



ACTION

ON GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND
ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN AFRICA

Report of the Sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI) From Commitment to Delivery



Economic Commission
for Africa



African Union



African Development Bank



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Sixth The African Development Forum (ADF VI)

19-21 November 2008 - United Nations Conference Centre - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



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Acronyms and abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ART	Anti-retroviral treatment
AU	African Union
AWF	African Women's Fund
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CBOs	Community-based organizations
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FGM	Female genital mutilation
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IEC	International Education Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MMR	Maternal mortality ratio
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RECs	Regional economic communities
SDGEA	The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN SCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSG	United Nations Secretary-General
WHO	World Health Organization

Overview

The sixth African Development Forum convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) was held in Addis Ababa from 19 to 21 November 2008. The theme of the Forum was: *Action on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women*. The aim of the Forum was to review progress made towards gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women, in order to identify the major constraints and the concrete actions required to speed up progress in that regard. The Forum was attended by more than 800 delegates, women, men and youth, representing Governments; international, regional and subregional organizations; community-based organizations; civil society organizations; the private sector; traditional and religious leaders; trade unions, the media; and the youth. The observations and recommendations from the meeting are summarized below.

A. Achievements and obstacles

Participants noted that one of the major achievements made on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women was the development of relevant instruments at the global and regional levels. Others included the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1820¹, which designated rape as a war crime; the development of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979); the Beijing Platform for Action (1995); Millennium Development Goal 3 (2000); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990); the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003); the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004); and many other instruments.

There were shining examples of women's empowerment on the continent, including the provision of the Constitutive Act of the African Union calling for gender parity at the level of the African Union commissioners. Another achievement was the election of Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as President of Liberia, making her Africa's first female head of State. The level of women's representation in national parliaments was also increasing partly because of the increased use of quotas and other affirmative action measures in many countries. In fact, Africa had made considerable progress towards achieving gender parity in education, especially at the primary school level.

In spite of those achievements, there was little progress in translating commitments into action. Many daunting challenges had to be overcome in order to achieve accelerated progress, including inadequate political will, shortage of resources, conflict situations and poor coordination. The global crises, which included escalating food prices, volatile fuel

1 Adopted June 2008

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prices, climate change and the financial turmoil, posed a major challenge to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment on the continent. It was not sufficient for a Government, an international development partner, a multilateral institution or a societal stakeholder, to make a promise or sign a pledge to advance gender equality without establishing a clearly thought-out implementation strategy. There had been insufficient action taken to implement many of the commitments. Delegates demanded change immediately, noting that global economic crisis might reverse some of the gains of recent years and turn current aspirations into a mirage. Finally, the theme of the conference could be summed up in two slogans that recurred throughout the three days proceedings, namely, "*From commitment to delivery*" and "*Time is up!*"

B. Ending violence against women and girls

Recommendations were made on violence against women in general as well as on three related issues: violence against women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations; harmful traditional practices and institutions; and trafficking of women and sexual exploitation. Participants noted that the vulnerability of women and girls to violence stemmed from deep-rooted socio-cultural factors; low social and economic status; lack of rights to land and other forms of property; limited access to relevant information and institutions that were supposed to protect them; and exposure to armed conflict.

Most countries had laws that prohibited violence against women and girls, but in many countries those laws were deficient and needed reform to make them consonant with the regional and international conventions and protocols which countries had signed and ratified. In addition, those laws were rarely enforced and most men and women, boys and girls were unaware of them.

Few data were available on violence against women or on the different forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual harassment in public spaces, or on conflict-related, political, trafficking-related violence, and harmful traditional practices. There was need to formulate a coherent strategy and to adopt a holistic approach to violence against women, and data should also be disaggregated by age of the victim and the specificity of each context.

Gender inequality, lack of women's empowerment, violence against women and the unequal relationship between men and women were deeply rooted in culture. In addition, pervasive cultural attitudes and practices, and patriarchal customary laws were affecting the achievement of gender equality, women's empowerment and the ending of violence against women. African countries and their partners should develop and support programmes to dismantle pervasive and entrenched patriarchal cultures and traditions. Such programmes should not only involve participatory research but, also widespread dissemination across borders using cultural icons and the media. Finally, cultures that could play a positive role in ending violence against women needed to be identified, documented and disseminated.

Violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations

The rights of women continued to be violated during and after conflict. Women with disabilities, older women, girls and widows were increasingly vulnerable yet not targeted by intervention strategies. Even though countries had adopted Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, implementation at national level was weak, partly because of the failure of countries to develop action plans for implementing the resolutions. In addition, women at grassroots level did not have adequate information on resolutions that protected them; they were not fully involved in mediation efforts and those of them who were victims of violence had no platform to make their voices heard.

Progress toward ending violence against women in conflict and post conflict situations should be stepped up. All stakeholders should take cognizance of Security Council resolution 1325 and women, the armed forces, peacekeepers, traditional and religious leaders, and parliamentarians should be trained on the content and implications of the resolution. Countries that had not yet developed national action plans for implementing the resolution should do so. Governments should sensitize their citizens, especially women, about resolution 1325 as a means of empowering women in conflict situations. Also, the regional component of the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women" should be launched as soon as possible, at least by 2009. Research and joint efforts should be undertaken to address the various underlying causes of violence against women and girls in conflict settings.

Harmful traditional practices and institutions

Despite national legislation and the implementation of projects by numerous actors, millions of women and girls continued to be victims of harmful traditional practices in many parts of Africa. Those practices were embedded in customary institutions and social values the most common being female genital mutilation. Others included taboos and practices that prevented women from controlling their own fertility, virginity testing, male child preference, nutritional taboos, early marriage, and traditional birth practices. Non-traditional harmful practices included the use of skin-lightening creams and abuse of prescription drugs.

The regional component of the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women", should be supported by the best documentation and data on harmful traditional and non-traditional practices. The campaign should involve traditional and religious leaders, health practitioners, traditional health and birth attendants, community leaders, women and women's organizations, and the media, in an effort to raise awareness of the risks of such practices and change social norms. The campaign should encourage survivors of harmful traditional practices to speak out.

Human trafficking

Illegal trafficking of women and children across borders for exploitation, often as sexual slaves, was caused by poverty and the vulnerability of women and girls in times when law and order had broken down, notably in situations of conflict. Although adequate data were not available, human trafficking, especially from west and central Africa to more

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affluent countries, such as those in Europe, appeared to be growing. Hence, African and international efforts to combat human trafficking should be stepped up, especially through media campaigns to alert people to the existence of those dangers; the capacity of national and regional law enforcement bodies should be enhanced, and cooperation with international authorities should be increased. African countries should ratify and enforce supportive international and regional instruments such as the 2003 United Nations Convention against Transnational and Organized Crime, the 2000 Supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the 2006 AU/EU Ouagadougou Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children.

African countries needed to adopt necessary legislation allowing for extradition of human traffickers, build the capacity of law enforcement and social services needed to combat trafficking and provide necessary protection and assistance to survivors of the practice. Statistical capacity for data collection on human trafficking should be upscaled in order to increase awareness of the magnitude of the problem and results-oriented policies that could be monitored and evaluated should be designed. African countries should draw up and implement national plans of action to combat trafficking. The African First Ladies' Association should be actively involved in combating human trafficking and AU, ECA and AfDB should set up a joint fund to combat the practice.

C. Action on gender equality and women's empowerment

Although African countries had taken the lead in signing and ratifying international and regional conventions and declarations on the rights of women and girls, the main problem had been failure to integrate international and regional standards into national laws and to ensure that the laws were disseminated and enforced. Action on gender equality and women's empowerment was also discussed under the following themes: gender, land and property rights; gender, employment, markets and trade; HIV and AIDS; health; education, training and skills development; financing for gender equality; and governance, conflict, peace and security.

Gender, land and property rights

There were many inequities in land tenure systems that made it impossible for many women and girls to gain access to or to own and inherit land and other property. Almost all countries had progressive legal instruments to provide women with property rights, but implementation of those policies and legislation were hampered by socio-cultural attitudes, economic constraints and limited knowledge of the existence of supportive policies and effective practices. In that regard, concerted efforts should be made to disseminate relevant laws and norms at the community level. Positive elements in customary land tenure systems should be reinforced by integrating into the formal legal system. Information, experiences and effective practices should also be shared across countries.

Existing best practices should be supported. They included the promotion of broad-based consultations in formulating legislation on land and providing for women's access; tax incentives for transfer of land from husband to wife; local land committees with equal representation of men and women; leasehold rights for women's groups over productive land; provision of extension services and literacy training to improve women's productivity and livelihoods; and support for urban women slum dwellers to partner with Governments in order to access adequate housing and consequently improve their livelihoods.

Gender, employment, markets and trade

The 2000 decent work development agenda of the International Labour Organization for women; The Ouagadougou Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, the 2004 Plan of Action and the 2005 Follow-up Mechanism on Employment all addressed the major challenges that hindered employment creation in Africa, especially among young people. The Governments should swiftly implement the Ouagadougou Declaration and other regional and international commitments aimed at fostering gender-sensitive employment creation, and national employment laws should be made consistent with international norms and to be rigorously enforced.

Women faced many obstacles in undertaking cross-border trade, due to lack of gender-sensitive trade policies. In that regard, Governments should mainstream gender issues in trade agreements at all levels and in action plans for implementing the Aid for Trade Initiative, with assistance from regional institutions such as the African Trade Policy Centre of ECA. The Regional economic communities (RECs) should support women in undertaking cross-border trade by establishing and financing information centres, helping with the interpretation of trade agreements and creating harassment-free environments at border crossing points.

Finally, Governments should consider fiscal incentives and create investment climate that favours foreign direct investment (FDI) and domestic investment in sectors that generate employment for women, especially high up in the production and value services chain. Special funds should also be set up to support women's entrepreneurial activities.

Education, training and Information and communications technology

Promoting women and girls' access to education and training was the most important route to gender equality, women's empowerment, better health outcomes and human capital development. Women and girls lacked access to education, vocational training and Information and communications technology (ICT), and girls faced many obstacles in trying to achieve their academic potential. It was therefore necessary to adopt effective social protection and poverty-reduction measures such as free and universal primary and secondary education, supported by school meals and educational support grants, affirmative action in enrolment and financial assistance to girls from poor households to continue their education at the secondary school level. Specialist training in ICT should also be targeted at women and girls.

Financing for gender equality

Investing in women and girls contribute to poverty reduction, economic growth and social development in positive and sustainable ways. However, resources for gender equality and women's empowerment remained desperately limited, hence the importance of domestic resource mobilization, to that end. Although no national budget could be gender-neutral, countries that had not yet adopted gender budgeting should do so as a matter of urgency. Gender-responsive statistical systems were required in order to support gender financing and budgeting. It was also important to establish gender-sensitive, expenditure-tracking and outcome-monitoring systems. In that regard, ECA, AUC, AfDB and other stakeholders should strengthen the capacity of ministries of finance and planning to enable them to undertake gender-responsive assessment of sectoral financial plans and to track and monitor spending.

A number of international financing measures should be taken and existing commitments in development partnership including funding levels and quality of partnership should be fulfilled. In that connection, special efforts should be made to promote financing for gender equality and women's empowerment. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action should be utilized by Governments and development partners in implementing their commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.

The African Women's Fund of the African Union was an important step in mobilizing resources and providing continental leadership for gender and women's issues. The Fund should be launched and operationalized within the deadline of July 2009 set by the Executive Council. The proposal for a unified United Nations agency to provide global resources and advocacy for women and girls and gender issues was a positive development.

Health

African women continued to have some of the world's worst health indicators, including unacceptably high rates of maternal mortality. Women's level of access to free and high quality health services remained poor. Water and sanitation were important for health and for women's rights and empowerment, and all the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) needed to be prioritized. Health services should be universally and freely accessible, and the associated increases in funding for health systems in general and specific diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, alongside efforts to control and eradicate preventable childhood diseases should be welcomed. Comprehensive reproductive and sexual health services needed to be scaled up.

Human resources in the health sector with a particular emphasis on frontline health workers, including midwives and community health workers, should be scaled up, and parallel systems of health care, including traditional medical practices, self-care and home care, that many women relied on should be developed. Gender-disaggregated health data existed but were not sufficiently used for lack of capacity, a problem compounded by the

limited use of ICT. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to increase the use of existing information at the national and international levels.

HIV and AIDS

The HIV/AIDS epidemic was the outcome of severe gender inequalities. Some women and girls, especially in the rural areas did not have adequate access to HIV-prevention information, technologies and treatment. HIV/AIDS interventions in the past had been made parallel to other health-care programmes and therefore needed to be integrated into other health programmes, such as reproductive health.

As both older people and the young were at risk of HIV infection, services should be targeted at persons of all ages. Similarly, as sexual- and gender-based violence and exploitation was a major source of HIV/AIDS for girls and women, the campaign to end violence against women and girls should be central in the efforts to protect them from HIV transmission. Men should play also a greater role in addressing HIV/AIDS.

Gender, governance, conflict, peace and security

Although important steps had been taken to improve the representation of women in Africa's decision-making structures, such as the legislature, the judiciary and the executive, the situation remained woefully unsatisfactory. Translating numbers into effective action continued to be a major challenge. African countries' current achievements still needed to be consolidated, sustained and translated into actions that transformed the lives of ordinary women and girls.

Women should become more involved in peacemaking activities, including negotiations and advisory services. Women from civil society, the refugee and internally displaced communities, and women survivors of violence should also be represented in peace talks. In addition, women needed to be trained in negotiation and peacemaking skills. Given the extreme and brutal suffering of women and girls in many African conflicts, their portrayal only as victims of conflict was doing them a serious disservice. While the physical protection of vulnerable women and girls was important, the potential for peacemaking would be even greater if women's capabilities were unlocked through gender-equitable peace processes.

D. Involving men

For true gender equality, women's empowerment also meant empowering men to play a more fulfilling and capable role within society, as the equals of women. Men and boys, including perpetrators of violent crimes such as rape, needed psychosocial counseling as well as social and economic protection. There was therefore a need for more positive and gender-aware construction of male identities to allow for recognition and destigmatization of the opposite gender.

E. Emerging issues

The African continent was experiencing multiple crises, including, high food prices, volatile fuel prices, climate change and the financial turmoil, which could affect its efforts to achieve gender equality, women's empowerment and end violence against women. High food and fuel prices generated hardship for importing countries, and wild fluctuations in the price of oil created instability among Africa's oil producers. Furthermore, the financial crisis and the economic downturn among the development partners in Europe and North America might lead to a freeze or reduction in official development assistance (ODA); a decrease in the international demand of African products as well as in remittances to Africa. As women and girls tended to bear the brunt of such multiple crises, development partners should continue their efforts to protect them. Bold action should also be taken to mainstream a gender perspective into all efforts to address climate change.

F. Conclusion

A Plan of Action for Ending Violence against Women and Girls, Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women was adopted. It consisted of the following three priority actions: (a) launching an Africa-wide campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls; (b) improving financing for gender equality, women's empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls; and (c) strengthening the collection of reliable data on gender equality, women's empowerment and violence against women and girls.

The Africa-wide campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls would be a three-year campaign to address the underlying economic and social causes of vulnerability of girls and women to violence. Its goal would be to transform patriarchal values, end harmful traditional practices, and improve women's access to productive assets, housing and property. The campaign would also involve strengthening legal systems as well as educational, health, police, judicial and social service institutions entrusted with preventing such violence and punishing its perpetrators.

Finally, financing for gender equality, women's empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls required scaling up efforts to improve domestic and external financing strategies. Increased collection of reliable data on gender equality, women's empowerment and violence against women and girls was to establish sound data on all aspects of the issue for use in policy making, monitoring and evaluation. The detailed Plan of Action is presented in Annex 2.

1. Introduction

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in cooperation with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), convened the sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 19 to 21 November 2008 under the theme: *Action on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women*. The Forum was organized following the realization that although many international and regional commitments (listed in annex 1) have been made by African countries, progress towards recognizing the rights of women and girls, attaining gender equality and successfully addressing violence against women in Africa has been disappointing. Notable achievements, include the establishment of national policies and strategies for gender equality, increased awareness, improved legislative and institutional frameworks, increased diversity in mechanisms for promoting and monitoring gender equality, improved resource allocation through gender-sensitive budgeting, and increased efforts to engage men and boys more actively in the promotion of gender equality.

2. Despite these, gender inequality still prevails, especially in secondary and higher education enrolment; technical and professional training; access to productive resources and assets such as land, capital and technologies; agriculture and rural development services; basic health services; employment opportunities and decision-making processes, and violence against women and girls is still prevalent. These ills are impeding progress towards achieving the MDGs and overall socio-economic development in Africa. They are accompanied by new challenges, which include food insecurity, exacerbated by rising food prices; climate change; water and energy shortages; and the financial crisis.

