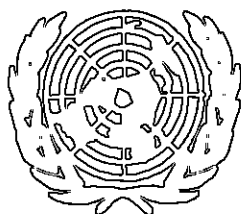


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OUTLINE OF A MODEL NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

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Background

The model national action plan has been adapted from the one presented to the Sub-regional Conference of Senior governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Platform for Action in Central and Eastern Europe, held at Bucharest from 12-14 September 1996. It has been designed in a manner that allows national governments to adapt it to their particular circumstances.

As the *Guidelines for the Implementation of the African Platform for Action* (ACW, 1995), pointed out:

«Some of the difficulties which faced the implementation of the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the advancement of women were the failure to allocate responsibilities for the various aspects, sectors and levels of implementation, the absence of appropriate structures for undertaking implementation activities and the failure to identify the sources of resources for enhancing effective implementation.»

It was therefore agreed in Beijing that *«as soon as possible, preferably by the end of 1995, Governments in consultation with relevant institutions and non-governmental organisations should begin to develop implementation strategies for the Platform and preferably by the end of 1996, should have developed their strategies or plans of action. . . . These implementation strategies should be comprehensive, have time-bound targets and benchmarks for monitoring, and include proposals for allocating or reallocating resources for implementation.»* (*Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration*, para 297, p.161)

Organising elements of the National Plan of Action

In producing the National Plan of Action government should at the very least have done the following:

- Prioritised objectives and actions
- Set specific time-bound targets for the objectives;
- Set benchmarks and established mechanisms for monitoring.
- Identified (named) actors in the implementation of the Plan

- Put in place clear structures and processes for consultations and clear institutional arrangements, as well as clear roles and responsibilities for different
- actors in the implementation
- Specified necessary legislative measures
- Specified resources to be allocated to the implementation of the plan and identified sources for these resources

The following section outlines and gives suggestions on how the national action plan could be structured:

Summary and overview of the model national action plan

This section should be limited to one or two pages, highlighting the main features of the National action Plan (NAP), including major accomplishments and new priorities.

Introduction

This section might include the following:

- an assessment of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Platform for Action from the country's vantage point;
- a brief presentation of those global or regional changes taking place that are relevant to the advancement of women from a national perspective,
- a statement on the most critical areas of concern to women in that country, including relevant social indicators,
- a reiteration of the commitments made at Beijing, and
- a brief description of the country's accomplishments thus far in the advancement of women, including institutional mechanisms established for the advancement of women and any post-Beijing follow-up measures taken for the implementation of the recommendations of the Platform for Action.

This would provide a framework for examining the priorities of the national action plan.

Strategic objectives and actions

The strategic objectives on women and poverty and those that follow at the beginning of each critical area are excerpted from the Beijing Platform for Action.

A. Women and poverty

- A1. Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.*
- A2. Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources.*
- A3. Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.*
- A4. Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty.*

For each of the above strategic objectives (and subsequent objectives), the Platform for Action suggests actions to be taken by Governments, in addition to actions to be taken by multilateral organisations and non-governmental organisations.

In preparing their Action Plans, Governments should:

- ✓ Review the objectives and actions in the Platform for Action.
- ✓ Decide upon those which are most urgent and feasible from the national perspective.
- ✓ Recall the commitments they made at the Beijing Conference.
- ✓ Specify the targets to be met.
- ✓ Name the government agencies and NGOs involved.
- ✓ Indicate the resources to be allocated.
- ✓ Specify any necessary legislation and any measures already taken.

For example, if a poverty study or a living standards survey has already been conducted with methodologies that take gender into account, this may be stated, with a note concerning the agency or agencies in charge, and any plans to extend gender-sensitive survey methods other agencies or sectors. If poverty-alleviation projects for women are in place or are planned, the description of these should specify the targets, institutions and resources involved. An action plan would specify time bound targets and benchmarks for

monitoring the implementation of this commitment, and describe the resources allocated.

