have corresponding access to opportunities for improvement (e.g. through education, training, paid jobs etc.) They face a situation of voicelessness and powerlessness in the institutions of state and society. They are prevented from taking advantage of new economic opportunities, and are often discriminated against in the household and in land, labour, and credit markets.
- Thirdly, in the absence of widespread use of technologies, paid work and basic infrastructure such as water and roads, it is difficult to overcome unsustainable subsistence in rural Africa.
- Finally, inability to reduce risk or cope with adverse shocks is a major material and human deprivation that perpetuates poverty. The risks that the poor and near-poor face due to their circumstances cause great vulnerability. These risks include living and farming on marginal lands with uncertain rainfall, precarious employment in the formal or informal sector, social exclusion, and victimization

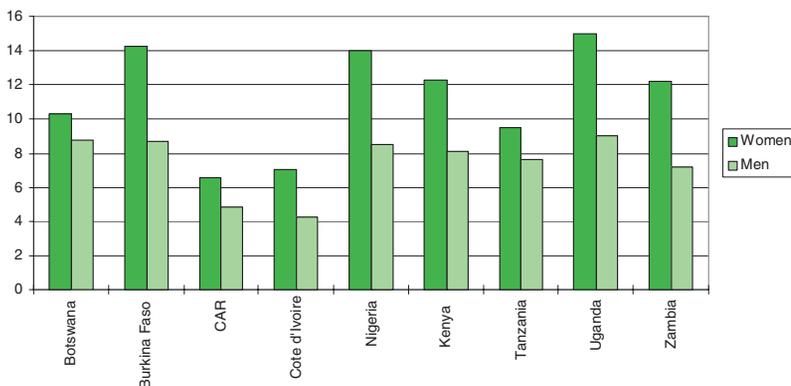
from violence and crime. Other risks include economic shocks such as price fluctuations. Low levels of assets also make poor people especially vulnerable to negative shocks, while those with more assets are more resilient, but only if they are temporary¹.

2.2 Challenges in Reducing Poverty

15. It is now generally accepted that the causes of poverty can be addressed by either increasing per capita income (economic growth) or by reducing inequality in the distribution of income and wealth. However, seven challenges in reducing poverty can be identified.

16. The first challenge is reducing women’s poverty. Since 70% of the poor in Africa are women, reducing women’s poverty will greatly reduce overall poverty on the continent. Although women and men share the burdens of poverty in most societies in Africa, women are also subject to socially imposed constraints that further limit their opportunities and deny their equal access to public services and consumption goods. Poor women in particular are subject to heavy time burdens due to the demands on their productive, social, reproduction, and community management roles. When both household and market work are considered, women work much longer hours than their male counterparts (figure 1). The constraints that women face are ironic, given that they play such significant roles in the economic development of the region. Women contribute 70% or more of the labour force in agricultural production and produce over 90% of the food in Africa.

Figure 1: Productive Hours per Day by Gender: Selected Countries



Sources: World Bank 1999.

1. In this paper, “assets” refer to directly productive assets (labour, land, agricultural inputs, financial services, and infrastructure), human capital (education and health), and social capital assets (household relations and participation).

17. For the continent to reduce poverty by 50% by 2015, an average annual GDP growth of at least 7% is required. Recent ECA studies (ECA Economic Report, 1999) show that to achieve this demands a 4% reduction per year in the ratio of people living in poverty. In these terms, for Africa as a whole, GDP growth of about 7% per annum would be required. This is no doubt a genuine strategy, but can it be realistically achieved without integrating gender issues into macroeconomic policies and procedures within the context of economic reform? Recent analysis by the ECA PRSP-LG shows that despite better economic performance reported in several African countries in the recent past, the impact of this growth does not seem to reduce poverty. The question we should ask ourselves is which kinds of growth will best reduce poverty and raise the living standards and productivity of African peoples?

18. The second challenge, which is tied to the first, is how to address the gender inequality that persists in access to and control of productive, human, and social capital assets. Recent UNDP studies show that women in Africa receive less than 10% of the credit going to small farmers and 1% of the total credit given to the agricultural sector. In 1990, multilateral banks allocated \$US5.8 billion for rural credit to developing countries, but only 5% reached rural women. Likewise, differential access to essential public services including education and health is prevalent in nearly all African countries.

19. Despite the belief that education is the single most important investment a country can pursue to eradicate poverty, education in Africa registered the lowest average annual growth in total years of schooling between 1969 and 1990 of all regions of the world. Moreover, gender disparity in enrolment persists in favour of male students. This is indeed saddening given that knowledge, innovation, and application of skills are considered by the new endogenous growth concept as the only sources of long-term economic growth. It is therefore a missed opportunity for growth to deny education to girls, who in many countries outnumber boys, and grow up to be the backbone of livelihoods. A study by UNDP (Human Development Report, 1995) in Cote d'Ivoire, India, Indonesia and Thailand reveals that an additional year of schooling can increase a woman's future earnings by about 15%, compared with 11% for a man. Furthermore, education affects women's ability to control their own fertility and such control is a cornerstone of population and development-related programmes. To be sustainable, development programmes should embrace universal female education, improved reproductive health, and more credit for women.

20. A World Bank Status Report on poverty argues that for SSA to achieve equitable growth and sustainable development it is necessary to reduce gender inequality in access to and control of a diverse range of

assets. Reducing gender inequality, which is a development objective in its own right, also increases growth, efficiency, and welfare. Conversely, there is a growing awareness that gender inequality does not only cost women lost opportunities, but is also costly to children, and to many men. It exacts costs in lower output (GDP, food security, etc.), lower development of people's capacities, lower leisure time and lower overall well being.