3. The objective of the Forum was to reflect on progress made towards promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and addressing violence against women, and to identify the challenges constraining implementation of commitments at the national and regional levels and to propose concrete actions that could be taken to quicken progress. This report gives a detailed account of the proceedings and outcomes of the Forum².

2. Attendance

4. The Forum brought together more than 800 delegates, representing African Governments, international, regional and subregional organizations, community-based organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector, traditional and religious leaders, United Nations agencies, development partners, the diaspora, trade unions, the media, and youth. The meeting was attended by several dignitaries, including Ms. Asha Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mrs. Isatou Njie-Saidy,

² Full texts of all the major addresses and presentations at the Forum are posted at: <http://www.uneca.org/adfvi/>

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Vice President of the Gambia, Mr. Lesao Lehohla, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Mrs Sia Koroma, First Lady of Sierra Leone, and Her Majesty, Silvia Nagginda, Queen of Buganda Kingdom in Uganda. The meeting was also attended by several ministers of gender and women's affairs and defense. The complete list of participants and their affiliation is in annex 6.

3. Opening Session

5. The opening ceremony started with participants observing a one-minute period of silence dedicated to women victims of violence and to the late Ms. Miriam Makeba, Mama Africa. Opening statements were made by Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA; Mr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank; Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission; the Special Guest the Honourable Ulla Tornaes, Minister of Development Cooperation of Denmark; and His Excellency, Mr. Girma Wolde-Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

6. Mr. Abdoulie Janneh said that the Forum was being held fifteen years after Beijing, ten years after ECA organized a conference on African women and economic development, and in the year in which ECA was celebrating its 50th anniversary. Although some progress had been achieved in Africa on gender equality, particularly in increased women's representation in parliament and primary education; some gender-related challenges remained.

7. The theme of the Forum was very relevant and timely, especially given the need to upscale efforts in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by the target date and the recently - launched multi-year campaign of the United Nations Secretary-General to intensify action to end violence against women. Gender equality and women's empowerment were essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

8. The review of the status of implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action undertaken at the seventh African Regional Conference in 2004, showed that Africa had made considerable progress in reducing the gender gap in several sectors, including education, access to health services, representation in parliament and decision-making positions, and in the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, much remained to be done, especially as the recent strong growth of over 5 per cent a year recorded on the continent had not impacted enough on poverty reduction, achievement of the MDGs, gender equality and overall social development. Also, Africa was facing new crises (financial, food, water and energy) that had varying impacts on women and men, could limit achievement of the MDGs and deepen the existing gender inequalities.

Progress towards gender equality is affected by multiple global crises

9. Policies, legislation and effective strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment had been adopted in many African countries. Nevertheless, the various measures taken needed to be more effectively implemented and enforced to make a tangible difference. He wished that the Forum would propose actions and strategies that could help speed up progress towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and ending violence against women. Therefore, the Forum should adopt an innovative and well-thought-out action plan that would ensure a transformational intervention under all the three main sub-themes of the conference.

10. The Forum was evidence of a tripartite collaborative action by ECA, AUC and AfDB to address development challenges on the African continent. The joint ECA-AU-AfDB secretariat was to be commended for the partnership established with other United Nations agencies in delivering their programmes. He thanked the bilateral partners who provided financial support to ECA to enhance the capacity of policy makers and other stakeholders in member States to use appropriate tools and methodologies to establish gender-responsive policies and programmes. One of the major achievements in that regard had been the development of the African Gender and Development Index which measured the extent of gender inequality in Africa and helped African Governments assess their performance in narrowing the gender gap.

11. Mr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank, noted that the Forum should take stock of MDG3 and resolve to make faster progress. The AfDB had made progress toward implementing its Gender Plan of Action, particularly with the support given to promote gender equality in education, support women in business and mainstreaming gender in the entire programme of the Bank. Ms. Ulla Tornaes, the Danish Development Minister who had participated in a marathon in support of MDG3 and had issued MDG3 torch to many development institutions, including the AfDB, was to be commended.

*From crisis to
improvement*

12. The multiple crises that Africa was facing, including food and energy shortages, climate change and the recent financial turmoil, had major implications for gender equality as they deepened poverty, especially among women and children. The financial crisis could lead to slower growth, lower aid and reduced public resources, thus negatively affecting gender equality through reduced budgets for gender programmes, reduced employment opportunities, and business closures, especially small- and medium-scale enterprises, many of which were female owned. Also, fragile States required special support in order to achieve progress towards gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women. Participants should therefore share experiences, learn from one another and identify key areas for implementation. Finally, the major challenge of the conference should be to find solutions that could help improve the situation on the continent.

13. Mr. Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, said that ADF VI provided an opportunity to review progress made at the national, subregional and regional levels, to define priority actions and mechanisms to quicken progress, build new strategic alliances and strengthen partnerships to move the gender equality

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agenda forward. Although some progress had been made in establishing frameworks for promoting gender equality, a number of member States still lagged behind in overcoming the challenges of gender-based discrimination and violence.

14. The African Union (AU) remained committed to redressing gender inequalities in all its ramifications. AU Heads of State and Government had been championing gender equality and women's empowerment and had adopted relevant landmark provisions, including the African Union Constitutive Act, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA). That spirit was also clearly reflected in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme and the African Peer Review Mechanism. Also, the Heads of State and Government had set precedence in 2003 by electing five female and five male commissioners, thus implementing article (4L) of the African Union's Constitutive Act at the highest level of the Commission.

15. The African Union Commission (AUC) would continue to report to the AU Assembly on progress made in the implementation of the regional commitments made by member States. By the January 2009 Summit, 20 AU member States would have reported on the implementation of SDGEA. Already, 26 member States had either signed or ratified the Protocol on Women's Rights. The AUC was at an advanced stage in finalizing a gender policy and gender action plan, that would mainstream gender into the Commission's programmes, guide AU organs in the implementation of the Assembly's commitments on gender, harmonize implementation of the gender commitments made by the regional economic communities, and speed up implementation of their commitments with regard to gender. Finally, the new challenges of food insecurity, climate change, migration, and water and energy shortages threatened the fragile gains made on gender equality. Although those issues affected both sexes, their impact on women and children was more catastrophic, making it more imperative to hasten the progress towards achieving gender equality.

16. Ms. Ulla Tornaes, Danish Minister of Development Cooperation, as special guest, stressed the importance of financing for gender equality as an effective means to reduce poverty, increase economic growth and quicken achievement of all the MDGs. Financing for gender equality was fundamentally about ensuring that women benefited from and had equal access to society's resources as men. Financing for gender equality should go beyond securing specific budget allocations for women's ministries or national machineries, to cover all the gender related needs of the other sectoral ministries.

*Financing for gender
equality effective means
to reduce poverty*

17. African countries and donor partners needed to implement the Paris Declaration principles and the Accra Agenda for Action as a means of promoting financing for gender equality. There was also a need to conduct analysis using gender-disaggregated data in order to determine the challenges and opportunities for promoting gender equality. Earlier in 2008, the Danish Government had launched the MDG3 Global Call to Action to generate stronger political and financial support for the third MDG on gender equality

and women's empowerment. The core element of the campaign had included handing over MDG3 torches to representatives of Governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society. By becoming torch bearers, they all had committed themselves to doing something extra to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The torch bearers had included the United Nations Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union, the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ECA, the President of AfDB, and the First Lady of Ethiopia. Finally, she hoped that the torch bearers would all cooperate beyond their individual torch-bearer commitments to secure an increase in the political priority and resources needed to promote MDG3 at both the international and the country levels.

18. President Girma Wolde-Giorgis said that ADF VI was a significant opportunity to focus collective efforts on addressing one of the biggest and most crucial challenges of the time: achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, and ending violence against women. Development could not be achieved without the full participation of women who made up at least half of the population of every country. Africa had experienced some positive economic growth averaging more than 5 per cent a year over the past six years. Although that growth had been accompanied by some improvements in social conditions, it had not had a tangible impact on poverty reduction, achievement of the MDGs, gender equality and overall social development. The emerging challenges of high food and fuel prices, increasing unemployment, climate change and the financial crisis that the continent was facing made it more pressing to improve gender equality and women's empowerment.

*It is now time to move
from talk to action*

19. The Forum had to produce an achievable plan of action, which should include strategies that would improve access of women and girls to education, health, marketing infrastructure, technologies, secure land rights, irrigation and clean energy sources. With regard to the food crisis, Governments and development stakeholders should take the necessary steps to mitigate the gender effects of rising food prices on living standards and design strategies to boost domestic agricultural production, while redressing problems of gender inequality in agricultural development. The capacity of countries to develop gender-sensitive indicators and compile gender-disaggregated data should be strengthened in order to provide accurate information for policy makers. Finally, it was time for countries to follow through on their commitments and to make follow-up plans to monitor progress in that regard.

4. Plenary Session 1 – High-Level Session on Culture, Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Ending Violence Against Women in Africa

20. The objective of the session was to reflect on how culture and the social construct of gender were linked to gender equality, women’s empowerment and violence against women, and to develop effective reinforcement measures and tools for identifying gender gaps. The participants discussed options on strategies that could be used to hasten progress in ending violence against women that would feed into and shape Africa’s development policy.

21. The presentations made during the session included those of (a) Ms. Rudo Chitiga, international gender expert, entitled “Culture and the Social Construct of Gender”; (b) Ms. Auxillia Ponga, advisor on gender, Commonwealth Secretariat, entitled “Empowerment of Women for Ending Violence against Women”; and (c) H.E. Ms. Elisabeth Rehn, Minister of State, Finland, entitled “Effective and Creative Measures and Tools for Ending Violence Against Women”.

22. Ms. Chitiga pointed out that although many African countries had adopted many international, regional and sub-regional instruments to promote gender equality, the main obstacles to achieving progress were cultural attitudes and practices and customary laws. They kept women from gaining access to productive resources, participating in decision-making, exercising their reproductive and other rights, and subordinated them to men. Culture was very pervasive in the face of progressive legislation for many reasons, including female genital mutilation (FGM) and modern practices such as silicone breast implants and other symbols portrayed on television, Facebook and the catwalk; gendered social arrangements that were justified and reinforced by religion, cultural practices, myths and customary law; and sanctions against rebellious women and girls, including violence and ostracization. Culture was therefore a powerful force that could not be dismantled by good policies, legislation and money alone.

Some cultural practices are still a major obstacle to gender equality

23. Multidimensional methods should be used to break that social construct and empower women, including access to and control of knowledge and information. Most of the institutions that generated knowledge and information were still controlled by men despite the need for women to participate actively and equally in knowledge generation. Gender sensitization training should be provided to community workers and community media should be used to generate debate within the community on the status of women, gender roles and the need for change.

24. Education was another key area for deconstruction of culture. Although commendable efforts had been made in increasing the enrolment of girls in primary and

secondary schools, women still accounted for 62 per cent of the 155 million illiterate adults in Africa. Women therefore had no source of information or experience to contradict the unwritten customary law and traditional practices that confronted them, access to education for women and girls should be improved.

25. Women relied more on tradition in their lives than men. For example, stages of puberty, marriage, childbirth, and child-rearing were mired in myths and traditions which left many women having to follow traditional and, often subordinating, practices. Therefore, women's groups and reproductive health practitioners should do more to demystify the life cycle of women, for example, by producing educational materials that were easily accessible to young girls and women.

26. In addition, measures to improve the economic empowerment of women were still the main way to raising their status. Such measures included improved land rights of women; improved employment and income generation opportunities for women; and improved access to complementary services such as extension, credit, inputs and markets. Men and boys should also play a greater role in addressing gender inequality. In conclusion, she said that monitoring the deconstruction of culture required the development of indicators to measure changes and the removal of cultural barriers. For example, progress markers for gender equality should include qualitative measures of changes in attitude by both men and women towards women's empowerment.

27. Ms. Auxillia Ponga said that the persistence of violence against women and girls in Africa in spite of the continental and international treaties, conventions, resolutions and policy frameworks that had been adopted was regrettable. Apart from the traditional forms of violence, there were emerging forms that included trafficking, and organized crimes against women and girls. Legislation alone was not enough to achieve gender equality in Africa, and it was not sufficient to change perceptions, or cultures of sexism – the types of cultures that encourage gendered violence. Even with an increasing number of women in parliament in some countries and increasing legislation to prevent gender-based discrimination and violence, a culture of male predominance prevailed. Apart from the emotional and psychological impact on the affected person, violence against women also had social and economic costs.

28. Women's poor economic status or the feminization of poverty compounded their vulnerability, and the lack of accurate data to capture violence against women constrained progress in developing appropriate policies and programmes. Empowerment of women through education was vital to enable them to speak out and to take action themselves. Women's empowerment programmes, including those that promoted and re-built women's self-esteem, should be specific and should not be hidden behind gender mainstreaming strategies. Furthermore, survivor-friendly strategies, including capacity development, victim counseling and support groups, should be adopted.

29. Ms. Elisabeth Rehn said that some of the tools for ending violence against women already existed, including the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, and tools

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for achieving gender parity in decision-making developed by the African Union. She had undertaken an independent assessment on women, peace and security with the President of Liberia, H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, immediately after the adoption of resolution 1325. The key message from interviews with women and girls in regions of conflict all around the world was that they were victims both during and after such conflicts.

*In wars, women's bodies
are the battlefields of the
fighting troops*

30. There was need for intensive gender training for all peacekeeping armies, peacekeeping leaders, international police, NGOs and humanitarian workers, to enable them to pay the necessary respect to women in countries where they were based. People involved in peacekeeping operations were predominantly men and therefore required gender training. Trafficking in human beings, in particular women and girls, increased during conflict and post-conflict situations. Her interviews with hundreds of women and girls had showed that they were forced into prostitution, either through trafficking or by being forced to be wartime “bush wives” – many of their true-life stories were heartbreaking.

31. Also, a judicial system that gave women same rights as men was required. Such a system must support and protect the human rights of every individual, even against the State. The development and enforcement of the tools to fight violence against women required resources and Governments and development partners should allocate more resources to that end. Also, impunity must be banned: all those responsible must be made to bear the consequences, whether they were generals or senior United Nations officials. Impunity and violence against women could only be overcome if they were condemned by the highest political leadership.

32. She lamented for the people suffering from sad and serious conflicts on the continent, including in the Sudan, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbouring countries. Women must be present at the peace negotiating table from the beginning, to ensure lasting peace. One area that needed to be improved, even at international level, was the absence of a platform for women to play an active role in building the future of their families and their home countries.

33. For example, only a few women were in the leadership of peacebuilding operations, European Union had no female special envoy, while the United Nations had one, in Liberia.

34. The Nordic countries and many others in Europe had drawn up their own national action plans, pursuant to resolution 1325. While some African States were in the process of developing national plans of action, all African Governments were urged to do so. Finally, men and women should participate equally in decision-making relating to conflict resolution.

35. In the ensuing discussion, participants stressed that violence against women was a violation of women’s human rights; political will was still not matched by action on the ground; and a wide gap still existed between men and women in terms of representation in decision-making. Culture differed from context to context within the

African continent, such that there could not be only one definition of culture across the continent. In tackling violence against women, it was necessary to revisit and understand the underlying culture in a given context.

36. Improved data on violence against women and gender equality was a pre-requisite for better monitoring of national and international efforts to achieve the identified targets. Gender-disaggregated and gender-relevant data should be an integral part of routine data collection by government departments and a component of the African Peer Review Mechanism. Data on gender equality should be an integral part of the proposed “State of Africa’s Women” report. Better data could be the cornerstone of any action plans to speed up achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment particularly, if result-based indicators were used instead of policy-based indicators.

Data on VAW and gender equality essential for better planning

Recommendations

37. These include that:
- Action should be taken to deconstruct culture through the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of cultural change programmes, including massive campaigns to change attitudes targeting men and women, opinion makers, and religious and traditional leaders;
 - Women should be empowered through education and conscientization so that they could speak out and to take action themselves. Women’s empowerment programmes should be specific, including those that promote and rebuild women’s self-esteem, and should not be hidden behind gender mainstreaming strategies;
 - Initiatives should be taken to support research and the definition of accurate indicators to build a body of knowledge on violence against women that can be used to develop appropriate actions;
 - The role of women as generators of knowledge should be promoted;
 - Survivor-friendly strategies, including capacity development, victim counselling and support groups should be adopted;
 - Intensive gender training for all, especially those in leadership positions, should be conducted; and
 - Domestication of international and regional instruments should be intensified and allocation of adequate resources for implementation ensured.

5. Plenary Session 2 – Violence Against Women

38. The session was opened by Ms. Marsha Moyo, Zambian artist and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador on MDGs, with the “African Voice.” She emphasized the need to hear from victims of gender-based violence at gatherings like the Forum, and

appealed to participants to identify those affected by violence and to encourage them to speak publicly.

