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Conference Background Paper Series

# **Topical Issue on Promoting the Advancement of African Women (Gender and PRSP)**

## **Gender Mainstreaming in National Poverty Reduction Strategies (2001-2005)**



**United Nations Economic Commission for Africa  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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*"The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were introduced by the Bretton Woods Institutions of the World Bank and IMF in 1999 as a framework for developing nationally-owned participatory poverty reduction strategies. The PRSPs provide these countries the basis of all concessional lending and for the debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The PRSPs also offer a significant opportunity to deepen the focus on broad-based participatory growth strategies that fully integrate gender concerns, and add value to the poverty reduction process. Therefore PRSPs form an important entry point for mainstreaming gender into sustainable development process and for enhancing African ownership of these strategies".*

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1. The objective of this background paper which was submitted to the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) is to reflect ECA's stance and comparative advantage on mainstreaming gender as a development goal, into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The paper also forms a basis for developing the ECA's framework for mainstreaming gender into PRSPs. The International consensus is that the motivating force for all African development partnership should be imperative of reducing poverty in the continent through broad-based growth, genuine participation of all stakeholders (including men and women), and accountable system of governance. This consensus is linked to international development targets, particularly that of reducing poverty by half by the year 2015, and places a premium on partnerships that support coherent, country-led programmes focused on poverty reduction.
2. This consensus brings with it a new development co-operation framework and aid relationship between African countries and their external partners that replace the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s and 1990s. The new relationship is characterised by a move away from fragmented, donor-driven programmes towards co-ordinated and synergistic donor support for an Africa-driven agenda, from externally imposed conditionalities to mutual obligations, and from a preoccupation with the volume of aid flows to practical steps towards improved effectiveness.
3. The PRSPs, a country-specific policy framework introduced by the Bretton Woods Institutions in 1999 as a framework for developing nationally owned participatory poverty reduction strategies. Good quality PRSPs now provide a mechanism for all concessional lending from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) to low-income African countries for the debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The PRSPs also offer a significant opportunity to deepen the focus on broad-based participatory growth strategies that fully integrate gender concerns, and add value to the poverty reduction process. Therefore PRSPs form an important entry point for mainstreaming gender into sustainable development process and for enhancing African ownership of these strategies. However, the process of drawing up a PRSP entails intensive consultations with broad categories of stakeholders at 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 on 14-19 January 2000. This was followed by consultations in Addis Ababa and Abidjan (March 2000) involving African government and civil society representatives on a range of issues related to the design and implementation of national poverty reduction strategies. The Addis Ababa consultation, hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the World Bank and the 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 need to be addressed jointly by African countries and their donor partners 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 adopt their aid policies and procedures to this process.

## II. THE ECA ROLE IN THE PRSP PROCESS

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6. The principles underlying the PRSP – a focus on poverty reduction; supporting countries to achieve debt sustainability, and 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, the ECA is uniquely positioned to play the role of honest broker in the PRSP process. The ECA can add value to the process by being a catalyst for ideas, action, capacity building, and for partnerships based on an Africa-driven agenda. Moreover, ECA's African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGAD), guided by the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) as a statutory organ and subsidiary of the Commission, is the only regional body with mandate to add value to the PRSP process. The ACGAD's 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 Partnerships with Africa (SPA Group). 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 comparative advantages and forge partnerships to assist African countries with the PRSP process. The first area relates to facilitating consensus on and promoting ownership of an Africa-driven agenda – a core mandate of ECA that is fully integrated in its work programme. Leveraging its convening power, its proximity to African policy makers at the highest levels, its Ministerial meetings designed to facilitate informed high-level panel discussions on selected development themes, and the regional mechanisms it has set up such as, the African Development Forum (ADF), 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. 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 developing committed leadership at various levels in African countries.
9. Furthermore, through the CWD, ECA offers an opportunity for Ministers of Women Affairs in Africa to use this forum as an effective vehicle of advocacy through the ECA Conference of



Ministers, to increase understanding of Ministers of Finance and Development on how gender can add value to the PRSP process. Already the African leaders recognise that poverty reduction can not be achieved without gender perspectives, and that gender equality in the PRSP process adds value by increasing growth, economic efficiency and welfare.

