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African Centre for Gender and Development

Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on
| Women and Development

24-25 January 2006
Addis Ababa

DRAFT REPORT

Introduction

1. The Bureau meeting of the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), from 24-25 January 2006.

2. This meeting, organized at the invitation of the ECA, was attended by the CWD Bureau members as follows:

- **Senegal:** Chairperson, represented by H.E. Hon. Aïda Mbodj;
- **Uganda:** 1st Vice-President, represented by H.E. Hon. Zoe Bakoko Bakoru;
- **Cameroon:** 2nd Vice-President, represented by H.E. Hon. Suzanne Mbomback;
- **Tunisia:** 1st Rapporteur, represented by Mme. Neziha Zouabi, Directrice de la Promotion de la Femme;
- **Botswana:** 2nd Rapporteur, represented by H.E. Hon. Maj. Gen. Moeng R. Pheto;
- **Nigeria:** Ex-officio member, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, represented by H.E. Hon. Maryam Inna Ciroma;
- **Namibia:** Ex-officio member, Chairperson of the 7th Regional Conference on Women, represented, by H.E. Hon. Marlene Mugunda

Agenda item 1: Opening of the Bureau meeting

3. The meeting was opened by the Chairperson of the CWD Bureau, Hon. Aida Mbodj. She welcomed the CWD Bureau members and other participants to the meeting. She recalled that the current Bureau was elected and held its first meeting during the last CWD meeting. She further expressed her satisfaction about the ECA and the African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) hosting and facilitating this meeting, an act which shows the commitment of the ECA to the advancement of women. She also recalled the commitment of African Heads of States and Governments as reflected through several resolutions and conventions that promote the advancement of women and gender equality. Furthermore, the Chairperson referred to the items that would be discussed during the meeting as follows:

- Operational guidelines for the Implementation of the Follow -up Strategy on Beijing +10;
- The ACGD work programme for the coming two years;
- Progress report on the use of the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI);
- Possible participation of the CWD Bureau in the meeting of the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

4. In her welcome remarks, Ms. Josephine Ouedraogo, Acting Deputy Executive Secretary (DES) of the ECA welcomed all the participants to the meeting on behalf of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the ECA and in her own right. The Acting DES highlighted the importance of CWD as a forum providing guidance to the ECA for the implementation of its mandates in the advancement of women and gender issues. She reiterated the importance of collaboration between Regional Institutions such as the African Union, the African Development Bank and ECA. Finally, she thanked the CWD Bureau members and ACGD staff.

5. In her opening remarks, Officer-in-Charge of the ACGD, Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo welcomed the distinguished Bureau members to Addis Ababa. She thanked the Acting DES for her presence at this opening session. Ms. Ruzvidzo highlighted the agenda items awaiting the Bureau's consideration and reiterated her wish for an 'action-packed' meeting.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of Agenda and Work Programme

6. The Agenda and the Work Programme were adopted without amendments.

Agenda item 3: Presentation of the ACGD 2006-2007 Work Programme

7. Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo started the presentation of the work programme by pointing out the objectives of ACGD to mainstream a gender perspective in national development policies and programmes, including budgetary processes, in order to achieve the goals of gender equality, more efficient use of resources and poverty reduction. ACGD's programme of work for the biennium 2006-07 is expected to result in enhanced capacity of member States to formulate and implement gender sensitive policies and programmes for accelerated progress towards gender equality and poverty reduction. Another expected accomplishment is to have enhanced capacity of policy makers

and other stakeholders in the use of tools and methodologies for ensuring gender-responsive policies and programmes.

8. These achievements would be measured through the following indicators: increased number of member States adopting and utilizing policy options for mainstreaming gender into national policies and programmes and increased number of countries adopting tools and methodologies for the development of gender-responsive policies and programmes. Achieving such objectives will depend on the existence of political commitment to the advancement of women and support from partners at the national level.

9. The outputs to be delivered during the biennium include: (i) the servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies such as the CWD meeting and the ad hoc expert group meeting on the review and validation of the African Women's Report as well as the production of parliamentary documentation; (ii) recurrent and non-recurrent publications on the AGDI and the implementation of NEPAD, as well as technical material on national satellite accounts of household production and on assessing national gender policy frameworks; (iii) technical cooperation through the provision of advisory services to member States and capacity building activities on national satellite accounts of household production targeting policy makers and on gender mainstreaming.

10. Ms. Ruzvidzo also briefed the CWD Bureau on the work of the two regional advisers who provide advisory services to member States upon request in the area of women's human rights, including the mainstreaming of these rights into national policies and programmes, and in strengthening the capacity of Member States to mainstream gender.