39. The following three presentations were made: (a) “Violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations”, by Mr. Joseph Chilengi, Executive Director, Africa Internally Displaced Persons’ Voice; (b) “Harmful traditional practices and institutions”, by Mr. Morissanda Kouyate, Director of Operations, Inter-African Committee; and (c) “Trafficking of women and exploitation”, by Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Rapporteur on Trafficking.

40. Mr. Chilengi indicated that violence against women was extensive on the continent and that it was not only hindering the advancement of women but also the development of the continent in general. Ending violence against women was a prerequisite for sustainable development, women’s empowerment and gender equality. All post-conflict reconstruction efforts should put women at the centre because most victims of conflict were women. In conflict situations, women suffered physical, psychological and socio-economical abuse. Women accounted for most casualties of war and the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Ending violence against women – a prerequisite for sustainable development

41. An examination of the root causes of the problem in conflict and post-conflict countries indicated the need to shift the paradigm from reconstruction to transformation. After conflict, countries should not only reconstruct the same legal environment, policy frameworks or national and legal structures, but should also transform the legal and policy governance structures in order to prevent a relapse. Peacebuilding efforts should not only focus on gender equality and improved power relations, but should aim to address the specific needs of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

42. Although many instruments were available at the international, regional and subregional levels to prevent violence against women, such violence continued to be perpetrated in conflict and post-conflict situations, partly because those instruments were not fully translated into local contexts. Also, most of the affected women were unaware of their rights. Accordingly, international and regional commitments should be incorporated into national policies and disseminated to all citizens, especially women.

43. Mr. Kouyate indicated that Africa had many good and nefarious cultural values. The good cultural values could be used as models for replication, such as the community collectively taking care of vulnerable children or the community supporting the elderly. The nefarious practices were those that were used deliberately against a person’s body or mind but not for medical reasons. Those practices had similar characteristics: (a) they had mostly vague traditional foundations; (b) they mainly perpetrated violence against women (98 per cent of the practices targeted women and were inflicted by men); (c) there was strong resistance to their elimination (e.g. the plight of girls forced into early marriage; female genital mutilation (FGM), lip plate mutilation; widow cleansing, nutritional taboos such as preventing women from breastfeeding babies, kidnapping, and fetishes against women.)

44. There was a need to combat those practices. When an international or regional instrument or protocol was developed, some countries were quick to sign on but failed to implement it. Women and girls were not informed of the existence of such protocols. Finally, tribute was to be paid to the late Mme Stella Obasanjo and the First lady of Burkina Faso who declared 6 February as an international day for elimination of FGM and zero tolerance on that issue.

45. Ms. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo called on African people to combat the trafficking of women, which affected all countries in the world, but particularly Africa. She said that lack of accurate data made it very difficult to ascertain the exact number of women and girls who were victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. However, the numbers that did exist were likely to be a gross underestimation. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2008 data, some 2.5 million people throughout the world were at any given time recruited, entrapped, transported and exploited – a process called human trafficking. Trafficking within national borders in Africa was on a large scale, mostly from rural to urban areas. In addition, there was a lot of trafficking across borders within the African continent and Africa had become a major source and supplier of trafficked human beings for the rest of the world.

46. The root causes of trafficking included: absent or corrupt public administration; cultural and religious practices; conflict; poverty and high unemployment which fuelled human trafficking, especially of women and children into forced prostitution, domestic labour and sexual exploitation; gender inequalities; increased use of ICT, especially the internet, for the purposes of exploitation, including prostitution and trafficking of women and girls for sex; exploitation of women and children for sex tourism and child pornography, pedophilia and other forms of sexual exploitation of children; illiteracy and lack of awareness.

*Data on trafficking is
of poor quality and is
unreliable*

47. There were numerous international, regional and subregional instruments dealing with that issue, including: the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979); the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000); Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); the International Labour Organization Convention on Forced or Compulsory Labour No C.29 (1930); the United Nations General Assembly Declaration on Violence against Women (1993); and the United Nations resolution adopted by the General Assembly (A/61/144) on 19 December 2006 on trafficking in women and girls.

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48. The regional legal frameworks designed to fight trafficking of women and children included the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990); the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) and the 2006 AU/EU Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, especially women and children. At the subregional level, Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) had developed frameworks against trafficking in persons, especially women and children. At national level, some countries such as Nigeria, Egypt and Ghana had developed laws and institutions to combat trafficking.

49. Examples of what had worked well in some countries included the establishment of a multi-agency task force on trafficking and a special anti-trafficking unit to gather, exchange and process information and enforce and monitor action on human trafficking; specific legislation dealing with the trafficking in persons and related matters; training of law enforcement agents to identify cases of human trafficking, investigate and prosecute; establishment of victims of trafficking funds; enhanced information-sharing and systematic collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data; and increased capacity of State actors to help rehabilitate victims of trafficking, through counselling, psychosocial support, medical and legal services.

50. Despite those achievements, major challenges remained, such as the lack of reliable data specific to trafficking in women; widespread poverty; gender-based discrimination; conflict; corruption; restrictive immigration policies; limited political will to combat trafficking; difficulty in identification of victims; and limited resources for law enforcement and re-integration of victims.

51. The main lessons learned included the need to strengthen international cooperation and to adopt a multi-pronged approach. There was therefore a need for member States to have effective laws that tackled all aspects and forms of trafficking of women and children; to implement subregional initiatives such as those in ECOWAS, ECCAS and SADC; establish dedicated anti-trafficking agencies; take preventive measures such as increasing education and awareness at source, transit and destination countries; rehabilitate victims; and increase capacity and cooperation among themselves. In conclusion, as Africa was a major source and supplier of trafficked persons, there was a need for new ideas and immediate action to counter the practice.

52. In the ensuing discussions, participants suggested that intensive awareness and sensitization campaigns were important to help prepare women to say no and to act on violence against them. It was also important to integrate Violence against Women in education programmes. Some participants noted that even though laws on sexual violence had been passed in countries, rape still persisted on a daily basis and rapists had total impunity. They unanimously called for an African campaign to end Violence against Women and for increased exchange of experiences among countries. Since men were the perpetrators of Violence against Women, there was need to work closely with them.

53. The Forum welcomed the 2008 Security Council resolution 1820, which designated rape as a war crime. Rape used as a weapon should be stigmatized, criminalized and, where possible, prosecuted. It was also necessary to acknowledge the occurrence of many other forms of sexual violence and exploitation taking place during wartime, but that might not fit into Security Council's definition. Sexual abuse ranged from rape (perpetrated by a combatant, a bandit, or a civilian) to transactional sexual relationships, which women or girls entered into because of their extremely vulnerable position. All of those varied forms of sexual- and gender-based violence and exploitation were of concern and should be fully addressed.

*Strong political will
essential for ending violence
against women*

54. The Forum expressed concern about the limited political will to combat violence against women and recommended that a campaign on Violence against Women should include building political will. It was necessary to identify the root causes of trafficking (voluntary or involuntary) and to design appropriate solutions. The solutions should include poverty reduction, capacity-building for women, conflict prevention, environmental protection, and industrialization to improve job creation. Women's empowerment should address all areas, including the economic, financial, political and social fields. It was also necessary to address the needs of women with disabilities who faced greater challenges.

55. Data on crimes against women and girls were insufficient and sometimes even non-existent. Owing to social stigmatization and discriminatory attitudes and practices among law and order institutions and health services, violence against women, especially sexual violence and exploitation, was grossly underreported. Data needed to be collected on different forms of sexual and gender-based violence (domestic, family, conflict-related, political, trafficking-related, and harmful traditional practices), as the basis for the formulation of a strategy and a holistic approach. Data should be disaggregated by age of the victim and the specificity of each context. Male victims of sexual violence should also not be excluded. The data should include the personal testimonies of women and girls survivors of violence. Qualitative evidence was as important as robust quantitative data. Evidence could be put to use at various levels. At the community level, reporting helped efforts to combat crimes against women, to break the silence, and to provide assistance and protection. At the national level, the adoption of indicators allowed for goals to be set and progress to be assessed. It also allowed for analysis of the association between national policies (economic, social, legal and political) and violence against women and girls.

Recommendations

56. These include that:
- International cooperation in actions and campaigns aimed at eradicating violence against women should remain an imperative. In particular, there should be cooperation in identifying the underlying issues that cause violence;

- Countries should implement the internationally agreed protocols aimed at protecting women against violence;
- Countries should initiate campaigns to educate and sensitize their women citizens on these protocols;
- Governments should take positive actions to empower women, including by incorporating gender into education curriculums; and
- Analyzed data should be widely disseminated through the publication of a report, “The State of Africa’s Women”, which should be based on national data across the continent and the finest analysis of the situation of women and best practices in addressing the violations that they suffer.

6. Breakout Sessions on Violence Against Women

57. The objective of the breakout sessions was to deepen the discussion on each of the thematic areas, particularly on the major gaps and challenges; the key achievements or best practices and to identify key recommendations for action.

6.1 Violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations

58. Participants noted that the violation of the rights of women persisted during and after conflicts. Women with disabilities, elderly women, girls and widows were particularly vulnerable to violence and yet were not targeted by intervention strategies.

59. Even though countries had adopted Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820, implementation at the national level was weak. The intractability of the problem stemmed, in part, from the failure of countries to develop action plans for implementing the resolutions. Countries that had developed action plans, such as Liberia and Burundi were to be commended. Women were still not involved in mediation efforts and lacked a platform for presenting their case. Furthermore, women at the grassroots level did not have adequate information on Resolutions protecting them. Governments therefore

needed to sensitize their citizens, especially women, about resolution 1325 in order to empower them.

60. They identified some good practices, including the collection and burning of arms, and strengthening of the role of civil society groups that, in mediation efforts, worked on violence against women. International peacekeepers were particularly responsible for maintaining the highest standards of conduct. Peacekeeping soldiers (mostly men) well paid and secure, were placed at the centre of humanitarian emergencies in which women were vulnerable and in need of assistance and protection.

Increase the number of women in peacekeeping missions

It was important that peacekeepers did not abuse their power in such situations, and that those who appeared to do so were promptly investigated and, if found guilty, punished.

61. The number of women in peacekeeping missions should be increased creating the potential of all-female units of peacekeepers and the United Nations police. More women should be given senior positions in peacekeeping missions, including as special representatives. Furthermore, training of all peacekeepers on gender equality and ending violence against women and girls should be encouraged, and close contact should be established between peacekeeping missions and civil society organizations working to protect women and promote women's rights.

62. Participants also highlighted the issue of child soldiers, both boys and girls, and called for strict and rapid implementation of resolution 1612, which prohibits the use of child soldiers. Furthermore, they called on Governments to report and monitor all forms of violence against children in conflict zones.

Recommendations

63. These include that:
- Countries that have not done so should develop action plans for implementing resolutions 1325 and 1612;
 - The international community, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders should support training and dissemination of programmes on resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1612, especially to women and girls in conflict situations, peacekeepers and parliamentarians;
 - Financial support should also be provided for training women in negotiation skills;
 - Regional and international intergovernmental bodies should come up with proper mechanisms to reinforce adherence to resolution 1325, and African countries should adopt strategies to collectively punish non-compliance with resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1612;
 - Establishment of early warning and response mechanisms on conflict at different levels should be promoted;
 - The regional component of the United Nations Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women," should be launched as soon as possible, at least by 2009;
 - Research should be conducted on the situation of women in conflict situations, in order to inform policy and adopt appropriate measures. This should also involve establishment of baseline data to expose attitudes, practices and behaviours across Africa and corresponding responses to generate evidence-based data for accountability;
 - Governments need to effectively enforce laws that protect women;
 - Donor support to countries should be tied to their avoidance of conflict;
 - Women should be involved in peace processes and trained in peace negotiation skills; it is important to ensure that Violence against Women

and gender equality are on the agenda of AU peace negotiations, e.g. for eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo;

- A platform should be provided for women victims of violence to discuss the culture of peace;
- Specific vulnerable groups of women, for example, disabled, girls and widows, should be identified and intervention strategies should be targeted at them;
- Those who violate women in conflict situations should be prosecuted and psychological and medical care for women victims of violence should be provided;
- As part of post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, adequately resourced (financially and professionally) specific gender desks/departments should be established in police stations and community structures to address Violence Against Women;
- The proportion of women in peacekeeping mission should be increased and peacekeepers and armed forces at all levels should be trained on women's and children's rights;
- Poverty, the root cause of violence, should be combated and women should be empowered economically through education and access to credit and markets; and
- Gender experts, envoys and the media should be used to sensitize belligerents on the culture of peace.

6.2. Harmful traditional practices and institutions

64. Participants identified other physical and psychological harmful traditional practices and institutions, in addition to the ones identified in the plenary session. They said one such practice was the limited or lack of women's rights of access to and inheritance of property and other productive assets, a practice which constrained women's empowerment and was particularly harmful to widows. In addition, cultural attitudes restricted women's ability to make their voices heard in the presence of men, further reducing the opportunities for them to express their views on such practices.

65. The preference of the male child over the female in many African countries resulted in a number of harmful practices against the girl child, such as inadequate nutrition and sanitation. Those practices also adversely affected young women during pregnancy, resulting in high maternal mortality. The practice of whitening of the skin, which reflected a bias toward light complexion in many societies, could lead to physical damage and bleeding.

66. Women with disabilities were disproportionately affected by harmful traditional practices, which left them vulnerable to sexual exploitation, physical and moral violence, and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. The practice of testing of the virginity of young girls and women was harmful and degrading. Furthermore, virgins were believed to be a cure for HIV in some countries, resulting in sexual exploitation and violence.

Other harmful practices and institutions included polygamy, tattooing and scarring, excessive bride price/dowry, the use of derogatory language, violence targeting lesbians, and women-to-women violence, and many of those practices reflected the values and institutions of patriarchy.

67. Moreover, traditional and religious leaders were insufficiently engaged in efforts to eradicate harmful practices and institutions, and stakeholders at the local level were insufficiently involved in the formulation and implementation of strategies targeting pervasive practices in their communities. The weak implementation of policies and strategies, which was caused by lack of political will and poor understanding and awareness of those issues at the grassroots levels, where they were exacerbated by low levels of literacy.

Recommendations

68. These include that:
- Girls and women should be encouraged to stand up and speak out against harmful traditional practices and institutions;
 - Traditional and religious leaders, along with faith-based organizations, should be engaged in efforts to eliminate these practices;
 - Grassroots communities should be fully involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies and interventions;
 - Laws should be revised and/or fully enacted to discourage harmful practices and institutions, and provide effective legal remedies for victims;
 - Both international organizations and member States should support civil society organizations to provide free legal and paralegal services as well as counseling services for victims;
 - Both international organizations and member States should mount extensive literacy campaigns so as to empower women and raise awareness of the issue of harmful practices. Awareness-raising campaigns should target not only children and young people in formal education, but also government authorities, including the judicial system, the executive and departments/agencies in charge of education, communication and information;
 - For the purpose of developing more effective responses, all stakeholders should collect data, document harmful practices and institutions, and encourage research on these issues. ECA, AfDB and AUC, should support the work already being done by the Inter-African Committee in the area of harmful practices and institutions and should also support the preparation of a manual to assist member States in identifying these practices;
 - Member States should establish national observatories to monitor progress in eliminating harmful practices and institutions; and
 - ECA, AfDB and AUC, should convene a multi-stakeholder conference to further discuss harmful practices and identify actionable recommendations.

6.3. Trafficking of women and exploitation

69. The participants noted that the main causes and reasons for trafficking were mainly; socio-economic underdevelopment and conflicts on one side and, on the demand side, cheap labour and the sex industry. Trafficking was also closely related to other crimes and crises, including the drugs trade, organized crime and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Violence against children and women as well as discrimination, globalization and unfair development in the absence of a solid legal framework that criminalized those activities intensified the phenomenon.

70. Networking between countries, conducting human trafficking campaigns at the country level help raise awareness, creating chains of solidarity between victims and their exploiters, and providing training for victims to enable them to undertake income-generating activities, were some of the best practices to help tackle the trafficking problem.