10. In the second area, ECA as the main UN organ for development in Africa has been involved in the recent initiative of the African Leaders: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). ECA is working on priority sectors including poverty reduction as identified in NEPAD and as requested by 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 poverty reduction. When the PRSPs and gender concerns are integrated within the framework of NEPAD – Africa's own development agenda, it has the potential of capturing the full potential of the continent's productive labour force (i.e. both men and women) in reducing poverty. Thus, NEPAD will in future be a vehicle for making significant transformation of the African economy, while through it, integrating gender perspectives in all sectors and especially in the PRSP process will be one new factor of change that will add value to achieving economic development in Africa.
11. The third area includes a set of activities designed to facilitate systematic exchange of experiences among African countries on how PRSP process is unfolding; help meet the capacity needs of these countries in the design and implementation of national poverty strategies; foster the articulation of African perspectives on the PRSP at an early stage in the process; and also help ensure that these perspectives are taken into account in refining the PRSP process and in shaping the new aid relations. Towards this end, ECA created in 2000; the PRSP African Learning Group (PRSP-LG) for the exchange of experiences and lessons learnt during the PRSP process. The annual PRSP-LG will bring together African policy makers, 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 organisations and 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 organisations will serve as resource persons at annual PRSP-LG meeting. The meeting also draws lessons from the experiences of countries in other regions that have undertaken PRSPs through the participation of representatives from non-African PRSP/HIPC countries.
12. The ECA complements the annual PRSP-LG meeting with an annual PRSP Experts Group Workshop that draws on analytical work including gender analysis done in African countries and the relevant work being done by the Strategic Partners with Africa (SPA) Task Teams. ECA co-sponsors this workshop with the SPA Technical Group. The first PRSP-LG was held in November 2001. During this meeting, a strong recommendation was made to step up efforts to mainstream gender into PRSPs and develop tools for this process.
13. The paper therefore articulates this role in accordance with the requirements of the PRSP process and the needs identified by the ECA Member States through a continuing series of consultations to mainstream gender into PRSPs. The next section of this paper examines the policy challenges facing African countries including the challenge of how ECA can use its comparative advantage in addressing poverty issues.



### III. POLICY CHALLENGES OF POVERTY REDUCTION IN AFRICA

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14. Africa's poverty challenge is characterised by the poor record of economic growth, high inequality in income and asset ownership, and inadequate access to basic social services, which results in low levels of human resources 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 the sub-Saharan Africa 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, policy makers need to know its root causes. One way of investigating the causes of poverty is to examine the dimensions highlighted by poor people and these can be categorised as follows:
15. Firstly, inadequate income and assets to attain 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 do poor people in these countries are generally better paid. With economic growth, income poverty falls, while with economic contraction, income poverty rises.
16. Secondly, basic subsistence is sustained mostly by women and girls' manpower, but they do not have access to opportunities for improvement (e.g. through education, training, paid jobs etc.) due to a sense 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.
17. Thirdly, the absence of large use of technologies, paid workers and basic infrastructure such as water and roads make it difficult to overcome unsustainable subsistence in rural Africa.
18. Finally, vulnerability to adverse shocks, related to inability to reduce risk or cope with shocks is a major material and human deprivation that perpetuates poverty. The risks that poor and near-poor face as a result of their circumstances are the cause of vulnerability. These risks include living and farming on marginal lands with uncertain rainfall, having precarious employment, in the formal or informal sector, and the risk of being socially excluded and victims of violence and crime – especially, women. Other risks include economic shocks (e.g. price fluctuations). Low levels of assets<sup>1</sup> make poor people especially vulnerable to negative shocks, while those with more assets are resilient to these shocks as long as they are temporary.
19. 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.
20. The first challenge is how to bring about change in eradicating poverty in Africa where over 70% of the poor are women by reducing women's. 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 to improve economic conditions or to equal access to public services and consumption goods. Poor women in particular are subject to heavy time burdens due to their need to balance 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). This is ironical given that both men and women play significant roles in economic development of the region. Women in particular