21. The third challenge in reducing poverty is the need to include women's work in national accounts. Currently, women's work, to a larger extent than men's work, is not included in national economic statistics because a great deal of women's work does not take place in a formal market sector. Rather, it consists of subsistence production, informal sector employment, domestic and 'reproductive' work, and voluntary work. Subsistence production is often not included in GDP measurement, because statistical surveys tend to overlook this area of work and do not take account of it. Given that agriculture contributes over 30% of GDP in many African countries, and that it is a female labour-intensive sector of production, policymakers cannot afford to exclude women's subsistence production from national economic statistics.

22. According to a UNDP Report (1995:97), global estimates suggest that women's unpaid work produces an output of \$11 trillion per annum, compared to a global GDP of about \$23 trillion. The 'unpaid' care economy (domestic work and voluntary community work) contributes to the welfare of individuals receiving care, and contributes to the activities of both the private commodity economy and the public service economy by supplying human resources (human capital) and maintaining the social framework (social capital). The care economy produces family and community-oriented goods and services as part of the process of caring for people.

23. Essentially, ignoring the care economy leads to levels of investment that do not correspond to its importance. Macroeconomists treat the subsector as if it is able to supply whatever quantities of human capacities and social support that the private commodity economy and the public service economy require, regardless of the level of investment. It is assumed that women's time is available in unlimited quantities - i.e. that the supply of women's labour is perfectly elastic. For the same reasons, domestic activities such as water supply, energy supply, and caring for family members, which are vital for maintaining and reproducing the labour force, are excluded from GNP accounting. They are defined in the UN System of National Accounts as lying outside the production boundary. This in part explains why, despite many recommendations made by various meetings to increase national budgetary allocations for social sectors, compliance is still insignificant. A monetary value can be assigned to unpaid work to make economic valuation more accurate and comprehensive. In other

words, the values of such unpaid activities are economic and are not merely humanitarian.

24. The fourth challenge for development economists is to determine whether there are sufficient resources in the care economy to respond to the demands being made on it. If the care economy is overburdened, there is a negative impact on the commodity and public service economies, through the reduced productivity and increased costs arising from inadequate maintenance of the human resource and social frameworks. This negative impact affects the level of growth in these sectors. On the other hand, investment in these areas will not only reduce women's time burden but will also improve labour productivity and increase output, thereby reducing poverty. Much of the investment required by the care economy consists of social and physical infrastructure (e.g. health and education services, water, sanitation, roads, electricity, food-processing equipment etc.). Such infrastructure has to be accessible to the overburdened women of Africa, who are also constrained by very low purchasing power.

25. The fifth challenge is how to remove barriers to engendering national policies. These relate to:

- Unpaid female and children labour;
- Inadequate investment in social infrastructures;
- Inadequate gender-disaggregated data;
- Inadequate trained human resources and financial resources.
- Lack of people-oriented policies;
- Lack of accountability;
- Marginalization of people's voice from decision-making;
- Unclear understanding of the nexus between poverty, gender and growth; and
- Knowledge gaps in addressing the gender issues in poverty analysis.

26. The sixth challenge is how to combat the attitudes in Ministries of Finance and Planning, as key Ministries directing the pace and pattern of structural economic reforms and inclusion of gender concerns in macroeconomic policy. This is especially necessary in the changing ministerial roles during this period of globalization and liberalization of economies. Ministries of Finance and Planning have a critical role to play in engendering reforms even if specific decisions have to be taken by productive-sector Ministries such as Agriculture, Transport, and Energy. However, these Ministries are often very male dominated and are too gender insensitive.

27. The seventh challenge is how ECA can be a catalyst in translating development policy actions in Africa into practice, by using the institu-

tional comparative advantages outlined in section II of this paper. How can ECA use its unique positioning to help Africa reduce poverty by integrating NMW into Systems of National Accounts (SNAs) and national budgets? The Commission will need to address various issues, such as:

- How to convince and get the commitment of key decision-makers to eradicate gender-related constraints to growth and poverty reduction;
- The current scarcity of frameworks and tools at national and sub-regional levels for engendering planning instruments;
- The lack of knowledge of how macroeconomic policies impact on women's welfare, their productivity and how this relates to the overall economy;
- The urgent need to increase the current low national capacity to engender national planning instruments;
- How best to use ACGD to develop the framework for analysing gender in PRSPs as introduced by the World Bank; and
- How to disseminate the framework for use by member States.

3. Lessons Learnt from Implementing National Poverty Reduction Strategies

3.1 Gender-related Deficiencies in Past and On-going Poverty Reduction Strategies

28. To improve the performance of ECA member States, ACGD reviewed the gender and PRSP process, and took stock of where African countries stood, to help them to improve their engendering performance in the future. The review shows that most African countries are now in the process of preparing or implementing PRSPs, which if appropriately designed and implemented, will have policies that address such poverty reduction challenges.

29. A general deficiency noted by African countries and by some of Africa's external partners, including the European Commission, is that PRSPs have "a missing link". The mechanisms that lead to outcomes are not elaborated. This concern has been expressed in various meetings of Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Ministers of Finance and PRSP coordinators, who have taken note that the scale of growth planned under the PRSP cannot halve poverty by 2015, that there is no in-depth analysis of how sectoral and structural measures in the programme will produce the targeted growth rates and that insufficient attention is being given to social inclusion and equity in many PRSPs, including gender concerns. Although the ACGD review shows that many African countries recognize that gender-sensitive development strategies contribute significantly to economic growth and to equity objectives, deficiencies still exist in mainstreaming gender into their PRSP frameworks.