Social indicators available in various documents could help in the identification of priorities, time-bound targets, and benchmarks. For example, where female-headed households are a disproportionately large or growing proportion of all poor households, a government may establish a benchmark and specify the ways and means of meeting this goal. To help alleviate women's poverty, a benchmark could be established to narrow the gender-based income gap, with remuneration ratios and women's average wages monitored to assess progress.

An example of commitment is one by Lesotho which stated at Beijing that it would remove restrictions on women's ability to obtain credit and do business.

The Ivory Coast committed itself to create a special development fund to finance women's projects in agriculture and business; to create a women's bank of Ivory Coast to increase women's access to credit.

These commitments could be turned into action by national governments making specific and measurable objectives, specifying dates and targets, as well as the various actors to be involved in the implementation and the resources to be allocated to make the commitments a reality.

B. Education and training of women

B1. Ensure equal access to education.

B2. Eradicate illiteracy among women.

B3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.

B4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training.

B5. Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms.

B6. Promote lifelong education and training for girls and women.

This section might begin with a statement and data on women's literacy, school enrolments, and educational attainment (in absolute terms and relative to boys and men), the quality of girls' schools and coeducational schools, access of rural girls to schools, and any other relevant information. The objectives would set a time-frame and benchmarks

to be monitored, and specify the government agencies and other actors involved in achieving the goals, resources to be allocated, and any legislative changes.

Here it would be useful to specify existing barriers, the time-frame for realisation of the objectives, the resources to be allocated, and the agencies, organisations, and institutions involved in carrying out the objectives.

Ivory Coast committed itself to reduce fees and distribute free school books so that 100% of girls will be enrolled by the year 2000. The Congo committed itself to developing literacy and post-literacy programmes, paying special attention to the needs of the girl child. Ghana committed itself to increasing female enrolment in education, particularly in rural areas while Namibia committed itself to a goal of 94% primary school age enrolment and 80% literacy by the year 2000. Namibia also committed itself to continue efforts of the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture to remove all forms of discrimination based on gender.

Tanzania committed itself to increasing pre-school enrolment from 2% to 50%; increasing primary school enrolment from 80% to 100%; increasing primary school completion to 80% and reducing illiteracy rate by 50%, all by the year 2000. These commitments have clearly set targets and are time-bound but would benefit from having the actors/institutions involved in their implementation and monitoring named, as well as the resources for their implementation.

C. Women and health

- C1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.*
- C2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health.*
- C3. Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues.*
- C4. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health.*
- C5. Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.*

This section may also begin with relevant current and prospective social indicators, followed by the specification of objectives, targets, benchmarks, monitoring mechanisms, actors, and financing.

Mauritius committed itself to making reproductive health care a priority and implementing a country-wide breast and cervical cancer detection campaign.

Lesotho committed itself to institute specific programmes to improve women's health including care of sick family members, prevention of malnutrition and HIV/AIDS and safe drinking water.

In a National Action Plan, the above commitments should have measurable objectives, time-frames, targets, resources allocated and an identification of the actors/institutions to be involved in implementation.

D. Violence Against Women

- D1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.*
- D2. Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.*
- D3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.*

An especially relevant recommended action may be paragraph 124 (e):

«Work actively to ratify and/or implement international human rights norms and instruments as they relate to violence against women, including those contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.»

Governments might specify whether this action has been undertaken, and the institutions involved in monitoring human rights compliance and violations, including the human rights of women and various forms of violence against women.

South Africa committed itself to creating national consciousness regarding violence against women and increasing the provision of shelters for battered women. Mauritius committed itself to enact a domestic violence act. Again without measurable objectives, targets, time-frames, named actors/institutions, and resources, it would be difficult to monitor implementation of these commitments.