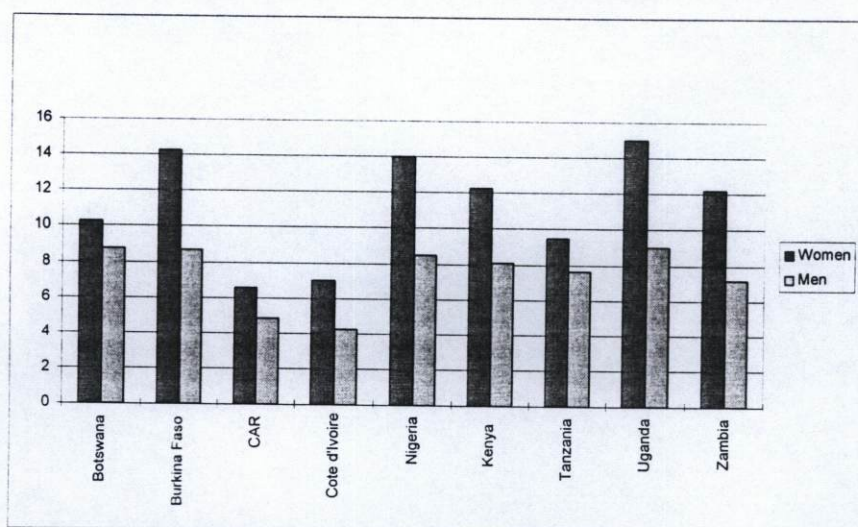
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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, "Assets" refer to directly productive assets (labour, land, agricultural inputs, financial services, and infrastructure), human capital (education and health), and social capital assets (household relations and participation).



contribute 70% 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.

21. It is envisaged that for the continent to reduce poverty by 50% in 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 a major challenge is if this can be realistically achieved without integrating gender issues into macroeconomic policies and procedures within the context of economic reform? Recent analysis by ECA's Learning Group on PRSPs show that despite good 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 what kind of growth should Africa opt for?
22. The second challenge which is tied to the first is how we can 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 credit going to small farmers and 1% of the total credit given to the agricultural sector. In 1990, multilateral banks allocated \$5.8 billion for rural credit to developing countries, only 5% reached rural women. And that differential access to essential public services including education and health are prevalent in nearly all African countries.
23. Despite the belief that education is the single most important investment a country can pursue to eradicate poverty, education registered the lowest average annual growth in total years of schooling between 1969 and 1990 of all regions. Moreover, gender disparity in enrollment persists in favour of male students. This is indeed saddening given that knowledge, innovation, and application of skills is considered by the new endogenous growth concept as the only sources of long term economic growth. It is therefore a missed opportunity in terms of 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. And ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development-related programmes. Therefore, sustainable development programmes should embrace universal female education, improved reproductive health, and more credit for women.



24. A World Bank Status Report on poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) argues that, if SSA is to achieve equitable growth and sustainable development, one necessary step is to reduce gender inequality in access to and control of a diverse range of assets. Reducing gender, which is a development objective in its own right, increases growth, efficiency, and welfare. Conversely, there is a growing awareness that gender inequality is not only costly to women, but is also costly to children, and to many men. It exacts costs in lower output (GDP), lower development of people's capacities, lower leisure and lower well being.
25. The third challenge in reducing poverty is the need to include women's work in national accounts. Today more women's work than that of men is not accounted for by national economic statistics because a great deal of women's work does not take place in a large market oriented formal sector. Rather, it consists of subsistence production, informal sector employment, domestic or 'reproductive' work, and voluntary work. Subsistence production is often not included in the measurement of the gross national product (GNP) because statistical surveys do not properly count it. Given that agriculture contributes over 30% of GDP in many African countries, and being a female-intensive sector of production, policy makers can not afford to exclude women's subsistence production from national economic statistics. 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.
26. Essentially, by ignoring the care economy, macroeconomists treat it as if it is able to supply whatever quantities of human capacities and social support required by the private commodity economy and the public service economy, regardless of the level of investment in the care economy. It is assumed here that women's time is available in unlimited quantities – i.e. that the supply of women's labour is perfectly elastic. This mistaken view stems from the conventional macroeconomic theory that treats the care economy as a sector that can supply whatever is required without the need for investment. For the same reason, domestic activities such as water supply, energy supply, caring for family members vital for maintaining and reproducing the labour force, are excluded from the GNP – 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 allocation for social sectors, relevant efforts are still insignificant. However, a monetary value is imputed to unpaid work to make economic valuation more accurate and comprehensive, and the values of unpaid activities in terms of human perspective of valuation including the care of children or the sick always supersede the economic perspective.
27. The fourth challenge linked to the third one for development economists is whether there will be sufficient resources in the care economy to be able to respond to the demands made on it. If the care economy is overburdened, there will be negative impacts to the commodity and public service economies, which will reduce their productivity and increase their costs, because of inadequate maintenance of human resources and the social framework. The negative impacts will affect the level of growth of output of these sectors, but investment in these areas will reduce time burden and will improve labour productivity and increase output, thereby contribute to 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.), which need to be accessed by women who are not only overburdened by time, but they have very low purchasing power.
28. The fifth challenge is how to remove barriers to engendering national policies relating 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;
- lack of clear understanding of the nexus between poverty, gender and growth as well as gaps in knowledge in addressing gender issues in poverty analysis in development sectors.