30. HIPC Ministers have also expressed concern that there is little evidence that possibilities for alternative macroeconomic paths have been explored, to take into account the inflation that can arise due to public expenditure cuts that affect NME (care economy) workers, who are mostly women. The need for the private sector to address women's credit needs has also not been adequately considered in the PRSPs. HIPC Ministers have underscored the need for these lessons to be taken into account as more countries develop full PRSPs.

31. The deficiencies identified were based on a review of 19 Interim PRSPs (I-PRSPs), four full PRSPs, accompanying Joint Bank and Fund

Staff Assessments (JSAs) that were completed in March 2001², and on the findings of the ECA PRSP-LG. The JSAs in particular examined the degree to which gender issues were included in the four core elements of the I-PRSPs (diagnosis, public actions, monitoring, and consultative process) and in eight sectoral areas (health, nutrition and population; education; labour markets; agriculture; safety nets; infrastructure; governance; and financial services). Each I-PRSP and PRSP was assigned a separate score from 0 to 2 for each core element and each sectoral area, using the following rating system:

- 0 = no mention of gender issues
- 1 = brief mention of gender issues
- 2 = gender issues treated with some elaboration

32. Table 1 shows average overall scores separately for I-PRSPs and full PRSPs, by region. The average scores in the table are low. They suggest relatively little attention to gender issues in any of the core elements or sectors of most I-PRSPs. There is moderate variation in coverage of gender issues across the strategy papers. At the lower end, one I-PRSP did not include any reference to gender issues in any of its core elements or in any sector. At the other end, the highest overall score for a single I-PRSP was

Table 1: Overall Coverage of Gender Issues in I-PRSPs and PRSPs: Average Scores by Region

Region	Interim PRSPs	Number of countries	Full PRSPs	Number of countries
Africa	0.5	9	0.5	4
East Asia & Pacific	0.7	1	--	--
South Asia	--	--	--	--
Europe & Central Asia	0.1	4	--	--
Middle East & North Africa	0.4	1	--	--
Latin America & Caribbean	0.4	4	--	--
All Regions	0.4	19	0.5	4

Source: Gender in the PRSPs: Stocktaking, World Bank, 2001

2. The review included I-PRSPs from some African countries, namely Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sao Tome, and Tanzania; and from some non-African countries, namely, Albania, Bolivia, Cambodia, Georgia, Guyana, Honduras, Macedonia, Moldova, Nicaragua, and Yemen. Also included were all four PRSPs from Africa that had been considered by the Board at the time of the study: Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Tanzania, and Uganda. Three reviewers examined the 23 documents, with each document being reviewed only once.

0.8. None of the I-PRSPs or PRSPs reached a score of 1.0 by making reference to gender in diagnosis and indicating intentions to include men and women in their actions and indicators in each of the eight sectoral areas.³

33. To date, some regions have incorporate gender issues into their documents more fully than have other regions. The one I-PRSP from East Asia and the Pacific received a higher than average rating, while the four PRSPs from Europe and Central Asia regions received lower than average ratings. Although the full PRSPs scored higher on average than the I-PRSPs, there is little difference in coverage of gender issues between the I-PRSPs and full PRSPs in Africa. This is disturbing, as the full PRSPs are expected to meet a higher standard than the I-PRSPs.

34. The analysis also covered gender issues in I-PRSPs and PRSPs in terms of diagnosis, public actions, and monitoring and consultative process as per the PRSP framework in box 1. Table 2 shows the average score for each element, separately for I-PRSPs and full PRSPs. The score for each core element was based on the average for all countries and all sectors. Again, overall, table 2 shows that little attention is being paid to the gender dimension of poverty reduction in the documents that were reviewed. In some countries, the most appropriate kinds of diagnosis, actions and monitoring are at a very basic level. However, the low scores shown in table 2 do not reflect a lack of sophistication but failure to address gender issues, even with simple approaches. The absence of a logical flow from diagnosis to public actions and from public actions to monitoring is a general problem with the PRSPs.

35. This paper also reviews sectoral content of the I-PRSPs and PRSPs covering gender issues in eight sectoral areas as depicted in table 3. The table shows the percentage of I-PRSPs/PRSPs that treated gender issues with some degree of elaboration for each of the eight sectoral areas (i.e.

Table 2: Coverage of Gender Issues in the Core Components of I-PRSPs and PRSPs: Average Scores by Component

Core element	I-PRSPs	PRSPs
Diagnosis	0.5	0.7
Public actions	0.5	0.6
Monitoring	0.2	0.4
Consultative Process	0.5	0.5

Source: Gender in the PRSPs: Stocktaking, World Bank, 2001

3. A score of 1.0 could also be reached by providing more than a passing mention of gender in each of four sectoral areas.

**Table 3: Treatment of gender issues in eight sectoral areas:
Percentage of I-PRSPs and PRSPs treating gender issues
with some elaboration**

Sector	Diagnosis	Actions	Monitoring
Health, nutrition, population	35	43	30
Education	30	13	22
Labour markets	8	13	0
Agriculture	4	0	0
Safety nets	0	4	0
Infrastructure	0	4	0
Governance	0	4	0
Financial services	0	0	0

Source: Gender in the PRSPs: Stocktaking, World Bank, 2001

score 2). A document was considered to have treated gender with some degree of elaboration in the relevant sector if anything more than a passing mention of gender issues was included.