Recommendations

71. These include that:
- Statistical capacity for data collection on human trafficking should be built to improve knowledge of the magnitude of the problem and result-oriented policies that could be monitored and evaluated should be designed;
 - Bilateral extradition treaties should be concluded between African countries in line with the ratification of international conventions on trafficking;
 - National and regional strategies should be developed to break trafficking networks, prosecute traffickers and increase coordination among countries of origin, transit and destination of trafficking;
 - Income-generating projects should be provided in the regions of origin of victims of trafficking, particularly in the most affected areas;
 - The public should be made more aware of the problem of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, and the AU-Ouagadougou action plan to combat it should be widely disseminated;
 - The African First Ladies Association should champion the fight against humans trafficking;
 - Institutions of higher education should be involved in awareness-raising programmes, which should also be included in the curriculums of faculties of gender and development studies;
 - AUC, AfDB and ECA should be encouraged to establish a common fund to combat human trafficking;
 - Action should be taken to enhance cooperation at all levels, including households, communities, grassroots organizations, civil society organizations and governmental institutions, in addressing human trafficking; and
 - Regional integration, labour mobility and employment opportunities should be facilitated; and strategies to tackle human trafficking should be developed.

6.4. Ministerial breakout session on violence against women

72. The group agreed that some progress had been made to address violence against women, but a lot more still had to be done.

Recommendations

73. These include the following:
- **Formal and informal education** - There is need to emphasize education of the girl child, address enrollment and retention, and draw up re-entry policies for girls and reinforce early childhood education. The education curriculum needs to be reviewed to include violence against women and human rights. Efforts should be made to ensure the education of women and men and to change the mind-set vis-à-vis cultural, traditional and religious beliefs, and norms, values and practices that are harmful to women;
 - **Awareness-raising** - Measures to sensitize the public and create awareness of violence against women should be promoted; they should specifically target law-enforcement agencies, religious leaders, traditional and cultural leaders and institutions and schools;
 - **Legislation, regulation and enforcement** - Where supportive laws do not exist, laws and policies to address violence against women should be adopted and implemented and monitored effectively. In situations where supportive laws exist, they must be disseminated and enforced, and out-dated laws need to be reviewed.
 - **Institutions** - Those that deal with violence against women should be strengthened to make them more accessible and usable to women, and well-equipped to deal with violence against women in a timely manner;
 - **Women's empowerment** - This should go beyond microfinancing to include skills development, ownership of land and other productive resources, access to markets, removal of market barriers and trade, value addition and processing, and easier movement of women traders with their goods and services within and between countries;
 - **Political will and commitment** - Leaders should commit themselves to financing and implementing programmes and policies on violence against women, being critical and open to advocacy at the highest level to end violence against women is the key to mobilizing leaders at all levels and in all sectors;
 - **Research and documentation** - Efforts should be made to strengthen the collection of sex-and gender-disaggregated data on violence against women and to undertake quantitative and qualitative research;
 - **Financing programmes and policies on violence against women** - Governments should commit themselves to increasing budgets for all gender/women ministries. They should establish a fund for the promotion

and protection of women's human rights and launch the trust fund which was already agreed upon in the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality;

- **Monitoring and evaluation** – Each country should establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the progressive implementation of policies and laws. Regional organizations (AU, ECA and AfDB) should develop common monitoring and evaluation strategies to help member States report periodically. A regional observatory for monitoring violation of the rights of women and children should be established;
- **Strengthening of networking and sharing of best practices** - Networking among Governments/NGOs/CSOs/CBOs, trade unions, development partners and the private sector need to be strengthened. Men and non-traditional ministries such as the defense, security and justice should be more involved in issues of Violence Against Women; and
- **Women with disabilities** - The special needs of women with disabilities need to be addressed, given the multiple challenges and burdens they face.

7. Key messages to ADF VI

74. Four special guests presented key messages to the Forum: H.E. Mrs. Isatou Njie-Saidy, Vice President of the Gambia and Minister for Gender Matters; Her Majesty, Mrs. Silvia Nagginda, Queen of Buganda Kingdom in Uganda; Mrs. Sia Koroma, First Lady of Sierra Leone; and Mr. Mo Ibrahim of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

75. Mrs. Njie-Saidy said that African countries had adopted many international, regional and subregional frameworks on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women, but what was then required was immediate action. African women had waited too long and could not be failed. It was also important to involve men in the drive to improve gender equality. She said: "We can not address the issue of women without addressing men's, involvement otherwise we will be marginalized and we will fail. We have to look at both sides of the coin to be fair. We must also remember that, as we point a finger at the men, three fingers are pointing back at us. We have to do things differently. When we leave this conference we have to leave with action plans that are doable."

*Involve men in the drive to
improve gender equality*

76. Her Royal Highness, Sylvia Nagginda, Queen of the Buganda Kingdom in Uganda, indicated that according to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) there were two main pathways to giving women more say in reproductive health and rights: (a) interventions that increased women's bargaining power and reproductive choices in the household such as improving women's access to education and entrepreneurship skills training, and women's expanded control over resources such as land and production income; and (b) interventions that improved women's access to reproductive health services, including family planning. Traditional leaders had a very important role to play in supporting those two pathways.

77. As recommendations, Governments and NGOs should partner more with traditional leaders when promoting reproductive health programmes; traditional leaders should in turn work closely with other community leaders to ensure acceptance of programmes in the community; reproductive health projects should aim to eliminate harmful traditional practices while reinforcing the cultural dignity of the community, and should strive to positively reinforce local values and traditions.

78. The First Lady of Sierra Leone pointed out that civil war had left many women widowed and girls orphaned, thereby exacerbating their other disadvantages with respect to access to land, resources and decision-making. Sierra Leone had introduced comprehensive laws on gender in 2007, including the Domestic Violence Act (2007), the Registration of Customary Marriage Act (2007), the Divorce Act (2007), the Devolution of Estate Act, and the Child Rights Act (2007). The main purpose of those acts was to promote balance of power between men and women in domestic environments and to ensure that men and women were treated fairly and equally under the law with respect to inheritance, family relationships and the protection of vulnerable children from abuse and neglect. Those acts were a major way of including CEDAW and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in national laws. In conclusion, initiatives involving traditional and religious leaders in changing attitudes towards gender equality and ending violence against women were to be commended. Those initiatives included activities to promote education on reducing infant and maternal mortality, such as the Women's Initiative for Safer Health.

79. Mr. Mo Ibrahim stressed that good governance was the foundation of development and the promotion of gender equality. It was important to measure governance through indicators, such as the 58 used by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, including some gender-specific ones. Finally, civil society as stakeholders in good governance should play an active role in promoting gender equality and women should aspire to positions of leadership in order to promote their rights and contribute to equitable sustainable development.

8. Plenary Session 3 - Gender and Socio-economic Rights

80. Four presentations were made in the session: (a) Gender, Land and Property Rights, by Professor Okoth Ogendero, University of Nairobi; (b) Gender, Employment, Markets and Trade, by Professor Vremudiah Diejomaoh, international development expert; (c) Gender, Education, Training and Skills Development and ICTs, by Ms. Codou Diaw, Executive Director, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE); and (d) Financing for Gender Equality, by Ms. Marianna Jacinta Muteshi, international gender expert.

81. Mr. Okoth Ogendero noted that gender equality was important to Africa's development agenda. Progress achieved with respect to women's access to land and

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property rights had been slow, hampered in part by the prevalence of systems of patriarchy which invariably excluded women from ownership or ultimate control of radical title to land; indigenous customs and practices which determined women's access to land through a variety of factors, including class, marital status, age, gender of children, and place of residence; statutory laws which re-affirmed those systems, customs and practices especially in relation to the right to inherit land and property; land governance systems (both indigenous and statutory) which excluded women from decision-making with respect to ownership and management of land resources; and a policy environment mostly controlled by men.

82. Nevertheless, some achievements had been recorded with respect to reconstructing gender roles in the area of land and property relations. Virtually all constitutions of African countries had come to recognize the equal right to land through purchase and inheritance for both men and women. In many countries, attention was being paid to the land and property rights of women, through a variety of legal mechanisms, including co-ownership arrangements, joint proprietorships, protection of matrimonial property, and requirement of spousal consent in land transactions. Important strides had been made in improving women's access to systems of adjudication and to land. This had become an important feature of land policies developed in the last two decades across Africa.

83. Finally, there was a need to shift the discourse from the private sphere of family and marriage to the public domain of human rights. Affirmative action policies and practices should be established at all levels of social, economic and political development as a means of advancing gender parity in the area of land and property rights.

84. Professor Vremudiah Diejomaoh's said that noteworthy (a) commitments had been made to employment creation at the international, regional and national levels, including the Ouagadougou Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa (2004), the Millennium Declaration (2000), the International Labour Organization's (ILO) decent work development agenda, the Copenhagen World Summit Declaration on Social Development (1995), and the Dakar and Beijing Declarations of 1995. Despite the comprehensiveness of the commitments, implementation had been limited. Unemployment rates for women in sub-Saharan Africa were still higher than that of men (9.1 per cent compared to 7.5 per cent), while youth unemployment rates were much higher for women than for men.

85. The main challenges of gender equality in employment, markets and trade included the predominance of women in the informal and agricultural sectors; limited access to markets caused by lack of feeder roads and administrative and discriminatory bottlenecks in the allocation of shops and stalls; lack of storage and processing facilities, compelling traders to sell their produce at poor prices, thereby reducing their income; and limited expertise to export their products.

86. As recommendations, a multi-stakeholder coalition should be built to ensure greater accountability of Heads of State and Government in implementing the Ouagadougou Summit Declaration on Employment and Poverty Alleviation; efforts

should be made to enhance the capacities of regional organizations, universities and research institutions to collect employment data and publish periodic and regular employment reports; and initiatives aimed at expanding the role of women in the formulation and implementation of local employment schemes should be strengthened.

87. Ms. Codou Diaw, noted that various instruments had been put in place to promote gender parity, such as (a) Education for All; (b) MDGs 2 and 3; (c) CEDAW; (d) the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, and (e) the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

88. Nevertheless, progress in gender parity in education was inadequate, as reflected by increased enrolment in primary education not being matched by commensurate gender parity in completion rates, as well as low female enrolment in secondary education. This was compounded by low participation of women in scientific and technical areas, thus limiting their empowerment and economic opportunities.

89. A holistic approach was needed in promoting gender parity in education, comprising of strategies that include elimination of school fees, providing targeted scholarships, building boarding facilities, building gender-based sanitation facilities, encouraging re-entry policies for pregnant teenagers, establishing school feeding programmes, making school and surrounding areas harassment-free, mobilizing communities to support girls' education, and promoting non-formal literacy campaigns.

90. Finally, for education to be a transformational tool in women's lives, it was important for countries to adopt the following actions: technical and vocational educational training, particularly for women in post-conflict situations and disadvantaged drop-outs; business education; and widespread use of ICTs.

91. Ms. Marianna Jacinta Muteshi highlighted some of the commitments made on financing for gender equality, including the provisions contained in the 2004 AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Protocol to the Africa Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, and the MDGs.

92. She said that gender concerns were being integrated into sectoral or national development plans, national gender machineries, legal reviews, awareness campaigns and capacity development efforts of government institutions. Several African countries had adopted "women budget initiatives" or "gender-responsive budgeting" to speed up gender equality and pro-poor, equitable development. Success stories were due to a number of factors, namely; advocacy, investment in women's analytical capacity, enhanced policy makers' gender analysis skills, donor support in the form of technical and financial assistance, financial support for advocacy and gender-based capacity-building as part of budget discussion and analysis, mainstreaming gender in national planning and expenditure allocation and provision of monitoring and evaluation tools.

*Develop national plan of
action for financing gender
equality*

93. Among the challenges enumerated, the most important was excessive reliance on the dominant orthodox-inspired macroeconomic model, which focused on growth rather than gender issues. It was lamentable that negligible resources were allocated to sectors that were crucial for achieving gender equality, such as sustainable agriculture, rural infrastructure, health and finance. Another challenge was the absence of monitoring of the channeling and allocation of domestic and foreign aid resources for advancing the gender equality objectives and strategies. Achieving gender equality was a multi-dimensional effort that was difficult to cost and yet costing was a vital first step in mobilizing resources.

94. Finally, a number of doable actions were to be recommended: (a) Gender-responsive budgeting should be introduced in countries that did not have it; (b) Project support, where Governments were not yet responsive to gender financing, coupled with innovative aid mechanisms should be continued; (c) Partnerships should be encouraged; (d) Scale-up of funds should be gender responsive; (e) A plan of action should be developed for financing gender equality in all African States.

9. Plenary Session 4 – Gender, Socio-cultural and Political Rights

95. Three presentations were made in the session: (a) Gender, HIV/AIDS and reproductive rights, by Ms. Belkis Wolde Georgis, an international gender expert; (b) Governance, conflict, peace and security by Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Director of the NEPAD and Regional Integration Division, ECA; and (3) Gender and health by H.E. Adv. Bience Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AUC.

96. Ms. Wolde Georgis said that despite the commitments and pledges made on health and HIV/AIDS, infant and maternal mortality was still very high in Africa. That was further aggravated by early marriage, frequent and early child bearing, and harmful traditional practices, which compromised women's reproductive health and rights, thus exposing them to HIV and AIDS. Accountability for what had been promised on HIV/AIDS, gender and reproductive health fell short of the designed and adopted plans and strategies.

97. Women in Africa were disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. They were biologically, socially and economically vulnerable and they took upon themselves the burden of caring and supporting family members who were ill. Some of the main challenges in addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS on women were inadequate investment in women's health and reproductive services; adopted approaches which did not link women's health and reproductive rights to the overall well being of communities; limited involvement of men and boys; and limited control of women over their sexual and reproductive behaviours.

98. In order to effectively address the issues of gender, HIV/AIDS and reproductive rights, the following recommendations were made: (a) Addressing reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and gender within a framework of dialogue, ownership and partnership, emphasizing linkages with the overall well being of men and women. (b) Redefining the concept of empowerment to foster an inclusive agenda and to promote collective empowerment of women; (c) Supporting African professionals and researchers in promoting reproductive health, both as practitioners and as advocates, (d) Seeking new paradigms within the context of religion regarding gender equality and sexual and reproductive health, (e) Strengthening alternative sources of healthcare for women, such as traditional medicine, self-care and home care, including responding to the health needs of women in the informal sector. (f) Preparing future generations by empowering the youth, both male and female, to make informed decisions on health and reproductive rights.

99. Mr. Hamdok pointed out that building democracy and democratic governance was a complex process that should be carried out over the long term and should essentially be constructed from within. Africa was making progress on governance and democracy, although it was still confronted with many challenges, including weak democratic traditions and culture; weak institutions and political parties; inadequate management of conflicts related to ethnicity, identity and religion; transforming the private sector to be an engine of development; and addressing gender gaps as women were marginalized in all organs of governance in the public and private spheres.

100. There had been progress in considering a gender perspective in policies and programmes related to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, but gender discrimination, political exclusion and economic marginalization and sexual violence continued during and after conflicts, thus denying women their human rights and hindering their potential for development. Many of the peacebuilding and reconstruction institutional frameworks and their implementation continued to fail to address underlying gender roles and associated power dynamics that lay the basis for institutionalized gender discrimination. Moreover, portrayal of women as only victims of conflicts overlooked their significant role in the resolution of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

101. In order to improve and increase women's participation in governance, peace and security, the following recommendations were made: institutions and mechanisms for equality should be established, including the electoral and the quota systems; coalitions among stakeholders should be promoted and strengthened; leadership on issues involving gender, peace and security should be strengthened; United Nations resolution 1325 concerning women, peace and security should be implemented; and monitoring and evaluation methods should be established to assess and guide gender perspectives in peacebuilding initiatives.

102. H.E. Adv. Gawanas indicated that gender considerations had a bearing on the causes and consequences of inequality in health and, therefore, a gendered approach to health led to the development of appropriate responses from the healthcare system and public policies. There was a health dimension in each of the MDGs that needed to be

taken into account in designing and implementing policies and programmes to achieve the MDGs and to promote and improve women's health.

*Women's rights are
human rights*

103. Successes that had been achieved on the continent included the following: the endorsement by African Heads of State and Government of the Africa Health Strategy (2007) and the Maputo Plan of Action on Reproductive Health (2006); RECs were at various levels of developing and implementing specific health strategies; all countries were scaling up efforts towards universal access to primary health care; many countries were offering free or subsidized sexual- and reproductive health-care services and commodities, affordable health services for rural communities, and training of grassroots health workers; many countries were implementing the roadmap for reducing maternal, infant and child mortality; and the rate of contraceptive prevalence had increased from 12 per cent in 1990 to 21 per cent in 2005.

104. However, Africa still faced many gender and health challenges, including: persistently high rates of maternal mortality, 13 countries having rates of over 1,000 per 100,000 live births; inequitable distribution of health-care services, especially in the rural areas; women's health viewed as relating only to reproductive functions, leading to inequitable handling of other aspects of health such as mental health or access to antiretroviral treatment (ART) when not in the context of preventing mother-to-child transmission; more resources allocated to HIV/AIDS while responses to other non-communicable diseases such as malaria, cancer and mental disorders remained static; health-care providers were often gender blind, even though the majority of them were women; financing of health care was gender blind except in reproductive health care; and difficulty in determining if funds had benefited women and men equitably.