11. During the discussion following the presentation, the members of the CWD Bureau congratulated ACGD for implementing this ambitious programme and made a strong commitment to support the Division.

Agenda item 4: Presentation of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Follow-up Strategy on Beijing + 10

12. This agenda item was introduced by Ms Thokozile and Ms Hannah Tiagha. Ms. Ruzvidzo's presentation concentrated on processes leading up to the 7th Regional Conference on Women and the development of the *Follow-Up Strategy on Beijing +10*. She highlighted various historical

events and stages, recalling the levels at which the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) was implemented. The presentation referred to the critical areas of concern as articulated in the BPFA. While noting progress made at various levels, the presentation equally pointed out the remaining challenges, as well as key actions to accelerate implementation of the BPFA.

13. In her presentation, Ms. Hannah Tiagha showcased the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Follow-up Strategy on Beijing+10.* Furthermore, she stressed the importance of member States drawing up national action plans. Operationalization as proposed by ECA will involve a series of subregional training workshops aimed at assisting member States to develop national plans of action. In conclusion, participants were accorded a platform to ponder the following questions:

- How can the national gender machineries effectively play their role in promoting, supporting and coordinating the implementation of the *Follow-up Strategy on Beijing +10*:
- How can CWD foster accelerated implementation of the *Follow-up Strategy on Beijing + 10* at the Regional level, thus ensuring timely submission of monitoring and evaluation reports.

14. Ensuing discussion centred around non-participation of Gender/ Women Affairs ministries in Summits of the Regional institutions, especially the ECA Conference of Ministers of Economic Planning and Finance. This was noted to jeopardize the gender mainstreaming budgetary allocation since gender issues are not normally presented at such fora, where attendance is mostly by Finance and Planning Ministers. The Bureau recommended that means should be sought to urge governments to demonstrate ownership of their gender programmes. The need to show political support for gender focal points was stressed since they seem to be ineffective due to lack of support and political clout to make decisions. Effective empowerment of women and creation of the required platform to enable them to address issues relating to poverty reduction was also pointed out. The creation of linkages with other sector ministries in support of the Ministry of Gender Affairs was noted as being of paramount importance to the success of the work of the advancement of women.

15. In further deliberations, the Bureau commended ECA on the work done in coming up with the *Strategy* and challenged itself to ensure that member States own the process of operationalizing

it. The Bureau underscored the importance of developing mechanisms that will ensure that national gender plans are enacted, thus becoming law by which everyone has to abide.

16. The Bureau further urged the ECA to conduct the subregional training workshops in 2006 to allow countries to commence with implementation of the Action plans, so that countries are able to report by 2009. Additionally, the Bureau underscored the importance of dialogues, which provide critical linkages.

Group Discussions

17. The groups were divided along language lines to ponder questions on support and operational modalities for the implementation of the *Follow-Up Strategy on Beijing +10*. The following is a summary of what was discussed and the recommendations thereof:

- Focal point mechanisms should be empowered to make decisions on issues affecting their sectors:
- Development observatories that follow up the evolution of the status of women should be set up.

18. Other recommendations fell into the following categories:

Expected tasks of the ministry

- Existing national gender machineries should be strengthened, and used to sell and implement the *Strategy*. The focal points, parliamentarians, and various gender networks are all important in the implementation of the *Strategy*.
- Capacity of these existing structures should be built for them to:
 - (a) Understand the *Strategy* and advocate for it; and
 - (b) Lobby within their respective sectors for the implementation of the *Strategy* including its financing.

- Gender Ministries should lobby other stakeholders – including the donor community. These other stakeholders can become a pressure group for mobilizing resources for gender programmes for the Government;
- The National Machinery should be made visible and relevant e.g. by producing a Social Development Investment Plan that can be used for both sensitization and resource mobilization;
- Information on key gender issues, especially the *Strategy* document should be shared with all stakeholders ;
- The national gender machinery can also raise awareness about the *Strategy* through the following:
 - a) Parliamentary commission/committees;
 - b) Women’s Members of parliament, youth, workers, and people disability forum;
 - c) Women’s movement made up of the academics, doctors, other professionals, civil society organizations, NGOs and the business community;
 - d) The national budget process that also gives priority to funding for the implementation of the *Strategy*.