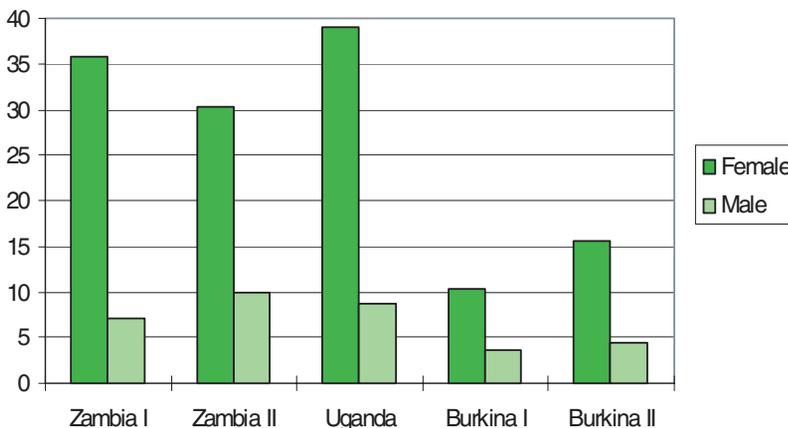
3.2 Policy Implications of Gender Analysis in PRSPs

36. Given the gender-blindness in both the I-PRSPs and full PRSPs, macroeconomic policies including PRSPs have to be gender-aware in order to make a difference in human development. To effectively address the challenges of poverty and the weaknesses of interim PRSPs, a few bilateral agencies and the World Bank have provided some insight into the policy implications of gender analysis for PRSPs. The aim is to achieve more informed, gender-aware policy responses and action priorities that address the gender-differentiated experience of poverty. The analysis of the gender dimensions of poverty identified four principal policy implications of relevance for the PRSPs:

- Firstly, both men and women play important roles in economic activity, especially in Africa, but they are not equally distributed across the productive sectors (e.g. agriculture, energy, transport etc.), and are not equally remunerated for their labour. In Uganda, which is illustrative of SSA as a whole, agriculture is a female-intensive sector of production, and industry and services are male intensive. This shows that different sectoral growth and investment patterns make different demands on men and women's labour and have different implications for division of labour, distribution of income and allocation of investment resources.

- Secondly, analysis of men and women’s time allocation shows that market and household economies coexist and are interdependent. For example, the gender division of labour leaves women in rural areas with a transport task that is much greater than for men (figure 2). Time constraints are often severe; they affect women more than men, given the unequal division of labour, and are more acute for the poorest. Addressing this time burden is considered one of the highest priorities for poverty reduction strategies for rural areas, as it shows the constraints and options women and men face in responding to changing economic incentives and opportunities. To reduce constraints on time budgeting, it is necessary to give the highest priority in the PRSP to measures that save time or improve the productivity of time use for both men and women.
- Thirdly, gender inequality in access to and control of a wide range of human, economic, and social assets persists, and constitutes a key dimension of poverty. This gender-based inequality has direct and indirect costs for economic growth and development, and diminishes the effectiveness of poverty reduction efforts.
- Fourthly, the poor in general, and poor women in particular, have little or no voice in decision-making, and their different needs and constraints do not inform policy choices and priorities. This means that proactive measures are needed to ensure inclusive participation in the PRSP process and in the formulation of inclusive policies and programmes. In this respect, gender needs to be a criterion of inclusion in PRSP participatory processes and a criterion of choice in prioritizing the PRSP policy responses and operational interventions.

Figure 2: Gender and Transport Burdens in SSA
Comparison of Female/Male Transport Burdens
(in Tonne-Kms per Year)



Source: Barwell 1996 in World Bank, 1999.

4. A Framework for Mainstreaming Gender into National Accounts and National Budget

4.1 Why Mainstream Gender into PRSPs?

37. Mainstreaming gender perspectives into PRSPs is important because of the evidence that gender-based inequalities slow economic growth and poverty reduction, and tend to be most extreme in the lowest-income countries and the poorest households. Given the experience of past failures, development in Africa may not be achieved by relying strictly on political initiatives or focusing narrowly on economic dynamics. A study undertaken by the World Bank and ECA (2000) among other partners: *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* argued that Africa has enormous unexploited potential. It has hidden growth reserves in its people, especially its women, who now provide more than half of the region's labour but lack equal access to education and factors of production. The study concluded that indeed gender equality could be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction in Africa as confirmed by the increasing recognition of the relevance of gender and development work.

38. In 1998, the World Bank analysed the linkages between gender, growth, and poverty. This helped frame the gender debate in terms of economic growth and productivity, that is important in terms of development effectiveness, and not just in terms of social equity - much as equity considerations are also important. Thus, the analysis shows that gender concerns are a real economic issue, not just a social one.

39. This paper identified four key reasons for integrating gender into PRSPs:

- Firstly, the causes of poverty are different for men and women, especially in Africa where there is “feminisation” of poverty;
- Secondly, gender inequality persists in access to and control of productive, human and social capital assets;
- Thirdly, men and women contribute in different ways to poverty reduction and are affected differently by poverty reduction measures; and
- Fourthly, gender increases growth, economic efficiency and welfare.

40. Thus, constraints, opportunities, incentives and needs in poverty in Africa differ along gender lines, making it necessary to address these issues

along gender lines. A gender-aware analysis of poverty contributes to a better understanding of the causes of poverty, and indicates in turn different policy responses and investment priorities for reduce poverty.