105. In order to address the gender dimension in health, the following recommendations were made: data to track progress in achieving the MDGs should be disaggregated by sex; budget and tracking mechanisms for health financing should be gender based and institutionalized; investments and replicate models should be scaled-up to reduce maternal and child mortality; a holistic approach should be adopted in the provision of health-care packages to address women's health needs, including non-communicable diseases; the role of men in promoting health for all, including issues related to violence, should be strengthened; and in fighting harmful traditional practices, the central role played by traditional medicine and health-care providers should be recognized, improved and promoted.

10. Breakout Sessions on Gender, Socio-economic, Cultural and Political Rights

10.1 Gender, land and property rights

106. The participants noted that access to land was essential for food production and income generation and was a key social and economic asset. However, the vast majority of African women were experiencing difficulties in owning and controlling land and property, due in part to traditional land tenure systems, which might grant women access to land use while guardianship remained in the hands of men. On the other hand, formal legislation might guarantee men and women equal access to land, but in most cases, such guarantees were not effectively enforced due to gender inequalities in the implementation mechanism.

107. In some countries, there were far more women in the agricultural sector than men, yet their access to land was not guaranteed. Globalization also tended to have a negative impact on women's access to land as it could increase existing disparities by changing collective land rights into individual land rights.

108. The major obstacles to women's land rights included the following:

- Modern land laws that conflicted with traditional and religious land regimes and did not reflect local realities;
- Cultural norms and practices, as well as government policies that excluded or marginalized women in land allocation;
- Gender-biased application of gender-neutral laws, which negatively affected women's access to land and security of tenure;
- Lack of knowledge and awareness about the existence of laws granting women rights to land;
- Women's limited access to financial resources to purchase and make optimum use of land.

109. Good practices worth noting included the promotion of broad-based consultations in the development of land legislation; legislation was increasingly providing for women's access to land and recognizing equitable sharing of land between husbands and wives, as well as the granting of land titles with the names of husbands and wives; instituting tax incentives for transfer of land from husband to wife; establishing local land committees with equal representation of men and women; granting women's groups leaseholds over productive land; provision of extension services and literacy training to women to enable them to benefit from land and considerably improve their productivity and livelihoods; and organizing urban women slum dwellers to partner with Governments in order to acquire adequate housing and improve their livelihoods. There was also the need to reinforce and widely disseminate the positive aspects of customary land tenure systems.

Recommendations

110. These include:
- Countries that have not yet done so should ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women which details all forms of women's access to land and property rights;
 - Existing laws that provide for all aspects of women's access to land and property, as well as to secure tenure should be enforced;
 - Legislation that addresses women's rights and improves their access to justice in a holistic manner, including prevention, protection and prosecution be enacted. Such legislation should take into account all categories of women, provide for education and sensitization on women's rights, and allow for litigation. Furthermore, judicial officials, including judges, traditional and statutory land governance and delivery authorities should be sensitized or trained on importance of women's land rights;
 - Women should be educated and sensitized on existing opportunities, including, land markets, and on their rights regarding access to land;
 - Distinct usufruct and legal rights to land should be ensured for all women in polygamous marriages;
 - The AUC/ECA/AfDB-sponsored land policy framework and guidelines currently under preparation must ensure that the land rights of women and girls are improved.
 - Governments should guarantee security of tenure, particularly for women and youth to ensure productive and sustainable use of land;
 - Affirmative actions should be instituted to ensure that women retain their rights to land. This should be complemented with the adoption and operationalization of gender-sensitive budgets;
 - Governments should address the special needs and concerns of indigenous peoples, particularly women, who are disproportionately marginalized in land-related investment schemes, which displace them from their natural environment;
 - Governments should establish incentives to minimize rural-urban migration and, in this context, should address land issues in a holistic manner, taking into account the rural-urban interface;
 - Given that women are particularly vulnerable to environmental change, it is important to adequately address not just the gender-environment-land nexus, but also, the gender-refugee-land nexus;
 - Tools should be developed and harmonized for data collection on women's access to land; such as the UN-HABITAT gender evaluation criteria and indicators currently under development and the African Gender Development Index of ECA;
 - A committee/think tank should be established to advise ECA and partners on women's land and property rights issues and to follow up on the recommendations of ADF-VI;

*Address the gender-
environment-land nexus*

- Land governance and delivery institutions should be held accountable for effective implementation of legislation, which guarantees women's rights to land; and
- As legal measures alone do not suffice, they should be accompanied by economic and technical measures that increase women farmers' productivity and reduce their drudgery.

10.2. Employment, markets and trade

111. Participants noted that despite the existence of various national, regional and global commitments promoting gender equality in employment opportunities, little progress had been made. The 2004 Ouagadougou Declaration, Plan of Action and Follow-up Mechanism, especially in relation to priority area 5 on gender equality, had not been implemented in member States. In that context, there was need to popularize such commitments amongst all relevant government authorities, the wider community in addition to the ministry of labour affairs.

112. The great diversity in the needs and challenges facing women (rural versus urban, educated versus non-educated, young versus old, disabled versus non-disabled) must be taken into consideration when developing policy responses. Women in general continued to face major barriers to finding decent jobs and becoming entrepreneurs, including difficulties in gaining access to credit, market information, technology, and infrastructure. Cultural attitudes also prevented women from breaking into male-dominated professions and sectors.

113. In addition, women did not have adequate access to education and vocational training. Even those who were lucky enough to complete higher levels of education were not gaining the skills demanded by employers. That was particularly evident in the case of ICTs, which remained outside the reach of most women. Vulnerable women such as those with disabilities faced more challenges in the labour market as a result of such factors as lack of physical access to the workplace and discrimination. In terms of employment policies, both demand-side and supply-side policies were also needed.

114. As a consequence of those factors, women in Africa were over-represented in the informal economy, where they worked in low productivity jobs, earning low wages and in hazardous conditions. Women were also over-represented in subsistence agriculture, where they dominated food production. Owing to inadequate skills and poor access to inputs, technology and infrastructure, women's agricultural production was characterized by low productivity.

115. With regard to trade, the participants noted that the current international trade regime was unfavourable to African countries in general and their women traders in particular. This was because women were mainly involved in agriculture, which was the key component of the continent's exports. Specifically, access to global markets was a

major challenge as subsidies provided by developed countries to their farmers rendered African products less competitive.

116. Another challenge faced by African women traders in gaining access to global markets was the need to produce high-quality goods to meet international standards. In that regard, lack of awareness of relevant specifications and standards was a major factor. Furthermore, understanding of issues of rules of origin in order to benefit from preferential treatment remained a daunting challenge to women traders. Overall, African women traders were not sufficiently aware of international trade agreements, and ongoing negotiations did not take into consideration their special needs. While some of the above challenges could be tackled by ongoing trade negotiations, constraints relating to supply in most African countries would minimize benefits from increased market access. Three categories of supply-related constraints could be identified: weak productive capacity, poor infrastructure, and inefficient trade procedures and processes.

117. In terms of productive capacity, women traders needed to be supported in adding value to their products and in creating, promoting and popularizing African brands. They thus needed access to financial resources to strengthen and ensure the growth of their businesses. Poor infrastructure, especially farm-to-market roads, contributed to the low competitiveness of African products, and high transport costs made local products more expensive than imported ones. For example, locally produced maize in Cameroon was more expensive than that imported from Europe.

118. Regarding trade facilitation in general and intra-African (cross-border) trade in particular, multilateral and regional agreements were not being fully implemented, resulting in illegal payments at border posts, including unjustified customs duties. Traders also encountered problems in gaining access to warehouses for storage of goods. Moreover, in most cases, service facilities were not provided for women involved in cross-border trade, especially at border posts. Furthermore, women traders were subjected to harassment at border posts and along trade corridors. Lack of trade-related information, including information on market opportunities rules and regulations, constituted a major constraint to cross-border trade.

Recommendations

Employment

119. These include that:
- Member States and RECs should develop partnerships with the private sector, civil society and development partners, to prepare resource mobilization plans for speeding up implementation of national, regional and international commitments, particularly the Ouagadougou Declaration, Plan of Action and Follow-up Mechanism with respect to priority number 5 on women's economic empowerment through employment creation;

- Governments should take a multi-sectoral approach to implementing these commitments and undertake a campaign to popularize and sensitize all stakeholders accordingly;
- Governments should ensure that the gender dimension of employment is adequately mainstreamed and addressed in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and macroeconomic, sectoral and investment policies;
- Governments should reform curricula with special attention to the needs of young women in the labour market and promote access of women to entrepreneurship and vocational training through vocational training centres, and financial incentives such as prizes;
- Governments should direct investment, including foreign direct investment, to sectors with higher impact on creation of decent employment for women;
- Member States should establish and strengthen women entrepreneurship funds and equip women entrepreneurs with skills to add value to and increase their productivity;
- Governments together with partners should promote disability-friendly working environments by increasing access to the workplace, tackling discrimination, and implementing a quota system for employment of women with disabilities;
- Governments should collect and disseminate employment data disaggregated by gender, age and region; and
- Governments should establish and extend social protection schemes to rural areas and the informal economy through such initiatives as micro-insurance.

*Address the employment
needs of women with
disabilities*

Trade

120. These include that:

- Gender issues should be mainstreamed in trade policies, bilateral and multilateral agreements and other initiatives, including proposals under the Aid-for-Trade Initiative;
- Governments should provide support to female traders to overcome supply-side constraints, such as enhancing access to training, credit, technology, inputs and information;
- Governments should increase market access and create trademarks, particularly for products produced by African women;
- Governments should support women in cross-border trade by enhancing access to storage, facilities and transport, and increasing awareness of trade and customs agreements through training;
- Governments should enhance women's productivity and help them meet global standards so that their products could be competitive;
- Governments should invest in rural infrastructure, especially in farm-to-market roads with a view to reducing transport costs and thus the cost of local products;

- Governments should create the environment that would facilitate access to financial resources by women traders, thus enabling them to acquire modern machinery and build the infrastructure necessary for product value addition;
- Governments should establish trade points and trade information centres to provide women traders with information on trade opportunities;
- Governments should encourage trade promotion and women's cooperatives; and
- Governments should establish joint border posts in order to reduce the number of control points at borders.

10.3 Education, training and skills development and Information and communications technology

121. Participants noted that women faced many obstacles in reaping the full benefits of existing education, training and skills development and ICT services, including harmful traditional and cultural practices; girls' high school dropout rate is high owing to the heavy burden of their domestic chores; the discriminatory attitudes of parents; early marriage; teenage pregnancy; lack of physical safety on their way to school, whether on foot or by public transport; prohibitive infrastructure costs; heavy burden of domestic care due to HIV/AIDS; inadequate teacher training; and lack of proper ablution facilities for girls in schools; abduction of girls en route to remote rural schools; and sexual harassment by bus and taxi drivers.

122. There was a need for tools to monitor young girls' and women's access to education, training and skills development and ICTs. Countries should have watchdog organizations, such as NGOs, Community-based organizations and trade unions, to conduct regular surveys on education at all levels and provide gender-disaggregated data on women's access to education. Ministries responsible for gender and education should provide regular information and data on women's access to education, training, skills development and ICT services.

Recommendations

123. These include that:
- Governments and stakeholders should promote ICT, radios, and mobile telephones for rural areas, and should set up literacy programmes for women of all ages;
 - Governments should adopt affirmative action policies and programmes to improve women's and girls' access to education, training and skills development and ICT services, including scholarships for girls from poor families;
 - Governments should revisit curricula in teacher-training colleges to improve the quality of education by including human rights education, and promoting women's entrepreneurship and self-employment;

- Governments should enact and enforce laws to punish parents who keep their children out of school for household chores, and reform laws that encourage early marriage for girls;
- Governments should address education and hunger issues, by providing canteens and promoting school feeding programmes;
- Governments should invest in ICT, encourage public private partnerships to lower the costs, and also encourage distance education;
- Traditional leaders should be involved in efforts to prevent harmful practices abduction and FGM, and other gender- based violence;
- Guidance and counseling services should be provided in schools;
- Networking and exchange programmes should be promoted in order to share success stories and best practices;
- Basic infrastructure built to meet the special biological needs of girls, especially toilets and roads;
- Women should be given basic business and managerial training to enable them to increase their income streams;
- Role models such as doctors, pilots and engineers should be identified and covered extensively by the media for emulation by women and girls; and
- Women's mindsets should be changed through sensitization and positive reinforcement mechanisms, especially in the rural areas, on the importance of educating a girl child. An example would be a national competition on the use of computers reserved strictly for women.

10.4 Financing for gender equality

124. The participants said that investment in women and girls had a positive and lasting effect on poverty reduction, economic growth and social development. However, resources for gender equality and women's empowerment remained desperately limited. The orthodox neoclassical development paradigm remained gender blind. Furthermore, national policies informed by that orthodoxy ignored the diversity of women's needs. Also, conceptualization of gender as an issue was still not well understood in some African countries, making governments reluctant to fund gender equality. Consequently, there was a clear gap between public proclamations and reality on the ground in most African countries.

125. A large number of women operated in low-skill and low-productivity activities, thus limiting their ability to escape poverty and to fully achieve their aspirations. Furthermore, although the needs and aspirations of women varied few efforts, national or international, had been made to adequately respond to those needs. Existing financing schemes were not properly aligned to the specific circumstances of women.

126. Domestic resource mobilization for gender equality and women's empowerment was essential for a real national ownership of the issue, and the financial crisis should be no excuse for inaction.

127. No budget should be gender neutral. Government policies, from macroeconomic through taxation to allocation of resources, all have a direct or indirect impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. The close involvement of women in government and civil society was the reason for the effectiveness of gender budgeting exercises in various countries. The costs and complexity of gender budgeting exercises made it unwise to undertake them without a good level of buy-in from a range of stakeholders. Governments should not regard the outcome of a gender budgeting exercise as simply directing funds to a ministry of gender or women's affairs. Performance-based budgeting was preferable to budget targets based on financial inputs alone, as a measure of a government's commitment.

128. There was an urgent need for an audit of existing knowledge-generation methodologies with respect to gender financing and budgeting. Gender-sensitive expenditure tracking and outcome monitoring systems need to be designed and implemented. Gender and women's empowerment policies and programmes should be mainstreamed into medium-term expenditure frameworks to put the issues at the very heart of national financial planning.

129. With regard to international financing, there was concern that the global financial crisis and imminent recession would slow down Official Development Assistance at best, and cause retrenchment and cuts at worst. Furthermore, international financing for gender equality and women's empowerment could suffer accordingly. Existing commitments in development partnership should be sustained, including funding levels and quality of partnership. In that context, special efforts should be made to promote financing for gender equality and women's empowerment in the run-up to the Doha meeting on financing for development. Finally, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action should be used as powerful tools for both Governments and development partners to implement commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Recommendations

130. These include that:

- Move away from neo-classical thinking to a people-centred development paradigm;
- Microcredit initiatives should be complemented by adequate schemes that address specific needs of women, particularly in medium- and large-scale businesses;
- Undertake a comprehensive audit of current knowledge production on financing for gender equality and disseminate widely;
- Mainstreaming financing for gender equality in the public discourse should be supported by sensitization and awareness campaigns as well as capacity-building with respect to gender-sensitive budgeting and statistics;
- ECA, AU and AfDB in cooperation with all the stakeholders should strengthen the capacity of ministries of finance and planning to undertake

gender-responsive assessment of sectoral financial plans, tracking and monitoring of spending;

- The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action that provide an appropriate framework should be used to ensure sufficient allocation of resources to gender matters, and mutual accountability should be ensured;
- International partners should sustain existing development partnership commitments, including funding levels and quality of partnership; and
- The African Women's Fund of AU should be launched and operationalized by the July 2009 deadline set by the Executive Council.

10.5 Gender and HIV/AIDS

131. The participants noted that the HIV/AIDS epidemic was the outcome of severe gender inequalities. Approximately 60 per cent of those living with HIV/AIDS in Africa were women, and the proportion was even higher among young people aged 15-24; women and girls did not have sufficient access to HIV prevention information and treatment; reproductive and sexual health services were insufficiently funded and not widely accessible; female condoms were rarely available and women and girls who carried male condoms with them were often stigmatized; microbicide development and availability were insufficient; voluntary counseling and testing services were not available on a sufficient scale, and there were many obstacles for women and girls to access such services.

132. The declarations made on gender and HIV/AIDS were not disseminated to the people affected and infected. In response, consultations should be held with all stakeholders at the national level to ensure that such declarations were incorporated into national legislation; translate into local languages and widely disseminated. Many countries had already translated the declarations into national strategic plans and set up budgets to address HIV/AIDS. For example, in Uganda the Government had increased financing for the purchase of antiretroviral drugs for those infected and was undertaking many prevention programmes. In Mauritius, motivational campaigns on prevention and treatment of infected persons had been arranged through civil society organizations.

