REPORT OF MISSION TO

ACCRA

16 – 27 November – 2004

By

Hilda M.K. Todria, Regional Advisor
African Centre for Gender and Development
REPORT OF MISSION TO

ACCRA

16 – 27 November – 2004

By

Hilda M.K. Tadria, Regional Adviser
African Centre for Gender and Development
MISSION REPORT

Ghana: 16 – 27 November 2004

By

Hilda Tedria

1. Mission Objectives

As a strategy of advocacy and information gathering, the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa (CHGA) has organized a series of interactive meetings throughout the region. Interactive meetings have already been organized in Botswana, for Southern Africa and in Ethiopia for Eastern Africa. CHGA organized an interactive meeting on HIV/AIDS and the work of work, in Accra, Ghana. The purpose of the mission was to participate in the interactive meeting and provide technical support to the Commission. ACGD is one of the active partners of the Commission Secretariat and has been actively involved in the preparation of the Commission report.

The second objective was to participate in the Advisory Board meeting of the African Development Fund for Women (AWDF). The African Women’s Development Fund, with its headquarters in Accra, Ghana is an Africa wide fundraising and grant making organisation which supports the work of non-governmental organizations that promote the social, political and economic empowerment of women. As such, AWDF has been an active partner of the African Centre for gender and Development, and receives technical services from the Centre regularly.

2. The CHGA Interactive Meeting

2.1 Participants

The meeting, which focused on HIV/AIDS and the work place, drew participants of diverse backgrounds from West Africa. The majority of participants represented local and international private sector organizations government ministries of health and Human resources development, as well as representatives of UN agencies. Commissioners chaired the interactive process.

2.2 Methods

The interactive was very participatory in which issue papers were presented, and then followed by plenary discussions. On the second day, technical group discussed focussed on identifying policy and advocacy recommendations related to policy frameworks and strategies, as well as corporate governance and HIV/AIDS. Partners such as ILO, and Ghana AIDS Commission, as well as stakeholders, such as AngloGold Ashanti, presented several
papers. In the opening session the key issues to be addressed during the interactive were emphasized. These included:

- The need to recognize HIV/AIDS as a normal work place problem, to be addressed from a multi-sectoral perspective.
- The importance of recognizing that HIV/AIDS has negative impacts on development.
- The need to understand and address the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS
- The need to address work related challenges of the pandemic such as:
  Persistent ignorance about, as well as fear of and discrimination against HIV/AIDS

The negative impact of HIV/AIDS on human resource development

2.3 Highlights of presentations and discussions

The ILO presented a paper, highlighting the negative impacts of HIV/AIDS on skills and human capacity, enterprise production household income, savings/investments as well tax base and growth. A critical issue is that the renewal of labour is being threatened, especially as children are taken out of school early. In addition, there is no intergovernmental skills and knowledge transfer as orphans become more and more excluded. The ILO presentations illustrated how ILO policies can be translated into workplace programmes and activities. The discussions emphasized that government has to play an important leading role in:

- Sustaining human resource capacity based on realistic assessment of human resource losses
- Controlling HIV infection in the workplace
- Ensuring that there are legal and policy frameworks to HIV/AIDS in the workplace, and
- In managing public/private sector relationships

The presentations from stakeholders and private sector organizations showed that organizations (eg. Anglogold and Cocacola) are beginning to address HIV/AIDS in the work place. Studies carried out by these organizations have been used to formulate programmes that address the risk factors not only at the workplace, but within the surrounding environments as well. Some of the risk factors for HIV/AIDS that have been identified in the different studies include:

- High level of illiteracy among unskilled labour
- High domination of male workers
- Easy access to free on subsidized alcohol
- Frequent travel
- Location of industry near border areas, since cross border activities seem to enhance sex trade
- Industries dominated by seasonality
- Access to relatively high levels of income.

In sharing experiences from the different countries, a few common issues emerged. On the positive side, several participants reported that their governments were beginning to provide ARV’s at subsidised prices. However, many common challenges remain, such as:

- The persistent difficulties in getting people to go for voluntary counselling and testing;
- Difficulties in accessing treatment, which in turn discourages voluntary counselling and testing,
- Inability of government to provide comprehensive care for people living with HIV/AIDS;
- Issues of sustainability, especially if most of the funding for HIV/AIDS programmes is external,
- Most of the policies on HIV/AIDS address mainly the formal sector, although the majority of the population in all the countries is in the informal sector.
- Ethical issues related to testing: FOR EXAMPLE: Should employers test their workers without their consent? What would the purpose of testing be? Is it right to test and not treat the individual? Should doctors be disclosing those found to be HIV+?
- Equity issues, especially gender equity: issues discussed related to increased accessibility for women to ARVs, VCT and more user friendly preventive measures, for example the condom; culture and the way gender relations are defined to disempower women.
- Other equity issues related to the formal and informal sector as well as rural and urban areas.
- In addition, there were issues raised in relation to the role of traditional healers, or and whether Africa should go into production of generic drugs or not. There were
lengthy discussions related to this. Most participants were of the view that African governments have to work hard to ensure that HIV/AIDS drugs are manufactured in Africa.