41. To realize the potential payoffs from engendering PRSPs, public policy has a key role to play in promoting gender-inclusive growth and poverty reduction as advocated in the PRSP framework. Therefore, if PRSPs are to serve the development goal for which they were developed, gender perspectives need to be integrated within the framework with commitment to implement from governments and their development partners. For example, failure to conduct poverty diagnosis in a gender-responsive manner runs the risk of ignoring important avenues to poverty reduction. The framework for using gender analysis in the PRSP that is presented in box 1 (modified from the World Bank, 2001) is designed to improve the access of the poor (especially women), to productive assets (e.g. land and credit), and to raise the returns on these assets. The framework's four stages for gender analysis are shown in box 1.

Box 1: A Framework for Gender Analysis in PRSPs

Stage I: Integrating gender into poverty diagnosis

- (a) Ensuring that gender is addressed across the four dimensions of poverty:
 - Opportunities:** analysis of gender differences in access to productive resources and opportunities for escaping poverty and promoting economic growth;
 - Capabilities:** analysis of welfare: employment, education, health, nutrition, and life expectancy;
 - Security:** analysis of vulnerability to economic shocks, natural disasters and violence; and
 - Empowerment:** analysis of gender differences in participation and in access to decision-making in politics at the national/local levels, and in control of resources within community and households.

- (b) Documenting experiences of poverty for both women and men:
 - Quantitative analysis** of household survey data on allocation/access to resources/decision making;
 - Qualitative analysis** of participatory assessment on concerns and priorities of the poor;
 - Analysis of different constraints** women and men face in accessing the range of assets for economic and household production (land, labour, financial services, human capital, social capital);

Analysis of conflicts and trade-offs in work in the “household” economy and in the “market” economy).

- (c) Undertaking gender analysis of the data gathered:
Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected for consequences and impact of gender differences e.g. time use and interdependence of household and market economies.

Stage II: Promoting gender-inclusive participation in all the processes of PRSPs

Stage III: Using gender-informed poverty analysis in defining priority policies and actions

- (a) Defining policy implications of analysis of country-level gender-differentiated experience of poverty to match measures that address the:
Different demands on men and women’s labour to increase productivity;
Short-term trade-offs between the “productive” and “household” economies and/or building on externalities;
Interdependence between household and market economies;
Inequality in access to human, economic and social assets;
Participation of all stakeholders including both men and women in the PRSP process.
- (b) Based on these policy implications, identifying gender-responsive priorities for PRSPs in:
Articulating gender priorities and responses (e.g. women’s time burden, insecure property rights, lack of access to resources, gender-based wage gaps, etc.); and
Engendering national budgets and labour markets.
- (c) Incorporating gender priorities into key poverty reduction measure.

Stage IV: Integrating Gender into the PRSP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

- (a) Integrating a gender dimension into the PRSP outcome monitoring system;
- (b) Deciding what to evaluate in the design of the PRSP evaluation strategy;
- (c) Measuring the impacts of policies and programmes; determining data requirements; etc.);
- (d) Building institutional capacity for gender-responsive M&E (e.g. for relevant agencies).

Source: Modified from World Bank’s Toolkit (Gender Chapter), PRSP Source Book, 2001

4.2. A Conceptual Framework for Mainstreaming Gender in National Planning Instruments

42. The ECA approach to mainstreaming gender into poverty reduction strategies (PRS) including PRSPs is based on the policy implications of gender analysis as outlined above. In this context, the ACGD gender-mainstreaming programme orientation for 2001-2005 is reflected practically in its biennial programmes of work. As poverty reduction strategies including the PRSP framework are now influencing national development planning, by targeting poverty reduction as the main entry point, gender can be mainstreamed in national planning instruments, especially in national accounts and national budgets.

43. The major output of the ACGD Policy Analysis and Advocacy Programme is to demonstrate to key decision-makers in six African countries initially, the importance of gender-based obstacles to growth and poverty reduction. The evidence will be used to get national commitment for adopting specific measures, especially mainstreaming gender concerns and mechanisms into national development and poverty reduction policies and strategies by 2005. The specific objectives of the programme are to:

- Establish the extent of inclusion of women's NME in national accounts and national budgets (NANBs) in African countries;
- Improve concepts, tools and methodologies to establish best practices and standards in Africa;
- Create NMW awareness and motivate policymakers to invest in increased production and application of time-use surveys for the data needed to place NMW onto the policy agenda;
- Strengthen the capacity of statisticians and national accountants to engender NANBs;
- and
- Support development of gender-aware tools to evaluate the impact of policies and strategies on women's welfare, economic growth and poverty reduction.

44. This programme proposes a framework for integrating women's NMW into NANBs (see box 2). The framework consists of seven strategic interrelated processes designed to lead to informed decision-making. The activities are not necessarily sequential in time. The programme recommends accounting of women's NMW as a critical policy intervention for poverty reduction in Africa. Its rationale is summarized below:

- Women who constitute 50% of Africa's population carry out about two-thirds of their work as unpaid labour. Taking account of the value of this NMW can be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction;

- Women's NMW work contributes significantly to income generation, long-term growth and poverty reduction by supplying human and social capital to both private and public sectors;
- Policies/programmes/services and resource allocations for NMW can lead to economic growth;
- Policies (e.g. cutbacks in the national budget, rising unemployment) increase women's burden of NMW, further restricting women's access to economic opportunities and benefits;
- Invisibility of NMW gives an inaccurate picture of GDP and cross-country comparability;
- The burden of women's NMW risks women's ability to supply paid work, and reduces their productivity.