133. HIV/AIDS issues should be considered at the national and regional levels to ensure universal access to prevention, treatment and care. HIV/AIDS interventions in the past had been run as parallel programmes to other health-care programmes, but should be integrated into other health programmes such as reproductive health programmes for comprehensive delivery.

134. Information on how to avoid opportunistic infections and sexually transmitted diseases should be made readily available and female condoms should be popularized and made affordable as a preventive measure. HIV transmission was predominant among heterosexuals in Africa, but little had been done to advise and support people with the disease in long-term relationships. HIV/AIDS testing should be emphasized to promote

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disclosure of status for people in long-term relationships. There was a need to address the issue of stigma which derailed treatment, and voluntary counseling and testing should be promoted.

135. The vulnerability of women and girls to HIV reflected both biological and socio-economic factors, especially entrenched patriarchal value systems combined with their physical, social and economic vulnerability. In that context, HIV programmes focusing on “structural prevention” such as changing negative societal values or poverty eradication were essential. Action within health systems, while important, was insufficient to tackle the causes of vulnerability, which were embedded in societal and economic systems. Sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation was a substantial part of that vulnerability and the campaign to end violence against women and girls was a central plank of efforts to protect women and girls from HIV.

136. Finally, participants called for elderly people not to be neglected in HIV and AIDS responses, especially in light of the specific medical challenges facing elderly women with regard to anti-retroviral treatment. Therefore, service provision should be targeted at persons of all ages. In some places (e.g. Mauritius), the predominant mode of HIV transmission was shifting to drug use by injection. African Governments and organizations should therefore not overlook the dangers and challenges of HIV epidemics associated with that mode of transmission.

Recommendations

137. These include that:

- Taking into account that HIV has no cure, prevention should be foremost in all HIV efforts. Leaders should be encouraged to participate in mobilizing HIV-free communities and in campaigning for effective social change;
- The subject of HIV should be integrated in the school curriculum even as an examination subject and parental participation in sexual and reproductive health should be encouraged;
- A universal campaign to end violence against women should be launched. By targeting violence against women, the spread of HIV would be controlled;
- Prevention programmes targeting rural women and providing them with information on post-exposure prophylaxis should be established;
- HIV in the next generation should be addressed by all stakeholders.;
- Governments and other stakeholders should provide services and encourage discussions concerning children who were born HIV positive and are now having children;
- HIV programmes are predominantly donor supported; hence Governments should begin prioritizing HIV and incorporating it into national budgets;
- Male involvement in prevention and care giving should be encouraged. It is important to have men role modeling for adolescents in order to make them responsible in society;
- There is a need to advocate for specific care of elderly HIV-positive women and to understand the interaction of ARVs with menopause;

- Governments should strengthen social security nets in order to support elderly people in care giving;
- Care givers should be educated on the role of nutrition for persons living with HIV.
- Private/public partnerships should be encouraged in order to optimize resource mobilization and utilization for desired results;
- A multi-sectoral approach to gender and HIV/AIDS should be encouraged in the implementation of existing commitments; and
- Positive African cultural practices which are important in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support should be promoted.

10.6 Gender and health

138. The participants noted that the discussion on gender and health should include other important health issues affecting women, besides reproductive health. Women had to bear the huge burden of disorders such as mental illness, depression, alcohol and substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and breast and cervical cancer. Women were also affected by health systems constraints, limited access to specialized services, inadequate quality of services, poor responsiveness to their needs, and limited availability of human resources for health.

139. There were best-practice initiatives related to the establishment of centres for battered women; mobile health services for reproductive health issues; advocacy training for emergency-room doctors handling cases of violence against women; campaigns to end maternal mortality; and training of senior government officials on violence against women in some countries such as Tunisia, Morocco, Sierra-Leone, Ethiopia and the Congo. With regard to budget allocation, health was allocated a comparatively lower and inadequate budget, particularly the reproductive health sector.

140. It is important to institute capacity-building for health practitioners by scaling up human resources in the health sector, with a particular emphasis on frontline health workers, including midwives and community health workers. This would involve more investment in training and better remuneration and working conditions for health workers in order to ensure retention and motivation, and to reduce the emigration of skilled health professionals to developed countries. It was also important to highlight the multi-sectoral aspect of the gender and health issue by heightening the involvement of key ministries such as finance, infrastructure, education, water and women's affairs. There should be a shift in emphasis from curative to preventive measures.

141. Women relied heavily on parallel systems of health care, including traditional medical practitioners, self-care and home care, often practiced by inter-generational networks of women. Those pluralistic forms of health care should be embraced rather than shunned, and developed so as to better serve women's needs and to complement formal health systems. While gender-disaggregated data to monitor and evaluate financing of health services were generally available from health service institutions,

projects and various other sources, the task of interpreting and harmonizing those data to identify gender gaps and inform policy was very challenging. Another challenge was limited access to data from private health centres and limited resources (human, ICT and hardware equipment) to collect and build databases.

142. Finally, the participants called for a new paradigm for gender issues in health matters, which would entail a comprehensive set of actions on all health issues, and putting women's health rights at the forefront. Issues including maternal mortality, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV prevention should dominate in such a gender-focused approach to health.

Recommendations

143. These include that:

- Implementation of the commitments that Africa has made on gender and health involving all stakeholders, including Governments, academic and research institutions, parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders, NGOs, development partners, retired health workers and opinion leaders needs to be up-scaled;
- Systematic collection and harmonization of gender-disaggregated data should be promoted;
- The capacity of health practitioners on gender should be strengthened; and
- Multi-sectoral approach to gender and health needs to be encouraged.

10.7 Governance, conflict, peace and security

144. Participants noted that few international and regional instruments on good governance dealing with conflict and building peace and security were being adopted and implemented locally. Women were particularly under-represented in decision-making positions both at state and at non-state levels in governance, peace and security, and conflict prevention institutions. That resulted in the marginalization of women in peace building and in providing solutions in post-conflict situations.

Recommendations

Institutional Actions

145. These include that:

- Governments should demonstrate political will on gender equality, and women's empowerment by encouraging women's participation at all levels of decision-making;
- National constitutions should be aligned to international, regional and subregional instruments to ensure women's participation in decision-making;

- National constitutions should provide for affirmative action with implementation mechanisms to guarantee equal participation of women and men in decision-making;
- The AU to motivate countries that have not signed and or ratified regional instruments to do so;
- Governments and civil society organizations should set up monitoring and implementation mechanisms in order to address gaps effectively;
- The military should mainstream gender through systematic processes, including affirmative action to recruit women not only in social and medical services, but also in core areas such as combatant departments. This will ensure women's participation in peacekeeping forces;
- Governments should implement decentralization policies to strengthen the participation of women in local government and other lower-level decision-making structures; and
- International organizations should reward countries that comply with agreed regional and international commitments on improved participation of women.

*Encourage recruitment of
women in the military*

Capacity-building

146. These include that:

- Governments should allocate adequate budgetary resources for building the capacity of women, particularly from the grassroots level, in order to empower them to raise their self esteem, thereby increasing their capacity to hold political office;
- Governments and civil society should undertake massive awareness programmes on gender equality and the need for women's participation in decision-making processes;
- Women parliamentarians should be used in disseminating information on international, regional and subregional instruments and frameworks;
- Political parties should be encouraged to adopt quota systems in their structures to promote equitable participation of women and men; and
- The media should be used to create awareness on gender and peacebuilding.

Partnerships

147. These include that:

- Synergy should be built between gender machineries and other sectors such as the military, the judiciary, and civil society;
- Traditional leadership should be harnessed in implementing laws that seek to protect women's and girls' rights; and
- Donor funding should target grassroots-oriented programmes in order to increase understanding of the various protocols and legislations.

Peacebuilding

148. These include that:
- The AU policy framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development of 2006 should be implemented;
 - More women should be appointed as heads of United Nations/AU peacekeeping missions;
 - A strategy should be devised for taking care of the needs of women ex-combatants.
 - Refugee and displaced women should be involved in peace negotiations so that their concerns and challenges are heard and addressed;
 - Women working in the military should be involved in conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of peacekeeping operations; and
 - United Nations resolutions 1325 and 1820 should not be confined to countries in conflict, considering the history of conflict in Africa. The resolutions should be integrated into development planning by all countries for effective use in case of conflict.

Research and data collection

149. These include that:
- Governments should collect data on women elected and appointed to decision-making positions, including at the grassroots level; and
 - Women in various decision-making positions should be profiled as role models for younger girls.

11. Plenary Session 5 – Remarks by United Nations Deputy Secretary-General

150. Ms. Asha Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, focused her remarks on the effects of the recent food, energy and financial crises as well as climate change on women. She said that there were huge economic and social costs associated with gender discrimination and that they were worsened by the crises. NEPAD could only succeed if women and men were accorded equal opportunities to participate in economical, social and political life.

*Domestic resources should
be mobilized to finance
gender equality*

151. Gender equality and women's empowerment were goals in themselves. The various crises had the potential of deepening and widening existing gender inequalities; the global financial crisis could negatively affect gender equality; the expected lower government revenues and aid receipts might curtail spending, especially on gender equality and women's empowerment programmes. Therefore, gender issues should be financed through mobilization of domestic resources in order

to promote ownership and sustainability. Furthermore, other non-traditional sources of external resources should be explored.

152. With regard to the food security crises, there was need to develop and implement long-term solutions to address its underlying causes. Women and girls must be given more access to secure land rights, irrigation water, clean energy sources and agricultural technology. The capacity of countries to develop gender-sensitive indicators and to compile gender-disaggregated data should be strengthened, in order to encourage mainstreaming of gender perspectives into national policies and programmes. In conclusion, collective action at all levels was needed to ensure that the many women and girls excluded from mainstream development were no longer left behind.

12. Plenary Session 6 – Interactive Dialogue on Emerging Issues

153. The objective of the dialogue was to demonstrate the importance of tackling the emerging challenges from a gender perspective and to provide a platform for developing policy recommendations. Introducing the theme and objectives of the session, the Moderator, Ms. Sheila Sisulu, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme, posed a challenging question to participants. “*When we return to our usual jobs, what are we going to do differently?*” She said that the interactive dialogue was focused on the gender dimensions of soaring food prices, climate change and the financial crisis.

154. There would be a need to swiftly move the ADF commitments from talk to action. Speakers should therefore bring the discussion of the issues down to “human size”, and to think about practical implementation, as Africa had enough policy frameworks and instruments to guide good practice. The main concern of many countries should be governance, i.e. ratification and national incorporation of relevant instruments as well as accountability of citizens.

*Act Now,
Time is up*

155. Four presentations were made during the session: *Gender and the international financial crisis*, by Mr. Rene Kouassi of the African Union Commission; *Women in decision making*, by Her Excellency, Ms. Maria Leissner, Swedish Ambassador on Democracy; *Gender and the international financial crisis*, by Mr. Adam El Hiraiki of ECA's Trade Finance and Economic Development Division; and *Gender, Food Security and Climate Change* by Mr. Josue Dione, Director of the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division of ECA.

156. Mr. Rene Kouassi noted that the current international financial crisis would not affect the financial sectors in Africa directly, given the continent's marginalization by global financial institutions. However, the crisis would have a negative effect on the real economy and African women would be particularly negatively affected due to their vulnerable status. Even with the moderately good economic growth in Africa in current

times, its impact on social development had been disappointing. The social indicators exhibiting that grim situation would be further exacerbated by the financial crisis.

157. The recession in the developed world would lead to a decrease in exports from African countries, less foreign direct investment, decline in remittances, and possibly reduced development aid to Africa. That in turn would mean reduced income for African Governments as a result of slower growth, fewer imports of capital goods, reduced capacity to reimburse debt, and slower progress towards achieving the MDGs. The decline in public expenditure caused by the economic slowdown in Africa would result in fewer resources allocated to education and health in general and to specific projects like those on women entrepreneurship and credit facilities for women. In addition, that might cause an exodus from rural areas for better employment opportunities, to the detriment of agricultural production, food security and nutritional levels. Finally, a way forward was for African countries to speed up progress towards economic and political regional integration.

158. Her Excellency Ms. Maria Leissner, said that it was important for women to be in decision-making positions in order to ensure progress in gender equality and women's empowerment. The international financial crisis would have an indirect effect on Africa because of declines in remittances, and slower economic growth. Recent progress in the entrenchment of democracy in Africa augured well for the protection of the most vulnerable groups (including women and the poor) from the negative effects of the international financial crisis. In times of crisis donor assistance should not be decreased. Instead, efforts targeted to the needs of the most vulnerable should be enhanced and measures to stop violence against women should be scaled up.

*Donor assistance needs to
be sustained during the
financial crisis*

159. Mr. Adam El Hiraiki said that women's activities and gender empowerment programmes were likely to be most affected by the global financial crisis as they were on the periphery of the modern financial system and had low priority in government expenditure plans. Key actions to be taken to address the effects of the global financial crisis on the most vulnerable groups included preserving the economic and social gains made by women in the past in education and health, and maintaining support for microfinance and small and medium enterprise programmes. The world financial crisis had clearly showed the need for Governments to play a more active role in correcting market failures and promoting new, innovative and mostly small-scale enterprises, which were mostly women owned.

160. Mr. Josue Dione focused his presentation on the link between gender, food security and climate change. He said that while food insecurity was a structural problem that had plagued Africa over two to three decades, climate change was an emerging global challenge and an indication of global governance failure. Both concerns had a direct impact on agriculture, the major productive sector in Africa, and dire consequences for women, given their role in securing food and fetching water and firewood.

161. Climate change comprised three dimensions that had a direct impact on Africa's production systems: sustainable development, social equity, and environmental protection. Africa contributed the least to climate change but given its climate sensitive production and lack of capacity in adaptation and mitigation measures, it remained the most vulnerable. In fact, climate change would possibly decrease Africa's cereal production by 33 per cent and in twelve years time 75 to 250 million Africans would suffer from water stress. Given that scenario, women were specifically vulnerable and therefore were the most likely to suffer from the combined effects of climate change and persistent food insecurity.

162. Consequently, bold action was needed in mainstreaming a gender perspective into all efforts to address climate change. That should be done at four levels, namely; understanding and mapping vulnerabilities to better inform policy interventions; assessing economic, social and environmental impacts through gender-disaggregated data; developing and implementing coping strategies, programmes and projects, with particular attention to technology transfer, including indigenous technology, in order to build community-based resilience; and promoting gender-balanced participation in natural resource management and in decision-making at the local, national, regional and global levels.

*Mainstream a gender
perspective into climate
change programmes*

163. In the ensuing debate, participants pointed out that women's involvement in decision-making processes was vital, but their limited access to information and services put them at a particularly disadvantaged position. There was a need to speed up regional economic integration, address gender equality and promote women's empowerment. Faith-based organizations had an important role to play in gender equality and in building resilience to threats emerging from the international financial crises. In that regard, the African Union Commission had been working on proposed partnership between faith-based organizations, civil society and Governments.

164. Social protection measures should be strengthened to support vulnerable groups, including women. Finally, a gender perspective had to be mainstreamed into climate change policies and programmes and a "gender revolution" was needed in Africa to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in general.

13. Plenary Session 7 – Open-ended Committee Meeting on the Draft ADF VI Plan of Action

165. The aim of the session was to review the draft consensus statement and plan of action. Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Officer in Charge of ECA's African Centre for Gender and Social Development, presented the draft document. The meeting was informed that from the broad array of recommendations and proposals that participants had come up

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with, three pillars were extracted to be in the consensus statement and plan of action. The aim of the consensus statement was to highlight key issues and themes identified by the Forum and needing urgent action, including: financing for gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women; and the need for reliable data.

166. The first pillar of the ADF VI Plan of Action was launching of an *Africa-wide campaign to end violence against women and girls*. It was an urgent issue of today, with many neglected aspects demanding attention. Most of the actions identified under the proposed campaign were the same as those recommended by the plenary and break out sessions on violence against women and by the pre-ADF VI Workshop on Ending Violence against Women in Africa detailed in annex 3.

167. The second pillar was financing for gender equality and women's empowerment (and also including the need to fund efforts to end violence against women and girls). Participants repeatedly noted that resources for gender equality and women's empowerment remained desperately limited yet it was widely acknowledged that investment in women and girls had a positive impact on poverty reduction, economic growth and social development in sustainable ways.

168. The third pillar recommended strengthening the collection, analysis, use and dissemination of accurate data concerning gender and women in Africa. Participants had no illusions that better information alone would spur effective action, but also knew that good evidence was essential for development, implementation and monitoring of effective policies.