E. Women and armed conflict

- E1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.*
- E2. Reduce excessive, military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.*

- E3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.*
- E4. Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.*
- E5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.*
- E6. Provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.*

Here it may be useful to specify the actions to be taken, including the consultative process and institution involved, the legislation required, and resources to be allocated.

The participation of women in conflict resolution, peace-making and peace-keeping is relevant objective.

Governments may also wish to specify, in their action plans, how they are reducing excessive military expenditures, and any plans to convert military resources to development, including social development for women in accordance with paragraph 143 (a) and (b) and paragraph 349. A national action plan may also specify a time-bound target for the realisation of Strategic Objective E2, establish a benchmark against which performance and outcomes will be measured, and identify how the military resources may be reallocated.

F. Women and the economy

- F1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.*
- F2. Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.*
- F3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, info particularly to low-income women.*
- F4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.*
- F5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.*
- F6. Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for women and men.*

A brief description of women's labour-market position, using information from the nation report and any other sources, may precede and put into perspective the time-bound targets and resources to be allocated.

Many countries have come to recognise women's contributions to economic development, reflected in the objectives and actions pertaining to women and the economy in the Platform Action. In Beijing, commitments were agreed upon to further women's economic rights and enhance their capacity to participate in, contribute to, and benefit from economic growth. In its national action plan, a Government may wish to specify the legislative being pursued in such areas as defining and prohibiting sexual harassment at the workplace, banning basis of gender, eliminating gender bias in social security programmes, promoting the ability of women workers to balance employment and family responsibilities, extending protection to home-based workers, and protecting the rights of documented migrant workers. Governments may also wish to specify which of the ILO conventions they have already ratified, and when others will be ratified.

Partnership among government agencies, private sector businesses, banks educational institutions, and women's organisations may be specified in describing time-bound initiatives to promote the expansion of women-owned businesses, to narrow the income gap between men and women. to increase the number of child-care facilities, and to integrate a gender perspective in development plans and in project and programme formulations. Benchmarks may also be defined -for example, establishing a child-care facility at each government agency and public enterprise by the year 2000; increasing the proportion of women's co-operatives; reducing women's unemployment rates to a more reasonable level by the year 2000, and so on.

G. Women in power and decision-making

G1. Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

G2. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

There is consensus that a critical mass of at least 30 per cent female is an appropriate benchmark, and that women's participation in political bodies is an appropriate area for monitoring. This will include monitoring women's presence in political parties, electoral lists, parliaments, cabinets, courts and police force, and influential government positions. Here partnership among governments, political parties, trade unions, women's organisations, human rights organisations, the legal profession, any regional organisations, and international organisations is crucial to the achievement of this strategic objective. The action plan should specify any new legislative measures to implement this objective, the resources allocated and the new institutions established to promote women's leadership and train them for decision-making positions.

Tanzania committed itself to increasing the number of women in decision-making to a minimum of 30% by the year 2000.

H. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

- H1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.*
- H2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.*
- H3. Generate and disseminate sex-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.*

Some governments have established a State Ministry for Women's Affairs as a way of strengthening the national machinery charged with achieving the integration of a gender perspective across agencies (gender main streaming). Others have set up equality ombudsman-type offices. The Central African Republic made a commitment to create a network of women ministers and parliamentarians to follow up on Platform recommendations,. While the Congo, among other countries, will establish national machinery for the implementation of the Platform. The action plans should include details, including time-frames and budgets. Many countries have committed themselves to developing gender sensitive social statistics.. The plan should also include a section on the consultation process bringing as wide a cross section of relevant ministries, NGOs and other actors in civil society as is necessary for comprehensive elaboration and effective implementation.

In the Action Plan, it may be useful to specify the ministries involved in the gender main streaming process (whether for national planning or overseas development assistance), the resources allocated to the national machinery for women. and any collaboration with NGOs and donor agencies.