29. The sixth challenge is how to combat the attitudes in the Ministry of Finance as a key ministry directing the pace and pattern of structural economic reforms, and explain the concept of gender impact of macroeconomic policy. This is especially necessary in the ministry's changing role during the recent period of globalisation and liberalisation of economies. The Ministry of Finance has a critical role to play in engendering reforms even if specific decisions have to be taken by productive ministries such as agriculture, transport, energy etc. However, the ministry is often male dominated and does not consider gender issues relevant to its work.

30. The seventh challenge and probably the most important is how the ECA can catalyse the translation of development policy actions in Africa into practice by exploiting its institutional comparative advantages outlined in Section II of this paper. The challenge is how ECA can exploit its unique position help Africa to reduce poverty. The ECA through its ACGAD proposes to develop further and disseminate to the Member States the framework for mainstreaming gender into PRSP introduced by the World Bank (Box 1).



#### IV. A FRAMEWORK FOR MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO PRSPs

31. The 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. Fourthly, gender increases growth, economic efficiency and welfare. Thus, constraints, opportunities, incentives and needs in poverty in Africa differ along gender lines, making it necessary to address these issues. 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 to reduce poverty.
32. 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 poorest households. Failure to conduct poverty diagnosis in a gender-responsive manner thus runs the risk of ignoring important avenues to poverty reduction. Mainstreaming gender into PRSPs comprises 4 key stages (Box 1).

##### Box 1: A Framework for Mainstreaming Gender into PRSPs

###### Stage 1: Integrating Gender into Poverty Diagnosis

- (i) Ensuring that gender is addressed across the four dimensions of poverty
  - Opportunities: analysis of gender differences in access to the productive resources and opportunities to escape poverty and promote economic growth;
  - Capabilities: analysis of welfare in terms of employment, education, health, nutrition, 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 the household.
- (ii) Document the experiences of poverty for both women and men for each of the 4 dimensions of poverty
  - Quantitative Analysis of household survey, data on allocation of and 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 the "market" economy).
- (iii) 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 2: Promoting Gender-inclusive Participation in all the processes of PRSPs

###### Stage 3: Using a Gender-Informed Poverty Analysis in Defining Priority Public Policies and Actions

- (i) Defining policy implications of the gender analysis in the country to address gender-differentiated experience of poverty to measures that address:
  - different demands on men and women's labour to increase productivity;
  - the short-term trade-offs between the "productive" and "household" economies and/or building on externalities due to inter-dependence between household and market economies;
  - inequality in access to human, economic and social assets;
  - participation of all stakeholders including both men and women in PRSP process.
- (ii) Based on the gender policy implications, identifying gender-responsive priorities for the PRSPs
  - Articulating gender priorities and responses (e.g. women's time burden, insecure property rights, lack of access to resources, gender wage gap etc.); and engendering national budgets and labour market.
- (iv) Incorporating gender priorities into key poverty reduction measures

###### Stage 4: Integrating Gender into the PRSP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

- (i) Integrating a gender dimension into the PRSP outcome monitoring system;
- (ii) Integrating a gender dimension into the design of the PRSP evaluation strategy (deciding what to evaluate,
- (iii) Measuring the impacts of policies and programmes; determining data requirements; etc.);
- (iv) Building institutional capacity for gender-responsive M&E (e.g. for relevant agencies).