45. The rationale for integrating women's NMW into national accounts is actually a poverty reduction strategy that allows accurate analysis of:

- Inequality in the distribution of activities of NME;
- Productivity changes in NME;
- Shifts in women's work and family welfare; and
- Contribution of women to GDP for sound policy and budget formulation.

46. The programme will also build national capacity to engender national budgets drawing to some extent on existing gender-sensitive budgets (GSBs). These are not separate budgets for women and men but refer to a variety of tools and processes that attempt to assess the impact of government budgets, mainly at national level. The national budget is considered to be the most promising entry point for integrating gender analysis into macroeconomic policies. This is because gender concerns are more visible in fiscal policy than in monetary policy, and as budgets have an annual cycle, this focus allows the processes of analysis, including impact monitoring and evaluation to be completed within a relatively short time. Moreover, GSBs can be implemented at the country level with a relatively small amount of resources.

47. As for national accounts, the rationale for engendering national budgets is also a poverty reduction strategy that allows:

- Better public expenditure management consistent with development policies;
- Overall budgeting that is pro-poor and pro-women;
- Resource allocation that is prioritized to the needs of both men and women; and
- Impact assessment across all sectors, to show benefits to both men and women through budget tracking and realistic sustainability testing of budget deficits.

**Box 2: ACGD Conceptual and Analytical Framework
for Mainstreaming Gender into National Accounts
and National Budgets**

**Stage I: Development of a Conceptual and Analytical Framework
(2001 - 2002)**

As a first step, ACGD has developed an appropriate conceptual framework to provide the basic knowledge to support the strategy for accounting for women's non-market work; and an analytical framework to analyze this work and time use. Before launching the programme, an Ad Hoc Expert Group will review, enrich and validate the framework and the implementation process.

Stage II: Establishment of a Quality Control and Self-monitoring System (2002)

To ensure quality outcome from the activities of the programme, ACGD will establish a quality control and self-monitoring system by constituting an internal working group and an external Advisory Expert Group made up of senior economists, statisticians, sociologists and gender experts.

Stage III: Undertake Inventory of Existing Tools/Concepts and Capacity to Engender National Accounts and National Budget (2002)

The inventory report will provide information on the need to develop tools and methodologies for engendering the planning instruments.

Stage IV: Development of an Easy Reference Guide (2003-2004)

This is a procedural manual aimed at sharpening the skills of both producers and users of gender-disaggregated micro- and macro-economic statistics based on time-use and household surveys. Currently, such a handbook does not exist in Africa. The ERG will cover procedures that survey statisticians and national accountants should follow in collection, analysis and integration of gender-disaggregated data on NMW into national accounts and national budgets. It will also analyse the impact of national budgets on time use, and assist governments in assessing the contribution of women to GDP. The ERG will also cover step-by-step instructions for modelers to construct, test and use the results of a gender-aware model.

Stage V: Development of a Gender-aware Macroeconomic Model (2003 - 2004)

Operational models to evaluate the impact of specific policy responses that effectively reflect the economic reality of a country are lacking. The gender-aware model will be used by governments to evaluate the impact of fiscal policies on women's welfare, and on growth and poverty reduction in Africa. Upon validation of the framework by the Advisory Expert Group Meeting, the programme will design and construct the model and then carry out controlled tests to evaluate fiscal policies.

Stage VI: Launching the ERG and the Model (2004)

After developing the ERG and the model, ECA plans to launch these tools in an international symposium to be attended by African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Development as key decision-makers to promote gender mainstreaming into national development plans. Other related Ministries, such as Agriculture, Energy and Water, will also be invited to attend the symposium along with ECA partners and other stakeholders. The expected outcome of the meeting will be commitment of the decision-makers to strengthen national capacity to use the ERG and the model.

Stage VII: Implementation of a Capacity- Building Programme Using the ERG and Model (2005)

The capacity-building component of the programme aims to sharpen the skills of national statisticians and accountants in collection, analysis, and integration of gender-disaggregated data from time-use surveys in national accounts and national budgets based on the ERG and the model. The activities will include designing the capacity-building programme for the ERG and the model, organizing sub-regional workshops on the ERG for statisticians and planners and organizing a regional workshop for policy makers on a gender-aware model.

Conclusion

48. This paper attempted to analyze the questions of gender inequality as a necessary condition for growth and poverty reduction with a view to enhancing the visibility, recognition and support of decision makers for the important role and contribution of women's NMW in achieving the MDGs of halving poverty by 2015. The paper argued that economic growth alone is not a necessary condition for development. It outlined the evolution of PRSPs through the Bretton Woods Institutions with ECA using its comparative advantage as a regional UN organ for development in Africa as a significant actor in adding value to the process. The paper also reviewed gender-related causes of poverty as being inadequate income and assets to attain basic needs of rural households, lack of access to opportunities for improvement through education, health, training, paid jobs arising from a sense of voicelessness and powerlessness in the institutions of state and society. Other causes of poverty relate to absence of time-saving technologies such as water, energy and roads, as well as low levels of assets, which make women in particular vulnerable to adverse shocks (e.g. price fluctuations and policy changes).

49. The paper further outlined the major deficiencies in the past and ongoing poverty reduction strategies. Given that rural women who provide most of the labour in the non-market economy are crucial partners in agriculture and rural development, the paper cited the little attention paid to gender issues as a major omission in the PRSPs. And Africa's development partners including the HIPC Ministers of Finance and PRSP coordinators observed this omission as a major obstacle to poverty reduction efforts. The paper outlined the policy implications of gender analysis in PRSPs as a case for sound policy formulation for empowering rural women to fully participate in poverty reduction efforts alongside their male counterparts.