I. Human rights of women

- II. Promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*
- I2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.*
- I3. Achieve legal literacy.*

In Beijing, several countries made commitments in this area. Several countries committed themselves to implementing fully the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). For the purposes of the action plan, it would be useful to specify a time-frame and a national monitoring mechanism. Ethiopia, among others, committed themselves to improving laws and regulations for

the protection of the rights and interests, of women. Gambia's commitments at Beijing included one to address violence against women in compliance with CEDAW. For the purposes of the action plan, it will be useful to describe the existing laws or any new legislative initiatives, along with monitoring bodies. If plans are underway to disseminate the human rights of women and promote legal literacy through various forms of media, the action plan may describe the initiatives.

J. Women and the media

- J1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.*
- J2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.*

In the action plans, Governments may specify the agencies and institutions involved (both governmental and non-governmental), the timetables, and the resources to be allocated towards the implementation of these objectives.

K. Women and the environment

- K1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels.*
- K2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.*
- K3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.*

Lesotho made a commitment to establish an institutional framework, including research, to co-ordinate environmental issues among government, NGOs and women's groups; and to educate rural women about alternative sources of energy. In the action plans, Governments may describe how implementation of these objectives is consonant with the objectives of Agenda 21, including chapter 24. In describing any new institutions, policies, or legislative measures, Governments may specify the actors involved, timetables to achieve the targets resources allocated, monitoring mechanisms, and accountability procedures.

L. The girl-child

- LI. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child in education, skills development, and training and in health and nutrition.*

- L2. Eliminate negative cultural and attitudes and practices against girls.*
- L3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.*
- L4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.*
- L5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.*
- L6. Eliminate the exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.*
- L7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child.*
- L8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.*
- L9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.*

Examples of relevant commitments made in Beijing are the commitment of the Ivory Coast to reduce fees and distribute free schoolbooks so that 100% of girls will be enrolled by the year, 2000, and Zambia's commitment to achieve gender parity in school enrolments by the year 2005. Through a consultative process with non-governmental organisations, Governments will decide upon the relevant objectives, targets, time frames, and resources to be expended. In describing the implementation of relevant objectives, the action plan should specify the agencies and organisations involved (governmental, non-governmental, bilateral, and multilateral), timetables for achievement of targets, the monitoring mechanism, an accountability.

Conclusion

Here the action plan may conclude by reiterating the main priorities and targets listing the governmental and non-governmental bodies involved, and presenting a matrix presenting current social indicators pertaining to women, and time-bound targets, and funds to be allocated. An example of the implementation plan matrix is attached.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

For each of the priorities identified, a separate implementation plan matrix should be produced. If time is spent producing these, then the monitoring and progress report writing tasks will be made much easier.

We have included an example to show what the document could look like once completed. The figures we have used are arbitrary and are only presented here for demonstration purposes.

Critical Area: Women and Poverty

Objectives	Activities	Outputs	Indicators	Critical Factors for Success	Measurement	Time frame	Resources required	Responsible person/body
Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions	1. Establish a development fund to finance women's activities in agriculture and business	A \$1m Special Fund for Women's activities in agriculture and business established	300 women's projects in business and agriculture receiving grants/loans of up to \$500 each in 10 districts	Availability of funds Viable, fundable projects Women's awareness of fund existence	Assessment by women users Records of transactions Assessment by the fund managers	Fund established December 1998 Operations begin January 1999	\$1m for establishment of funds 50 members of staff with qualifications	Ministry of Finance Ministry of Planning Women's Finance Trust

Checklist for Assessing National Action Plans:

Does the plan have

- ✓ Clearly defined priorities?
- ✓ Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound objectives in relation to the priorities?
- ✓ Specified activities to meet the objectives?
- ✓ Named actors for implementation of activities?
- ✓ Clear division of labour, roles and responsibilities between the different actors?
- ✓ Resources allocated to the activities?
- ✓ A time-frame within which to implement the Plan?
- ✓ A clearly stated monitoring process
- ✓ An identified body to monitor the implementation process?