169. Noting the high quality work of the drafting team, participants proposed a number of amendments and additions to the draft Consensus Statement and Plan of Action. The meeting indicated that in general the overall language in the preamble was too negative and should recognize that efforts had been made and that the focus was to build on achievements. They suggested that this part of the document should be more visionary in order to inspire stakeholders across the continent to quicken and intensify their efforts. They also suggested that every paragraph should begin with a positive statement, and that the Consensus Statement should highlight the challenges facing women in conflict situations and specific forms of violence such as economic violence.

170. With respect to the draft Plan of Action, a number of participants proposed that additional pillars, particularly in terms of promoting women's empowerment by, for example, creating decent employment opportunities for women, should be established. Other issues highlighted included sustainable development in terms of water, housing and energy. The meeting suggested that national plans should be prepared for promoting women's empowerment.

171. The meeting requested that the third pillar on "reliable data" should be made more action focused, to prevent it from becoming open to different interpretations after ADF VI. Participants suggested that the role of the RECs was missing from the draft Plan of Action. A number of participants requested that the definition of violence should

take into account all its dimensions: sexual, physical, psychological, moral, spiritual, and economic.

172. Participants also suggested changes to specific paragraphs of the draft Consensus Statement and Plan of Action that the secretariat took note of and incorporated in revising the document.

14. Plenary Session 8 - Adoption of the Plan of Action

173. After constructive discussions by participants, the Forum adopted the Consensus Statement and Plan of Action presented in Annex 2.

15. Any Other Business

Statement by Femmes Africa Solidarité

174. Mrs. Bineta Diop, Executive Director of Femmes Africa Solidarité, a women's non-governmental organization, said that her organization had been making efforts to advance the implementation of gender mainstreaming on the African continent, as exemplified by the African Gender Award that it instituted since 2005. The award was being given every two years to an African leader, who demonstrated outstanding achievements in advancing the implementation of gender-sensitive measures. The recipients of the first award were President Wade of Senegal for leading the decision on the gender parity policy in the AUC, and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa for ensuring the implementation of that decision and the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. The 2007 award went to H.E. Mr. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, for his personal involvement in ensuring that 48 per cent of Rwanda's members of parliament were women. In addition to the African Gender Award, there were other awards for the private sector organization and the other for the civil society or women's group that actively promoted women's agenda.

175. In concluding, Mrs. Diop indicated that the selection committee for the African Gender Award, presided over by Hon. Gertrude Mongella, President of the Pan-African Parliament, would be meeting in January 2009 to facilitate the work of the jury which would be voting for the next recipients of the award. In that connection, she appealed to the participants to ensure that the nomination forms distributed to that effect were duly completed and submitted to Femmes Africa Solidarité.

Civil Society Organizations

176. The representative of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) made a statement to the Forum entitled “Enhanced Government, Civil Society and Development Partners Cooperation – A panacea for Fast Tracking Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Ending Violence Against Women”. The statement recognized the need to harness technical and human resources for implementing the Plan of Action of ADV VI and reaffirmed the support of CSOs to AUC, ECA and AfDB as well as to all other key implementers in that regard. The Forum took note of the Consensus Statement, while some other CSOs voiced their reservations on major commitments outlined in the Statement.

Youth

177. In reiterating their position statement from the Pre-ADF VI Youth Forum of 18 November 2008 (see annex 4), the youth reemphasized the urgent need for ending violence against women - their mothers - and called for training of young women in the fight against violence. They emphasized that the “silence must be broken”.

Ministers of the Great Lakes Region

178. H.E. Carmel Sou IV Ngarmbatina, a minister from Chad, stressed that the biggest concern in Africa was for change through action. Portraying the conflict situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), she called for the generosity of every participant to assist. A spontaneous fundraising ceremony was conducted to raise funds for the internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

16. Closing Session

179. The speeches of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ECA, and Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of AUC, concluded ADF VI.

180. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, Ms.Lalla Ben Barka, conveyed Mr. Janneh’s apologies for his absence due to other pressing engagements and read his closing remarks on his behalf. She said that ADF VI provided a rich and lively debate on a pressing problem on the continent - gender equality, women’s empowerment and violence against women. Some progress had been made towards gender equality, particularly in education, and political acknowledgment of that pressing problem was evidenced by a number of international and regional resolutions. There was a need to implement those commitments in order to transform the status of women. The three pillars of the Plan of action: financing for gender equality; the need for reliable data on gender and data disaggregated by gender, and an awareness campaign on violence against women, constituted the main outcome of ADF VI. Financing for gender equality would be taken up at the financing for development meeting taking place at Doha later that month.

181. Ms. Bience Gawanas, African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs, also conveyed the apologies of Mr. Ping who was absent due to other commitments and read his speech on his behalf.

182. She started the speech by asking the rhetorical question: “When is the violence going to stop?” She said that legal reforms and constitutional clauses that embodied gender equality and human rights required implementation, and that silence was not an option at the household, community, local, national and regional levels. ADF VI was not a mere gathering but an assembly that called for tolerance, democracy, unity and action. Finally, that the three pillars of the Plan of Action were positive steps toward eliminating violence, ensuring funding for gender equality, and informing policy better through reliable data.

Annexes

Annex 1: Conventions and declarations promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women

No.	Conventions/Declarations	Year
INTERNATIONAL		
1	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	1948
2	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	1966
3	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	1966
4	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	1979
5	Optional protocol-CEDAW (OP-CEDAW)	1999
6	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	1989
7	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	2000
8	Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	1984
9	Cairo Declaration of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)	1994
10	Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)	1995
11	Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	2000
12	The Millennium Declaration	2000
13	United Nations resolution 1325	2000
14	International Labour Organization Convention 100 equal remuneration	1951
15	International Labour Organization Convention 111 on discrimination	1958
16	International Labour Organization Convention 183 on maternity at the work place	2000
17	International Labour Organization Convention 103 on maternity protection	1952
18	United Nations General Assembly Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS	2004
19	The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness	2005
20	United Nations Security Council resolution 1612 on children and armed conflict	2005
21	United Nations Security Council resolution 1820	2008
REGIONAL		
1	The African Charter on Human and People's Rights	1981
2	The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	1990
3	African Charter on Human and People's Rights: the Women rights protocol	2003
4	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa	2004
5	Abuja Framework for Action for the Fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases	2001
6	The Maputo Continental Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights	2006
EXAMPLES OF SUB-REGIONAL COMMITMENTS		
1	SADC Declaration on Gender and Development	1997
2	Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children (addendum to the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development)	1998
3	SADC Protocol on Gender and Development	2008
4	ECOWAS Declaration on the Fight against Trafficking in Persons	2001

Annex 2: ADF VI Consensus Statement and Plan of Action

Preamble

1. **We**, the participants at the sixth Africa Development Forum, representing stakeholders from across the African continent, women and men, Governments and civil society, the private sector, youth, traditional and religious leaders, convening in Addis Ababa at the invitation of the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, supported by the United Nations family and development partners, from 19 to 21 November 2008, examined the situation, experience and hopes of women and girls across the continent and the level of gender equality as well as violence against women, and agreed upon this Consensus Statement and Plan of Action;

2. **Aware that**, across the African continent, a powerful movement for the creation of a new social order is unfolding; led by women, men and young people of vision and commitment, Africans are determined that the strengths of their societies can form the foundation of a brighter future; Africans are confident that the future of the continent and all its people, women, men and children, will be secure when Africans enjoy full gender equality, and women are fully empowered and are free from all forms of violence; this dream can be achieved—and is being achieved;

3. **Noting that** we stand on the threshold of the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, and after more than three decades of solemn commitments, declarations and plans, progress towards achieving the rights of women and girls in Africa, achieving gender equality and addressing violence against women has been disappointing; we need to build on achievements and move forward with commitment; words have not been followed by sufficient action; promises have not always been matched by political will and resources; indeed, that time is up;

4. **Recognizing that it** is not possible for women to meaningfully participate in development when they are subjected to discrimination, disempowerment, violence and abuse; this subjugation is not only a grave violation of women's human rights but also a huge missed opportunity because African women possess formidable potential of strength and power and have been a major force for democratic and developmental change; violence against women is a key indication that African women are far from enjoying human security in general and personal security in particular, despite the adoption of numerous solemn commitments to end such abuses over the decades;

5. **Recognizing also that it is critical for** women to insist on asserting their rights; it is imperative to ensure the involvement of women from all walks of life, especially at the grassroots level, through participatory democratic processes; equally important is the involvement of men who must play a major role in taking the necessary action;

6. **Further recognizing that**, as emphasized by African leaders at the Forum, bold moves have been made to provide increased representation for women, enhanced participation for civil society, and to speed up efforts in support of economic empowerment and social protection; we congratulate and encourage those countries that are making efforts to involve women in high-level decision-making. We urge all African countries to follow best practices and to translate numerical representation into transformative change. We commend the African Union for its Constitutive Act, which sets a standard of gender parity at the highest level. We support President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf in her ongoing efforts to champion the cause of women and address issues of gender equality.

Consensus Statement

7. Now is the time to reverse injustices that have long been tolerated. Now is the time to put an end to a situation in which one in three women is subjected to violence, human trafficking, coerced sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime. Now is the time for women, who produce most of Africa's food and cash crops and are mostly responsible for care giving, to enjoy their rightful access to, ownership of and control over land, food, housing and property. Now is the time for women and girls, who are very often deprived of the right to literacy and education, to be able to fulfill their capabilities. Now is the time for men to engage fully in meeting the responsibilities of women and fulfilling their capacity as equal and empowered members of society.

8. African cultures have profound positive values, but patriarchal elements are also entrenched in African societies and persist despite national and international efforts to transform and to make them consistent with women's human rights. Within this culture, male and female identities are constructed in restricted ways that give low status to women. Weak economic power, subordinate social status and lack of voice mark women's experience across the continent. And there are indications that violations against women are increasing.

9. Although African women have made substantial progress and are making important strides in advancing their position, most women on the continent continue to suffer in silence with their rights denied. Despite the best efforts of a growing number of women and men activists and champions, women's voices are very rarely heard. Women are disempowered, their work undervalued and their experiences unreported. This is a particularly acute crisis for women who are victims of violence and abuse, who are very often unable to report their crimes and seek justice, solace and remedy. We recognize the courage and commitment of women who have spoken out and who have brought these vital issues to national and international attention. We need to break the silence, to empower survivors of violence to speak and be heard. We need to provide assistance and protection to victims. We need to gather and put to use authoritative evidence and data on violence against women and girls.

10. Recognizing the biological, social, cultural and economic vulnerability of women and girls to HIV, and the close link between violence against women and HIV transmission,

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along with the implications of the disproportionate impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on women and girls, we call for “structural prevention” efforts, public education, social and psychological services for survivors of sexual violence, and post-exposure prophylaxis. We also call for attention to be given to the underlying socio-economic drivers of women’s vulnerabilities, for action to combat stigma and discrimination and for efforts to ensure equitable access to treatment.

11. In some African countries, women and girls face unacceptably high levels of personal insecurity on a daily basis. The basic reality for many women and girls is constant vulnerability to abuse and exploitation, exposure to sexual harassment, vulnerability to HIV and risk of violence. In response to this insecurity for women and girls, we call for universal responsibility to protect and respect women and girls. This requires urgent and sustained action by all stakeholders, including women and men, families, communities, religious institutions, the private sector, civil society, the media, local and national governments, police and security forces, and African, global and international partners.

12. We call for safe streets and markets, safe schools and workplaces, safe recreation, safe police stations, safe refugee camps, and safe homes. We call for all members of society to ensure that women and girls are able to live without fear for their personal safety or the exploitation of their vulnerability. Achieving protection and respect demands that all assume their responsibilities. It requires transforming the patriarchal social and cultural norms that underpin gender inequalities, changing models of masculinity that degrade women and girls, and ensuring that every faith’s message of respect for women and girls is properly heard. It demands taking steps to address the interlocking crises of poverty and lack of services. It needs action to provide the rule of law and access to justice. We call for police services that are gender aware and gender balanced. We call for assistance, including psychosocial services, for survivors of violence. We call for international peacekeeping forces to prioritize the protection and respect of women and girls, to include female-only contingents, especially among civilian police, and to include training on gender issues in preparation for deployment. Leadership at all levels is needed in order to observe the universal responsibility to protect and respect women and girls.

13. We welcome the initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General to designate the coming seven years (2008-2015) until the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, as the occasion for his campaign “UNiTE to End Violence against Women and Girls” by 2015. We endorse this with a comprehensive and urgent Africa-wide plan of action to eliminate violence against women and girls, including costed and supported national plans for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325.

14. We urge Governments which have yet to ratify regional and international conventions and protocols to do so without delay and to enact domestic legislation to ensure their effective implementation.

15. We urge Governments to enter into extradition treaties to combat the trafficking of women and children and to enact domestic legislation to penalize the perpetrators of this crime.
16. We call for a special focus on ending violence against women and girls in situations of conflict, including special responsibilities for regional and international peacekeeping forces. Women in post-conflict situations face special threats and need special forms of protection and assistance. Women's involvement in peacemaking goes beyond advocacy efforts to bring about peace agreements, to encompass the substance of those agreements and monitoring and implementation skills. Women need to be provided with training in negotiation and peacemaking.
17. We endorse calls for the universal adoption of the gender parity principle, namely the goal of a 50:50 gender balance in all spheres of political, social and economic life. This is especially important in senior executive, judicial and legislative appointments across the entire continent, and should be implemented as rapidly as possible.
18. We call for global, African and national initiatives to ensure financing for gender equality. Governmental and multilateral financial institutions need to redesign macroeconomic policies to address women's needs and gender concerns. These efforts are all-the-more necessary as today's simultaneous financial, food and fuel crises imperil Africa's prospects for achieving the MDGs. ODA cuts should not be allowed to reduce development and budget spending. Women should not bear the brunt of any economic downturn. Their access to employment and credit should not be jeopardized. The crisis must not be used as an excuse to deepen gender inequities.
19. Current budgetary policies and outcomes are not gender sensitive. We therefore call upon African countries to formulate and implement budget policies in such a way that taxation measures and expenditure allocations promote gender equality and women's empowerment and help end violence against women.
20. Noting that deep and enduring poverty is the daily experience of most African women and girls, and that overcoming female and child poverty forms the core of poverty-reduction measures, we call on Governments and international development partners to prioritize and implement social protection policies and programmes. Among the array of possible measures to directly overcome female poverty, we specifically note cash transfers, old-age pensions, child support grants, social housing schemes, compensation to caregivers, and measures to empower persons living with disability. Among the measures that are highly effective in tackling gender-related poverty are universal primary education, equal opportunity for school attendance at all levels, equal opportunity for income generation, and universally accessible reproductive health services.
21. In the lead-up to the Doha meeting on financing for development and in the light of the financial crisis and rising food and volatile fuel prices, and in the context of climate change, development partners should sustain the ODA commitment they made in Monterrey and at the G8. Despite this crisis, we urge development partners to invest

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in women. At the same time, we urge African Governments to increase investments in women and in gender equality, funded by domestic resources. The financial crisis is no excuse for delaying action.

22. African Union member States and development partners are encouraged to finance the AU's African Women's Fund in an expedited manner to an extent sufficient for it to fulfill its mandate. We furthermore call upon the United Nations to establish a United Nations agency focused on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women and children. As the High-Level Panel on UN Reform has reiterated, this agency should be funded to a minimum of 1\$US billion a year, and provided with the standing and expertise to provide global leadership on these issues. As the MDG target date draws close, implementation of all MDGs relevant to women, girls and gender, especially Goal 3, should be hastened through investment of more resources and energy.

23. African member States are signatory to a rich corpus of international, regional and subregional declarations, resolutions, goals and conventions which provide a solid foundation for the Consensus Statement and Plan of Action of this Forum. We call for law reform to ensure that national laws and legislation protect women and girls and promote gender equality. However, the principal challenge before us today is to translate these commitments into meaningful action that can transform the lives of women and girls across the African continent.

Plan of Action: "From Commitment to Delivery"

24. The Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Ending Violence against Women and Girls, Achieving Gender Equality and Empowering Women consists of the following priority actions that can have far-reaching impacts:

- a. Africa-wide campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls;
- b. Financing for gender equality, women's empowerment, and ending violence against women and girls; and
- c. Reliable data on gender equality, women's empowerment and violence against women and girls.

25. Ending All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls: "Act Now, No Time to Wait!" We call for a three-year Africa-wide campaign to eliminate violence against women and girls, to be launched in 2009. This should take the form of a universal responsibility to protect and respect women and girls, including campaigns to transform patriarchal values, to end harmful traditional practices, to put a stop to the trafficking of women and children, to prevent and punish all forms of violence against women and girls, whether in peacetime, conflict or post-conflict situations, and to strengthen the educational, health, policing, judicial and social service institutions that should prevent and punish such violence. It should address such underlying economic and social causes of vulnerability as women's weak legal rights to land, housing and property. Given that gender-based violence is a major security threat of concern to national and international

authorities, the campaign should entail breaking the silence and encouraging and supporting survivors to speak out. It should compile best practices for tackling harmful traditional practices. It involves mobilizing people at the grassroots level.