50. The paper also uncovered a number of gender-related challenges to reducing poverty in Africa. The question now is if the MDG of halving poverty by 2015 can be achieved without integrating gender issues. Other challenges relate to how to address gender inequality in access to and control of productive, human and social capital assets, the need to include women's non-NMW in national planning instruments and how to remove barriers to engendering national policies. For ECA, the most critical challenge is how it can best exploit its unique position to help Africa reduce poverty through gender-aware approaches.

51. This in itself poses several challenges including:

- How to get the commitment of key decision-makers, who need to be convinced of how gender-related obstacles constrain growth and poverty reduction;
- The lack of frameworks and tools at national and sub-regional levels for engendering planning instruments;
- The low level of understanding how macroeconomic policies impact on women's welfare, their productivity and how this relates to the overall macroeconomy; and
- The urgent need to increase the current low national capacity to engender national planning instruments.

52. The paper's main conclusions are that:

- Mainstreaming gender perspectives into PRSPs is important economically, because of the evidence that gender-based inequalities slow economic growth and poverty reduction; and
- Gender-based inequalities tend to be most extreme in the lowest-income countries and poorest households.
- Relying strictly on political initiatives or focusing narrowly on economic dynamics may not achieve Africa's development;
- Africa has enormous unexploited potential in its people, especially its women who form more than 50 per cent of populations and who now provide more than half of the region's labour but lack equal access to education and factors of production; and
- Gender equality, through mainstreaming of gender concerns, perspectives and data into planning instruments for poverty reduction institutionalize a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction in Africa.

53. In acknowledgement of the vital role women play in Africa's development, the paper outlined ECA's conceptual and analytical framework, which is the basis for the strategy of the Policy Analysis and Advocacy programme and which strongly supports valuation and integration of women's NMW in national accounts and national budgets. The major outputs of the programme will be:

- To demonstrate to key decision-makers in six African countries initially, the importance of gender-based obstacles to growth and poverty reduction; and
- To get their commitment to integrate data and measures to overcome these obstacles into the national development and poverty reduction policies and strategies by 2005.

54. The framework consists of the following seven strategic interrelated processes designed to lead to informed decision-making:

Stage I: Development of a conceptual and analytical framework (2001 - 2002)

Stage II: Establishment of a quality control and self-monitoring system (2002)

Stage III: Undertaking inventory of existing tools and capacity to engender national accounts and national budgets (2002).

Stage IV: Development of an Easy Reference Guide (2003-2004)

Stage V: Development of a gender-aware macroeconomic model (2003 - 2004)

Stage VI: Launching the ERG and the model (2004)

Stage VII: Implementation of a capacity-building programme using the ERG and model (2005)

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Appendix I

Good Practices in Mainstreaming Gender into Poverty Reduction Strategies

1. Gender inequalities impact negatively on the overall performance of governments and impose costs on society as a whole. Conversely, if more investments were made in the household economy, each country would have a combination of more output, higher economic efficiency, more development of people's capacities, and higher levels of well being. In this sense, gender inequality is inefficient. Straightforward economic analysis, when disaggregated by sex, often provides convincing efficiency advocacy for governments to remove institutional barriers to women's productivity. The following best practices in mainstreaming gender into PRSPs are based on recent economic analyses that reflect the benefits of investing in the household economy:

2. The Cambodia I-PRSP provides a good description of the demographic characteristics of the poor. It shows how the effects of high mortality, internal displacement and large-scale out-migration of adult males from the country during the Khmer Rouge period have resulted in a large proportion of the population (17%) living in female-headed households. The I-PRSP examines differences in incidence of poverty by headship and finds that poverty rates are the same in male- and female-headed households. It goes on to say, however, that intergenerational transmission of poverty is particularly common in female-headed households because of the need for girls to substitute for women's tasks in household maintenance, resulting in low investment in the education and health of girls.

3. Another good example of the discussion of gender differences in poverty incidence can be found in the Tanzania PRSP. This PRSP distinguishes between income and non-income measures of poverty and discusses both differences between households and within households. In the discussion of headship, the PRSP notes that female-headed households are somewhat less likely to be poor in terms of consumption (45% compared to 49%), but are perceived to be poorer because of their vulnerability, lack of asset ownership and limited schooling.

4. The Gambia I-PRSP provides a good example of how the economic roles of women can be integrated into diagnosis and actions. This I-PRSP notes that extensive farm and household duties pose a time burden that often prevents women from using public services. It identifies the primary activi-

ties of rural women (84% are subsistence farmers) and notes that they have less access to the mechanization that has improved men's agricultural productivity. Studies show that women, in general, work longer hours than men do, carrying out traditional household tasks as well as farming. The lack of basic services in rural areas, such as reliable water supply, dependable health centres, transport and stores, adds considerably to women's workload. This analysis is followed by proposals to promote labour-saving devices to help women in their farming, post-harvesting and domestic duties and to establish activities to create employment and income generation for women.

5. The Burkina Faso I-PRSP provides descriptions of measures used to address the economic activities of rural women. With assistance from NGOs, women's cooperatives grow vegetables and produce crafts for the tourism sector. However, the productivity of these activities is low due to the lack of support services and access to credit. The institutional mechanisms established for the purpose of granting credit to women are inadequate, making it difficult for women to avail themselves of credit facilities. The strategy for Burkina Faso recommends enhancing existing institutions such as the Support Fund for Women's Income-Generating Activities. Specific actions with budget line items identified include:

- Subsidies for agricultural equipment, particularly for the poorest groups (women, small food-crop farmers);
- Support for experimentation, adaptation and distribution of low-cost equipment to small farmers and women; and
- Support for the establishment of small milk-manufacturing enterprises by women, with equipment, training, and producers associations.