2.4 Summary of recommendations regarding policy frameworks and strategies: During the interactive, participants worked in groups which came out with specific recommendations regarding policy frameworks and strategies in the formal and informal private sector and on corporate governance and HIV/AIDS. Participants recommended that:

- Governments should create enabling environment for the private sector to participate in HIV/AIDS programmes effectively;
- Possibilities of producing generic drugs should be explored, and that positive involvement of traditional healers in treatment programmes should be encouraged;
- Health sectors in Africa should honour the commitment to providing 15% of their budgets to the health sector.
- ECA should come up with an effective communication and monitoring strategy to ensure that recommendations are implemented.

Regarding the informal sector, it was recommended that:

- All policies on HIV/AIDS should include issues related to the informal sector;
- Functional literacy should be carried out for the informal sector;
- Policy information on HIV/AIDS should be translated into local languages;
- There should be tax rebates for people living with HIV/AIDS in the informal sector;
- Female condoms should be marketed as effectively as male condoms are at affordable prices;
- There should be 5% levy on National Health Insurance, and this should be allocated to HIV/AIDS Programmes.

Recommendations on corporate governance:

- The national strategic framework should define the role of private sector clearly;
- Desk officers in charge of HIV/AIDS programmes should be given authority, and their responsibilities should be included in their job descriptions. Structures should also be put in place to support the work of desk officers.
○ At corporate level, there should be a highest level of understanding and commitment to addressing HIV/AIDS as a work place issue. Monitoring indicators should be in place to measure and track commitment.

○ Reporting on HIV/AIDS in annual reports should be made a corporate responsibility.

○ HIV/AIDS programmes should be institutionalised in corporate programmes and Governments should give tax rebate to corporations that have HIV/AIDS programmes in the work place.

○ The confidentiality policy should be revisited.

○ Budgets for HIV/AIDS programmes should go beyond treatment issues to include other related concerns, such as social issues.

In closing the session, the Commissioner who had chaired the interactive summarised the key issues that had emerged. These were as follows:

○ There should be a system of reward and punishment for companies that do or do not incorporate HIV/AIDS programmes in the work place. In addition companies must start living up to their corporate responsibility;

○ Trade issues should be re-examined to address the need for manufacturing HIV/AIDS drugs in Africa;

○ Herbal practitioners should be brought on board in the HIV/AIDS treatment initiatives;

○ The role of nutrition in treatment and care of people living with HIV/AIDS should be taken seriously;

○ The issues of supply and accessibility to ARV’s need to be examined and addressed;

○ Organisations should create platforms for sharing lessons and best practices in the treatment of HIV/AIDS and related impacts;

Indicators for measuring success should be developed and shared.

3. African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF): the board agenda focused on programme activities, as well as governance issues and the external evaluation report.

3.1: On programme activities, the report of the Executive Director showed that the Fund had made tremendous efforts in fundraising to support the participation of women in the Seventh African Regional Conference, and commended the close relationships that had developed between the Fund and the ACGD. It was agreed that the BD should develop a concept paper on HIV/AIDS for discussion in the next Board meeting.
3.2 On governance issues

- It was reported that the revised byelaws were ready and board members should review for final printing.

- On Board Leadership: The board affirmed a new Chair of the board two Vice Chairs TA will continue as Acting Treasurer till the May 2005 board meeting when Thandi Mbudula the new board member, will take over. The Executive Committee now comprises of the following:

  - Hilda Tadria, Joana Foster, Thelma Awori, and Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi as Executive Director/Secretary to the Board.

The AWDF by-law will be amended to include a clause to states that if members miss two meetings consecutively they will be approached by the Chair to ask them if they are still in a position to continue.

Three board members were rotating off the board that are leaving because their terms are up. Two other members will be leaving as they had missed two consecutive meetings. An additional board member based in Ghana will be recruited on to the board as soon as possible. The current board membership is now as follows:

  - Hilda Tadria
  - Joana Foster
  - Thelma Awori
  - Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi
  - Abena Busia
  - Thandi Mbudula

Julie Asante will continue to be Financial Adviser to the board. It was agreed that in future, the AWDF board should not exceed seven people.
3.3 Presentation of AWDF’s Evaluation

The second day of the board meeting was devoted to receiving the report of AWDF’s evaluation, which was undertaken by Ms Hope Chigudu (HC). HC started her presentation by discussing the methodology that was used to collect the information, which included the following:

- A one day meeting with AWDF’s Regional Advisers in Addis Ababa in July
- A one week visit to the AWDF office in Accra
- Visits to AWDF grantees in Ghana, Nigeria and Zimbabwe
- Interviews with donors, peers and board members

HC highlighted the fact that there needs to be further discussion and reflection on AWDF’s feminist principles and values. Key issues which are tied to this and which the evaluation raised include the following:

- Understanding AWDF’s feminist principles and values
- Governance and role of the board
- Perceptions
- Relationships within the organization
- The importance of monitoring indicators for the RD
- The need to build relationships between the board and the staff
- What makes AWDF’s board different from that of others
- Growth of the organization – how do we want to grow?
- How can founder members ensure that ownership remains a key value? We need to be able to answer the question ‘who are the custodians of AWDF?’