## V. LESSONS LEARNT FROM IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

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19. The PRSP framework presented above is designed to improve access to the poor, (especially women) to productive assets (e.g. land and credit), raising the return on these assets. To help better ECA Member States, the ACGAD carried out a desk review of engendering the PRSP process, and took stock of where we stand to be able to improve 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 address policy challenges to reduce poverty. And many African countries recognise that gender-sensitive development strategies contribute significantly to economic growth and to equity objectives. However, the review of PRSPs revealed some deficiencies in mainstreaming gender into the PRSP framework.
19. The deficiencies identified were based on a review of 19 Interim PRSPs (I-PRSPs) and 4 full PRSPs, as well as the accompanying Joint Bank and Fund Staff Assessments (JSAs) that were completed in March 2001.<sup>2</sup> The review 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
20. Table 1 shows average overall scores separately for I-PRSPs and full PRSPs, by region. Overall, 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 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.<sup>3</sup>
21. To date, some regions have tended to 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 the Europe and Central Asia region 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, given that the full PRSPs are expected to meet a higher standard than the I-PRSPs.

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<sup>2</sup> The review included I-PRSPs from Benin, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sao Tome, Tanzania, Cambodia, Albania, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Bolivia, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Yemen. Also included were all four PRSPs that had been considered by the Board at the time of the study: Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Tanzania, and Uganda. Three reviewers examined the 24 documents, with each document being reviewed only once.

<sup>3</sup> 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 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	--	--
<b>All Regions</b>	0.4	19	0.5	4

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

22. 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 might be at a very basic level. However, the low scores shown in Table 2 do not reflect a lack of sophistication, but they reflect a 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 I-PRSPs and PRSPs.

**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

25. 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. 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.



**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

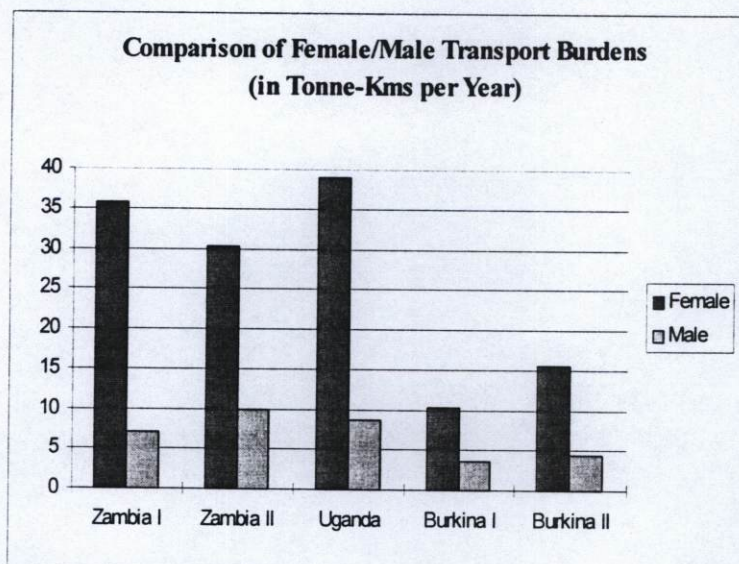
Source: Gender in the PRSPs: Stocktaking, World Bank, 2001

## VI. POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF GENDER ANALYSIS

22. Given the gender-blindness in both the I-PRSPs and full PRSPs, macro-economic policies including PRSPs therefore need 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 analysis aims to make more informed, gender-aware policy responses and action priorities, which 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:
23. 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.), nor are they 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 the division of labour and the distribution of income.
24. Analysis of men and women's time allocation shows that the market and the household economies coexist and are interdependent. For example, the gender division of labour leaves women with a much greater transport task than men in rural areas (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 therefore as one of the highest priorities for poverty reduction strategy as it shows the constraints and options women and men face in responding to changing economic incentives and opportunities. To reduce constraints on time budget, it is necessary to give the highest priority in the PRSP to measures that save time or improve the productivity of time use.
25. 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.
26. 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 pro-active measures are needed to ensure inclusive participation in the PRSPs and in the formulation of inclusive policies and programs. In this respect, gender needs to be a criterion of inclusion in PRSP participatory processes and a criterion of choice in prioritising the PRSP policy response and interventions.



**Figure 2: Gender and Transport Burdens in SSA**



Source: Barwell 1996.