6. The Rwanda I-PRSP also includes one of the more specific plans for targeting safety nets, in this case, for the new poor. The Victims of the Genocide Fund is designed to support widows and widowers, orphaned and unaccompanied children, sexually abused women and children, the elderly without traditional support, the handicapped and the homeless and landless. The fund helps build sustainable livelihoods through provision of educational fees, healthcare, social rehabilitation, housing, income-generation projects and legal assistance (related to both human and property rights). It also includes public-awareness campaigns.

7. In education, the Mozambique I-PRSP provides gender-differentiated analysis of illiteracy rates, and identifies the particularly large gender gap in rural areas. It also notes that educational status is an even more important poverty reducer for female-headed households than for male-headed households. It recognizes that the constraints to education are gender-specific. Targets clearly identified include the need to ensure that girls have access to school and remain in school, by making parents and communities aware of the importance of girls' attendance and through the free provision of school materials, uniforms and coverage of other educational

expenses. The goal is to increase the proportion of girls in school from the current 43%.

8. The Rwanda I-PRSP acknowledges the specific context in which its fertility rates have increased, and proposes ways to address the social factors. While men are ignored in many family planning programmes, the Rwanda I-PRSP illustrates a best practice, in its acknowledgement of the importance of men as well as women in fertility decisions. The high fertility rate is linked to several factors including the traditional and socio-economic preferences for large families, with children considered a source of family wealth and social security and also the inadequate access to family planning programmes. The genocide and its aftermath have contributed further factors, including a loss of professionals trained in reproductive health, and the emergence of a “fatalistic” sense in many Rwandans that has resulted in marked reduction in the contraceptive prevalence rate, from over 21% before 1994 to an estimated 7% in 1996.

9. Specific actions include:

- Designing family planning programmes with sensitivity to affordability and acceptability of specific methods;
- Providing better linkage to other reproductive health services;
- Conducting sensitization programmes in partnership with community organizations and NGOs; and
- Providing adult literacy programmes with family planning information for both men and women.

10. One of the few PRSPs to address gender issues in HIV/AIDS programmes is Burkina Faso’s. Here it is recognized that HIV sero-prevalence is 7 per cent among the general population and reaches 13 per cent among truckers. Nearly 64 per cent of the prostitutes in Ouagadougou and 43 per cent of those in Bobo-Dioulasso are estimated to be sero-positive. Yet, despite widespread knowledge concerning AIDS (in 1999, 87 per cent of women and 96 per cent of men knew how AIDS is transmitted) condom use by the most vulnerable groups (truckers, single women, military personnel) remains low. The strategy includes general actions, such as enhancing the ability to diagnose and treat AIDS-related illnesses at local levels, as well as actions targeted at specific groups including “ensuring most vulnerable groups (military personnel, truck drivers, sex workers, etc.) 100 per cent access to condoms, HIV tests, and counselling as well as treatment...” Specific budget line items for these activities are a hopeful sign that they will be implemented.

11. The Nicaragua I-PRSP was one of the few documents to address gender-based violence directly. It notes that, according to the DHS, 29% of women report having suffered some kind of physical or sexual abuse

and, of these, 60% report having been victims of violence when their children were present and 40% during pregnancy. It is likely that the highest incidence is among poor urban women and among the least educated. The most common risks that poor women face are prostitution and sexual and physical abuse. Despite this fact, the poorest communities usually lack the formal structures to protect women. The measures proposed include activities to prevent and penalize family violence and assist victims. In addition, a national action plan will be developed on the topic of domestic violence and it is expected to lead to draft legislation.

12. The Rwanda I-PRSP is one of the few to include discussion of legal issues related to gender. Specifically, the Rwanda I-PRSP discusses the recent revision of the matrimonial code which now offers couples a choice of property regimes, including ownership of assets in common. In addition, it proposes a new labour code and land legislation that would remove restrictions on women's ability to work and own property.

13. The Tanzania PRSP provides the most thorough discussion of inclusive consultations of any I-PRSP or PRSP. To ensure active participation in the grassroots consultations, villagers were grouped according to religion and gender, with women accounting for 22 per cent of participants. The PRSP states that one-sixth of the focus groups identified gender discrimination as an obstacle to poverty reduction, especially with regard to customary ownership of property, and wage employment and decision-making at the national and household levels. Female-focus groups also raised concerns about male alcoholism. In addition to citing the results of the focus groups, the PRSP discusses findings from the "Voices of the Poor" study and a UNDP study that identified gender inequality as a major factor contributing to poverty.

14. The assessment for Cambodia reflects good practice in the breadth of its scope, suggesting the need for:

- Participatory consultations to ensure the equal participation of both men and women so that the poverty reduction priorities of both sexes are taken into consideration;
- Poverty diagnostics that examine gender differences in the causes and consequences of poverty;
- Selection and design of interventions that reflect the different priorities, constraints and opportunities of poor men and women; and
- Appropriate gender-disaggregated monitoring and impact indicators.

15. The assessment for Rwanda provides a useful example in terms of the specificity of its recommendations, encouraging the rapid adoption of the land law that will have a significant poverty reduction impact by giving women access to land.