Management, Structure and Staffing Issues

HC raised a number of issues in relation to the management, structure and staffing of the organization as follows:

Recruitment policies: AWDF is a Regional organization and should have recruitment policies and conditions of service, which reflect this. Terms and conditions of service need to be reviewed to ensure that they are competitive. Policies regarding staff assessment, job categorization, progression, etc need to be reviewed. The leadership of the organization has been excellent under the RD. there is a huge and growing volume of work. There has to be someone responsible for programs since the RD needs to focus on fundraising and relationship building.

Programs

AWDF has learnt a lot as a fundraising and grants making organization and should be in a position to share this organizational learning on an ongoing basis. There should be a review of the role of the programs committee so that they can focus on strategic issues related to the organization’s programs. The Small Grants Program has been a success and should be rolled out
to other countries. AWDF grantees should continue to be involved in communication programs which highlight their challenges and successes.

Key Challenges

The evaluator raised the following challenges:

How does AWDF manage its success? According to her ‘failure is easier to manage’.

How do we continue to combine the need to be a feminist organization and a successful professional organization?

How do we manage power in women’s organizations and the risks facing the organization?

Priorities emerging from the evaluation

There are four priority issues which should inform AWDF’s future planning:

- Growth
- Structure
- Terms and Conditions of Service
- Fundraising

General Discussion

The conversation continued with an open discussion between board and staff members. HC asked everyone to reflect on the questions ‘why did you agree to work for AWDF? Why did you say yes to being a board member?’ The answers included the following: ‘I value the work of the women who had invited me’; ‘I was excited about the grand plan’; ‘To prove that Africans can do things for themselves’; ‘Raising money from Africans sounded exciting’; ‘I made a promise to the founders’, ‘This would be a way of ensuring sustainability for African women’, etc.

AWDF’s Values

HC then facilitated a discussion on the organisation’s values, which generated the following highlights:

- We are all responsible for being custodians of AWDF’s values

- We project our values through our behavior, acting out our values and internalizing them, walking the talk and keeping the faith

- The board and BD have a key role to play in affirming and guiding the rest of the organisation
There is a need to have a ‘conscience’ for the organization, a person or persons who can speak up or take action when things go wrong.

AWDF, being the unique kind of organization it is, should look into the possibility of putting structures in place to sustain the organization in good times and bad by ensuring that there are people of ‘conscience’ around to take action.

Inviting staff to board meetings is a way of creating stronger relationships and mentoring. The staff can stay till the board declares an executive session.

After the discussions, it was suggested that a committee to review the staff terms and conditions of service be set up. The terms of reference for the committee were defined as follows:

- Review of terms and conditions of staff
- Review of management Structure
- Financial implications and costings (setting caps where necessary)
- Work out short or Long term strategies, particularly within the context of the 2005 budget

The committee members are Hilda, Bisi, Hellen and Julie

The executive committee will make the final decision on the short-term issues

6. Fundraising and the role of the board

6.1: One of the key issues that the evaluation looked at was AWDF’s fundraising programs. It was quite clear that this is an area that the organization needs to keep building on and board involvement is key. The discussion started with looking at the individual Giving Program. HC said ideally, the individual program should be managed by a dedicated staff person so there was a need to increase the development team.

After reflections on the need to grow the program as well as the demands of sustaining existing resources, it was agreed that for the time being, the ED should look into how the individual giving program can be managed within the human resources we have now.

HC noted that AWDF’s staff are known and very well respected out there, which means attempts have been made to build them up and mentor them. AWDF staff have grown over the years, as well as the ED and board. It was noted that work in the office even when the Executive Director is away, this is a sign of an empowered, motivated staff.

Achievements:

The AWDF is the only fund for fund raising and grant making for women’s organisation, it has received consistent advisory services from the African Centre for Gender and Development since
it was established in 2000. While not all the successes of the Fund are solely attributed to these services, there have been some achievements that can be linked directly:

- Enhanced partnership between the African Women’s Development Fund: the evidence of this is that the Fund was the single, biggest funding organisation for participants attending both the NGO preparatory meeting for the 7th Regional conference, and the Regional conference itself. This funding enabled the ACGD to have highly competent and professional (especially from the NGO world) participants.

- The evaluation of the AWDF has indicated that the fund has established a viable institution, capable of servicing women at grass root level. The Board on which ACGD sits is responsible for defining and monitoring the policies and approving programmes of the Fund.

The next board meeting is May 14th to 17th 2005 in Accra. This is when we will be doing the SMART GROWTH assessment.
To: Mr. Robert Okello, Director  
Office of Policy and Program Coordination  

Date: 21 March 2005  
Ref: ACGD/05/03/0068  
HT/sg

Through: Ms. Thokozile Ezudido, OIC  
African Center for Gender and Development

From: Hilda Tadria, Regional Advisor  
African Center for Gender and Development

Subject: Report of Mission to Accra 16 – 27 November 2004

Attached herewith is a Report on the Mission to Accra 16 – 27 November 2004 and the supporting Documents.