## VII. ECA's POSITION IN MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO PRSP

(2004-05-11-12-13-14-15-16-17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100)

27. ECA's approach to mainstreaming gender into PRSP is based on the policy implications of the gender analysis outlined above. Consequently, the ECA Divisions including ACGAD, sought to harmonise and co-ordinate their work programmes with the SRDCs, which are arms of the Commission in the Member States and efforts are being made to improve work efficiency at country level. In this context, the programme orientation for ACGAD for the period 2001 – 2005 was developed over the last four years and led to a clear programme, which is necessary for practical implementation of the biennium programmes.
28. The Work Programme for the period 2001 – 2005 for ACGAD has 5 major components: The Policy Analysis and Advocacy for Gender Mainstreaming in National Development Plans; (ii) Capacity building in gender mainstreaming in ECA; (iii) Convening stakeholders and building consensus on progress on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action; (iv) Cross-cutting research; and (v) communication and information outreach.
29. As the PRSP framework is now orienting the national development plans, by targeting PRSPs as the main entry point, gender can be mainstreamed in national planning instruments including national accounts and national budgetary process. The Policy Analysis and Advocacy work's major output would be to make Member States and Intergovernmental Organisations to accept policy responses and reform policies that ensure gender-inclusive Plans, Programmes and Budgets. To reach this stage of policy reform, gender mainstreaming has to go through key stages outlined in Box 1 and these should involve ECA's SRDCs.
30. Public policy can have significant impact on the heavy time burden of domestic work. Reducing poverty means for example, increasing labour productivity in the household economy by reducing the time burden of domestic work. Of the issues which have been identified to constrain women's economic opportunities, ACW will address 'women's time burden' and will target actors in key sectors including agriculture, energy, the environment and natural resources, transport, and water supply and sanitation. In its approach based on advocacy and policy analysis, convening stakeholders and building consensus, and technical co-operation and capacity building, the ECA through its ACW will engender its PRS in its Member States based on following principles:
  - to remain focussed in its gender mandate, and will therefore not try to address all the recommendations of the Beijing Platform of Action;
  - to address the time constraints by focussing on measures that save time or improve the productivity of time use - improvements in accessibility and transport of fuel wood and water, intermediate means of transport, labour saving technologies and promoting gender balance in domestic work;
  - use analytical components as a policy advocate, which will draw upon recent work from other institutions e.g. World Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat etc. and analyse such work further to develop ECA's own hybrid approach for Africa.
31. With these principles in mind, ECA reviewed the World Bank's Toolkit (Gender Chapter of the PRSP Sourcebook, 2001) for engendering PRSPs and found that the policy analysis is comprehensive enough, but there is a crucial missing link of 'how' the expected results can be realised from the proposed policy actions. To bridge this gap in effectively engendering PRSPs, the ECA proposes the following strategies that provide for entry points (key actors) and key action strategies to generate the expected results and impacts of engendering its PRS.
32. Target Actors
  - The ECA will target experts and decision-makers in the Ministries of Agriculture, Water, Environment, Finance, Economic Planning, Energy, Industry and Transport. These ministries



are key in the implementation of PRSPs and the ECA will sensitise their experts on the policy implications of time burden of domestic work.

- The ECA will also target poverty-related Expert Group Meetings and conferences of the target ministries (e.g. ministerial conferences) by lobbying through gender focal points (e.g. Ministries of Gender/Women Development) and ECA's Sub-Regional Development Centres so that gender issues are included in the agenda of these fora.
- The Commission will further target selected countries in the sub-regions to mainstream gender into PRSPs by either sensitising or training select groups of stakeholders who can influence the planning and implementation of PRSPs in their countries. This will include a follow-up of earlier activities by the ACW in Western Africa (e.g. Niger workshop for gender sensitisation of members of government and parliamentarians), and in Southern Africa (Workshop on the formulation of gender indicators of economic empowerment of women).

### 33. Key Action Strategies to Produce the Expected Results of the PRS (Outputs).

- Based on the World Bank's analysis of Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction (Matrix of Key Policy Actions, Technical Paper No. 428, 1999), the ECA will prepare Issue Papers on "investment in the household economy to increase labour productivity and economic growth". The Issue Papers will focus on specific areas such as food processing, water supply, provision of intermediate transport etc. and shall be prepared in collaboration with SRDCs;
- The Ad Hoc Expert Group and the ICEs will then validate the Issue Papers, on the basis of which the ECA will prepare Advocacy Papers to be presented in sectoral conferences of ministers;
- Training senior level policy makers in its MCs on household economy and its implication on poverty.