2. Needed resources for data collection (staff and finances)

- National Gender machinery should lobby the Ministry of Finance and other line ministries to provide funding for gender related programmes and to sensitize them on work of gender ministries;
- Donor funding should be harmonized and coordinated for effective implementation of the *Strategy*;

- Gender Ministry should share and discuss information relating to funding of gender programmes with all stakeholders;
- Gender sensitive budgeting should be used as a tool for gender equality;
- Technical assistance from the ECA should be made available to member States, including training on gender sensitive budgeting;
- Political will and commitment at the highest level should be marshaled in support of gender programmes;
- Guidelines on gender equality and budgeting should be developed to build institutional capacity. This is important because there is a high turn over of Ministers and focal points;
- Focal points should be permanent employees of the gender and line ministries. Their terms of references should be defined clearly and more focal points should be trained. The education curricula should be gender mainstreamed especially to raise awareness of the *Strategy*.

3. Measures to acquire the necessary authority to promote and coordinate the implementation of the *Follow-up Strategy on Beijing +10*

- Cabinet memo should be prepared by each gender ministry to sensitize the cabinet on the gender agenda, especially the *Strategy* for the way forward;
- Parliamentarians should be trained on gender equality issues;
- The Gender Ministry should also sensitize the Parliament on the *Strategy* and to solicit for findings for gender programmes;
- Workshops to sell and explain the *Strategy* should be held for all stakeholders, especially those in decision –making positions and the beneficiaries at the grass roots level;
- The role of the media in selling and advocating for the *Strategy* is important and should be promoted., therefore, the media should be part and parcel of the implementation process of the *Strategy on Beijing +10*.

Agenda item 5: Presentation of Progress Report on the use of African Gender and Development Index (AGDI)

19. Under this agenda item, a representative of ACGD, Ms Tacko Ndiaye presented the **Progress Report on the Use of the African Gender and Development Index**. The presentation covered six main parts namely:

- The introduction that covered the definition, the concept, the characteristics and the objective of AGDI;
- The rationale of developing the AGDI, an African-specific tool for Member countries;
- The objective of AGDI that is to strengthen the capacity of Member States to effectively monitor the progress made in implementing Conventions related to gender equality;
- The process for developing AGDI that has comprised several steps including collecting and processing the data, and creating a Steering Committee for the implementation of the tool;
- The two main components of AGDI, i.e. the Gender Status Index and the African Women's Progress Scoreboard;
- Lessons learnt which emphasized the participatory development of this tool and the need to set up a forum for negotiating the scoring on a continuous basis;
- As a way forward, in 2006-2007 26 African countries will be covered in all the 5 subregions of Africa. The rest of the African countries will be covered in the biennium 2008-2009. The tool will be enriched with additional variables, raising the present 3-point scoring to 5 points;
- The African Women Report that will be published in 2006 will highlight the reports from the 12 countries.

20. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that taking gender issues into consideration within the political and economic variables should be taken as a basic human right that cuts across all sectors. AGDI should also measure the use of ICT. It was also suggested that ACGD assesses the use of the AGDI in pilot countries. In conclusion, AGDI was commended as a valuable tool for

measuring impact of policies and programmes in terms of reducing gender inequalities and as such, governments should promote its use.

Agenda Item 6 : Discussion of possible participation of the CWD Bureau in the meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers of Planning and Finance

21. Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo introduced this item by informing the meeting that the ECA, the AU and the African Development Bank are jointly organizing the conference of Ministers of Finance and Planning in May 2006 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The theme of the meeting is “challenges of employment in Africa”. Ms. Ruzvidzo stressed that this is an opportunity to lobby for inclusion /discussion of women’s empowerment in the labour market by the Conference and raised the issue of CWD participation in the Conference. She pointed out that ECA/ACGD would look at the issue paper to ascertain that women in labour, employment and non-market work were included. On the part of CWD members it was suggested that they could lobby their Ministers of Finance to raise gender issues during the Conference.

22. During the discussion that ensued, a number of suggestions were made by the various participants as follows:

- There should be horizontal collaboration among the statutory bodies of the ECA to achieve a more comprehensive and gender inclusive development agenda;
- CWD could send a few members to the ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance and Planning with a view to influencing the conference on gender issues in the same way as women influenced the AU Heads of State Summit in Maputo, Mozambique, into adopting the principle of gender parity in AU structures;
- CWD should target those who prepare the agenda of the Conference of Ministers of Finance and Planning with a view to influencing the inclusion of gender issues relating to employment and labour markets in the next Conference;
- ACGD should prepare a resolution during this meeting to be sent to the Bureau of the ministers of Finance & Economic development addressing the issue of collaboration between the two organs with a view to enhancing the development of gender agenda;
- That lobbying of Ministers of Finance and Economic development should be carried out primarily at the national level;

- A few members of the CWD Bureau could be mandated to lobby the Nigerian Minister of Finance who is the current Chair of the Conference of Ministers to ensure key gender issues will be addressed in Ouagadougou.