### 34. Expected Results (Outputs)

- Key lessons/issues in institutional and operational reform of PRSPs collected, analysed, understood, and conclusions promoted for improved design of policy reform packages on increasing labour productivity of household economy;
- PRSP development constraints and opportunities identified and prioritised, and appropriate policy models promoted to inform implementation strategies;
- Best practices in investing in household economy and enhancing access of poor women and men to productive assets disseminated;
- Specific measures to improve the productivity of time use (e.g. increase in provision of credit, increase in public expenditure on extension services, education for women, physical infrastructure etc.) understood and promoted in PRSPs.

### 35. Expected Impact

- Social and human capital of the poor, especially women strengthened at the household, enterprise and community levels;
- Disproportionate time burden and transport burden on women reduced, and labour productivity of household economy increased;
- Equitable distribution of employment opportunities and increased income achieved from providing access to and control of human, economic and social assets;
- Increased income, increased savings higher consumption by households, better education, less social exclusion, and greater security for women.

### 36. Indicators (Measurements to be made to show that the ECA has delivered the outputs)

- By 2004, gender component of report conclusions and recommendations of Expert Group Meetings and major ECA conferences and those of target ministries routinely incorporated in PRSP design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in selected ECA Member Countries.

### 37. Important Assumptions (Events necessary for meeting ECA objectives)



- Mechanism for extension and transfer of recommendations for policy and institutional reform operates effectively within target sectors and countries;
- Policy analysis accepted within target actors as the basis for engendering PRSPs;
- Target actors are able to transform gender policy actions in PRSPs into gender-responsive practices.



## ANNEXES

### GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES IN MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES

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1. Gender inequalities impact negatively on the overall performance of governments and imposes 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 are examples of recent economic analysis reflecting the benefits of investing in the household economy: best practices in mainstreaming gender into PRSPs.
2. The Cambodia I-PRSP provides a good description of the *demographic characteristics of the poor*, including how the effect 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 activities of rural women (84% of whom are subsistence farmers) and notes that they have less access to mechanization, which has improved men's agricultural productivity. Studies show that women, in general, work longer hours than men fulfilling traditional household tasks as well as farming. The lack of basic services in rural areas, such as reliable water supply, dependable health centers, transport and stores, adds considerably to women's workload. This analysis is followed by a proposed action to promote *labour-saving devices* to help women in their farming, post-harvesting and domestic duties, as well as activities to create employment and income generation for women.
5. The Burkina Faso I-PRSP provides another example describing 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 identified (and with budget line items) 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 created by women (equipment, training, 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 recognises that the constraints to education are gender specific, and identifies clear targets: 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... [with the goal of increasing]... the proportion of girls... from the current 43% to 45%.
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 programs, the Rwanda I-PRSP is an example of a best practice because it acknowledges the importance of men as well as women in fertility decisions. The high fertility rate is linked to several factors: a traditional (socioeconomic) preference for large families, with children considered a source of family wealth and social security; the inadequate access to family planning programs. 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 [resulting in] the marked reduction in the contraceptive prevalence rate, from over 21% before 1994 to an estimated 7% in 1996.
9. Specific actions include (i) designing family planning programs with sensitivity to affordability and acceptability of specific methods; (ii) providing better linkage to other *reproductive health* services; (iii) sensitisation programs conducted in partnership with community organisations and NGOs; and (iv) adult literacy programs providing family planning information for both men and women.
10. One of the few PRSPs to address gender issues in *HIV/AIDS* is Burkina Faso's. Here it is recognised that HIV sero-prevalence is 7 percent among the general population and reaches 13 percent among truckers. Nearly 64 percent of the prostitutes in Ouagadougou and 43 percent of those in Bobo-Dioulasso are estimated to be seropositive.... And, despite widespread knowledge concerning AIDS (in 1999, 87 percent of women and 96 percent 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 percent access to condoms, HIV test, 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 actions proposed include activities to prevent and penalise family violence and assist victims. In addition, a national action plan will be developed on the topic of domestic violence, which 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 percent of participants. The PRSP states that one-sixth of the focus groups identified gender discrimination as an obstacle to poverty reduction, especially in regard to customary ownership of property, 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 comments, suggesting the need for (i) 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; (ii) poverty diagnostics that examine gender differences in the causes and consequences of poverty; (iii) the selection and design of interventions to reflect the different priorities, constraints and opportunities affecting poor men and women; and (iv) monitoring and impact indicators to be gender disaggregated as appropriate.
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.