26. Governments which have not yet signed and ratified all international and regional conventions and protocols relevant to gender equality and the protection of women and girls from all forms violence, should do so without delay. All countries should enact corresponding domestic legislation and take the necessary measures to transform these commitments into national action plans.

27. Governments should identify and support community programmes that aim to increase awareness for families on gender equality issues and ending all forms of violence against women. Governments should establish gender desks or departments in all law enforcement and national security institutions to promote the end to violence against women and girls.

28. Governments need popular education programmes at all levels to help deconstruct negative cultures in an innovative way, making effective use of the African Women's Human Rights Observatory to monitor actions and assess the impact of these programmes. African research institutions and civil society should be supported to explore ways of pursuing these goals.

29. Religious and traditional leaders and institutions should subscribe to national laws and international standards in interpreting cultural practices and religious doctrines.

30. The police, the judiciary, and all other law enforcement agencies should enforce laws to protect women and girls from violence, including rape and trafficking, and should apprehend and punish perpetrators. In addition, they should establish women-friendly practices and institutions for responding to violence. These elements should be included in training modules for police and judicial officers. Ministers responsible for gender should set up oversight mechanisms to regularly monitor violence against women and girls and take steps to stop it.

31. Gender issues and the prevention of violence against women should be integrated into the formal and non-formal education curricula at all levels, and the media should be trained in gender equality and ending violence against women, to enable them to play a pivotal role in this campaign. Civil society and national human rights commissions should be involved in this effort.

32. New ways should be found to develop and disseminate recourse mechanisms which engage with victims of violence, encouraging women to speak out, report their experiences and obtain the necessary ongoing protection and support.

33. In situations of armed conflict where State responsibilities cannot be fully exercised, regional and international mechanisms for protecting women and girls must be developed and implemented. Governments and international organizations,

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including peacekeeping forces, should draw up and enact action plans to achieve the aims enshrined in United Nations Security Council resolution 1325. In line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1820, steps should be taken to prevent and punish rape as a war crime.

34. Countries should establish the necessary medical, psychosocial and economic assistance mechanisms to provide assistance to survivors of violence to ensure their future health, social and economic status and security.

35. A task force comprising AU, ECA and AfDB and the wider United Nations system, should be formed to drive the campaign.

36. Financing for Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Ending Violence against Women and Girls. Realizing that financing has been a major impediment to the implementation of gender-specific commitments and obligations, this Forum calls for specific financing of gender equality, empowerment of women and ending violence against women within each country's medium-term expenditure framework. It calls for implementation of action at the national, regional and international levels.

37. African Governments should formulate and implement taxation policies and expenditure allocations that address gender equality, women's empowerment and violence against women. This should include budget transparency and public expenditure tracking on gender equality and investments in women in order to ensure effective monitoring. Budget literacy at all levels, including civil society, should be increased.

38. Each sectoral ministry should formulate a comprehensive plan for promoting gender equality within the medium-term expenditure framework. The respective national ministries of finance and planning should ensure that each sectoral ministry allocates sufficient resources to these programmes in compliance with the financing for gender equality principles. Parliament should be supported to become a real force to play its oversight role in this regard.

39. The AU, ECA and AfDB in cooperation with the United Nations system should establish a joint task force to build the capacity of government institutions to establish the mechanisms to institutionalize this activity within twelve months with a view to completing the exercise within three years. In addition, the joint task force should support training of government officers and civil society to track the allocation and use of financial resources with respect to gender impacts and ending violence against women. Furthermore, the finance act should be reviewed to make the minister of finance accountable to parliament on gender-related resource allocation.

40. The launching and operationalization of the African Women's Fund, in accordance with the decision of the AU Assembly, should be undertaken within the deadline of July 2009 set by the Executive Council. National governments, international partners and the private sector should be encouraged to provide the AU with sufficient finance to fulfill its mandate.

41. The proposed United Nations women's agency should be set up during 2009 and funded to a minimum of \$1 billion a year, to ensure that resources and expertise reach all levels, especially the grassroots.

42. Governments and development partners should use the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action as powerful tools for Governments and development partners to implement their commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.

43. Collecting Reliable Data on Gender Equality and Violence against Women and Girls. Establishing sound data on all aspects of gender equality, women's empowerment and violence against women and girls is a precondition for establishing the best policies and monitoring the effectiveness of actions. Data also include the life stories of women and girls survivors of violence and exploitation. In addition to being collected, it is equally vital that data are analyzed, disseminated and used as the basis for designing and implementing programmes and for monitoring and evaluating activities. ICT should be used for better dissemination of data. All member States and partners should cooperate to strengthen the African Gender and Development Index developed by ECA and to build capacities and strengthen systems for collection, analysis, dissemination and use of gender-disaggregated data. The AU, ECA and AfDB should jointly publish a regular report, "The State of Africa's Women" based on these data.

Annex 3: Speeding up implementation of existing commitments recommendations from the pre-ADF VI workshop on ending violence against women in Africa

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The workshop identified strategic areas for speeding up implementation that include: State accountability; data collection; service delivery; identification of new strategic partners and initiative; re-conceptualization of violence against women; advocacy and capacity-building; handling for violence against women in conflict and post conflict situations; and enhanced coordination and networking.

State Accountability

- Legislation largely in place at the international and continental level – both for women’s and children’s rights; but enactment or revision of laws is patchy and some countries and subregions still need to work on this;
- Develop model legislation for countries in the process of drafting their legislation;
- Set up of tribunals and accountability mechanisms for dealing with impunity at AU level and subregionally;
- Explore innovative ways to ensure State accountability and a strong social contract – e.g. public litigation and basic service delivery from a multi-sectoral approach;
- Ensure the strengthening or creation of anti-corruption units; and
- Ensure that these recommendations are considered at all AU decision-making forums.

Service delivery

- Governments need to be innovative as current methods do not always meet the challenges that women face;
- Support services must be stepped up – security sector, psychosocial, etc.;
- Multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach to supporting survivors of violence – e.g. one-stop centres –to make it easier for women and girls to report violations;
- Community-led initiatives must be strengthened and upscaled; and
- Use indigenous ways to condemn and punish violence against women and girls in communities; eg. palava huts.

Data Collection and Documentation

- Data collection of prevalence and degree of violence against women and girls is essential;
- Information management systems must be put in place to capture cases and services provided;

- Develop an index on gender-based violence similar to the African Gender and Development Index;
- Document best practices; and
- CSOs and justice delivery systems should collaborate to document and analyze cases.

New strategic partners and Innovative programmes

- Identify new strategic partners such as defense forces, trade unions and safer cities;
- Men are already a key partner in efforts to end violence against women and these needs to be strengthened where efforts are still weak; and
- Find new ways of working with the media e.g. use of ICT to spread messages; and find suitable methods to use in villages without access to conventional communication methods.

Re-conceptualization of violence against women

- Violence has economic, political, social and human rights dimensions; and
- Policy makers should understand the role of the State and that this is a political and rights issue.

Advocacy and capacity-building

- High-level political support is needed especially to implement laws enacted;
- Advocate for lifting of CEDAW reservations and full ratification of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and its additional Protocol on Women's Rights and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
- Advocate for resource allocation for implementation of laws and national machineries;
- Set up a social protection fund for survivors;
- Implement multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional community-based initiatives;
- International education centre strategies for attitude and behaviour change at different levels of society must be strengthened and resourced;
- Strengthen capacity on "women know your rights" and access to justice and service delivery;
- Gender mainstreaming remains a useful strategy;
- Share tools and methodologies across networks, regions and continents;
- Institute quota systems for women in decision-making in various arenas of life; and
- Build the capacity of young people and children on how to deal with violence against women.

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Conflict and post-conflict situations

- End wars and rape as a weapon of war or conflict;
- Implement peace protocols from subregions and enforce conditions; and
- Raise awareness of and implement resolutions 1325 and 1820.

Enhanced coordination and networking

- Launch the African Campaign to End Violence against Women;
- Improve the resourcing, advertising and use of the African Network to End Gender-Based Violence, and violence against women;
- Strengthen subregional and national violence against women networks;
- Greater coordination between NGOs and national gender machineries to avoid duplication; and
- Ensure better coordination between the United Nations and Governments.

Annex 4: Position Statement from the Pre-ADF VI Youth Forum

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We the young people of Africa at this ADF-VI are committed to being active participants in the development of Africa. We bring our energy, creativity and drive and hope that you policy makers will support us. We acknowledge the challenges facing us, and we declare that we as young people are committed to empower ourselves and especially young girls and women, to be capable partners in development.

1. We stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in areas of conflict and humanitarian crises and urge policy makers to properly execute the various laws and frameworks that are already in place;
2. We commit to use the different platforms we have to bring attention to the violence and harmful practices being committed against children, young people and women. We advocate for equal opportunities for boys and girls;
3. We commit to volunteer our professional and other competencies to contribute to the betterment of society but for a limited length of time;
4. We demand full accountability for the implementation of your commitments made at ADF-V for the ratification, implementation and monitoring of the African Youth Charter; and
5. We request that a decade be declared the “**Decade of Youth Development in Africa**”, immediately following the Year of the African Youth, 2008. This will sustain political commitments to youth development, empowerment and increased concrete investment in participation and leadership of young women and young men in development processes.

We must all rediscover, understand and respect our African values of family, togetherness, unity and respect for all citizens, male or female. We need to break the silence and emphasize that if one of us is experiencing gender violence then our presence here is pointless.

Annex 5: ADF VI Work Programme

DAY ONE Wednesday, 19 November	
09:30-11:00 hours	<p>Opening ceremony Venue: Conference Room 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Statement by Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa Statement by Mr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank Statement by Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Statement by Honorable Ulla Tornaes, Danish Minister of Development Cooperation <p>Special Guest</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Opening Statement by His Excellency Girma Wolde-Giorgis, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
11:00-11:30 hours	<p>COFFEE BREAK Visit of exhibition by VIPs (exhibition area)</p>
11:30-13:00 hours	<p>Plenary session 1 High-level session on culture, gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women in Africa</p> <p>Co-Chairs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Dr. Mantombazana Tshabalala-Msimang, Minister in the Presidency, South Africa Ms. Marie-Angelique Savane, Former Chairpersons of the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons <p>Presentations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Culture and the social construct of gender, - Ms Rudo Chitiga, International Gender Expert. Empowerment of women for ending violence against women, - Dr. Auxillia Ponga, Advisor Gender, Commonwealth Secretariat Effective and creative enforcement measures and tools for ending violence against women – H.E. Ms Elisabeth Rehn, Minister of State, Finland. <p>General discussion</p>
13:00-14:30 hours	<p>LUNCH</p>
14:30-16:00 hours	<p>Plenary session 2 Theme: Violence against women</p> <p>Co-Chairs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Suzanne Mbomback, Minister of Women's Empowerment and Family, Cameroon H.E. Ms Nouara Saadia Djaafar, Minister for Family and Women's Affairs, Algeria <p>African voice - Ms. Marsha Moyo, Zambian Artist, UN Goodwill Ambassador MDGs for Zambia</p> <p>Presentations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations – Mr Joseph Chilengi, Executive Director, Africa Internally Displaced Persons' Voice Harmful traditional practices and institutions - Dr Morissanda Kouyate, Director of Operations, Inter-African Committee Trafficking of women and exploitation - Ms Joy Ezeilo, UN Secretary General Special Rapporteur on trafficking <p>General discussion</p>

16:00-16:30 hours	COFFEE BREAK
16:30-18:00 hours	<p>BREAK-OUT SESSIONS FOR DAY ONE</p> <p>1. Violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations</p> <p>Chair: H.E. Ms. Mamatou Marie Djoussou, Minister of Family, Women and Children, Benin Facilitator: Ms. Hyacinthe Budomo, International Gender Expert</p> <p>2. Harmful traditional practices and institutions</p> <p>Chair: H.E. Ngarmbatina Odjimbeye Sou Vi, Minister of Social Action and Family, Chad Facilitator: Ms. Lomcebo Dlamini, Women and Law in Southern Africa, Swaziland</p> <p>3. Trafficking of women and exploitation</p> <p>Chair: H.E. Chief Mgwagwa Gamedze - Minister of Home Affairs, Swaziland Facilitator: Ms. Karen Stefiszyn, Programme Manager, Gender Unit, Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria</p> <p>4. Ministerial Break-out session on Violence against women</p> <p>Chair: H.E. Ms. Vabah Kazaku Gayflor, Minister of Gender and Development, Liberia Facilitator: Ms. Bineta Diop, Executive Director, Femmes Africa Solidarite,</p>
19:00-22:00	ADF VI Cultural evening – Ballroom Hilton Hotel

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DAY TWO Thursday, 20 November 2008	
09:00:-09:30	<p>MESSAGES TO ADF VI</p> <p>Chair: Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECA</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H.E. Mrs. Isatou Njie-Saidy, Vice President of the Gambia and Minister of gender, 2. Her Majesty, Mrs. Silvia Nagginda, Queen of Buganda Kingdom in Uganda. 3. Mrs. Sia Koroma, First Lady of Sierra Leone; 4. Dr. Mo Ibrahim of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.
09:30-11:00 hours	<p>Plenary session 3 Theme: Gender and socio-economic rights</p> <p>Co-Chairs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H.E. Ms. Syda Bumba, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda 2. H.E. Lieut. Gén. Germain Niyoyankana, Minister of Defense and War Veterans, Burundi <p>Presentations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender, land and property rights - Professor Okoth Ogendo, University of Nairobi 2. Gender, Employment, markets and trade - Professor Vremudiah Diejomaoh, Nigeria 3. Gender, Education, training and skills development and ICTs - Ms. Codou Diaw, Executive Director, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) 4. Financing for gender equality –Dr. Marianna Jacinta Muteshi, International Gender Expert
11:00-11:30 hours	<p>COFFEE BREAK</p>
11:30-13:00 hours	<p>Plenary session 4 Theme: Gender, socio-cultural and political rights</p> <p>Co-Chairs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. S.E. Madame Barry Babatou Niando, Minister of Women's Affairs and Child Protection, Niger 2. H. E. Mrs Ubah Mohammed, Minister of State for Women's Affairs, Ethiopia <p>Presentations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gender, HIV and AIDS and reproductive rights - Dr Belkis Wolde Georgis, International Gender Expert 2. Gender and Health - H.E. ADV. Bience. Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AUC 3. Governance, conflict, peace and security - Mr. Abdalla Hamdok – Director, NEPAD and Regional Integration Division, ECA
13:00-14:30 hours	<p>LUNCH</p>

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS FOR DAY TWO

1. Gender, land and property rights

Chair: H.E. Ms. Germaine Manguet, Minister of Social Affairs and Promotion of Women, Guinea

Facilitator: Ms. Diana Tempelman, Senior Officer, Gender and Development, FAO Regional Office for Africa.

2. Employment, markets and trade

Chair: H.E. Ms. Anna Andrew Kachikho, Minister of Gender, Child Welfare and Community Development, Malawi

Facilitator: Ms. Jennifer Kargbo, Director – ECA Southern Africa Office

3. Education, training and skills development and ICTs

Chair: H.E. Ms. Marlene Mungunda, Minister of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Namibia

Facilitator: Dr. Sizo Mlanga, ECA - Division of ICT, Science and Technology (ISTD)

4. Financing for gender equality

Chair: H.E. Ms. Margret Simwanza Sitta - Minister of Community Development, Gender and Children, Tanzania

Facilitator: Ms. Laetitia Mukurasi, Chief Gender Specialist, African Development Bank

5. Gender, and HIV and AIDS

Chair: His Royal Highness, Phathekile Holomisa, Member of Parliament, South Africa.

Facilitator: Ms. Bernadette Olowo-Freers,, Senior Political Advisor for Advocacy, African Union, UNAIDS

6. Gender and health

Chair: H.E. Ms. Marie Solange Pagonendji- N'dakala. Minister for Social Affairs, Central African Republic

Facilitator: Dr. Florence Baingana, Research Fellow, Makerere University School of Public Health

7. Governance, conflict, peace and security

Chair: Brigadier General Jack Nziza, Government of Rwanda

Facilitator: Mr. Okey Onyejekwe, Director, ECA - Governance and Public Administration Division.

14:30-18:00 hours

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DAY THREE Friday, 21 November 2008	
09:30-10:00 hours	Plenary session 5 - Remarks by Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Chair: Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary, ECA
10:00-10:30 hours	COFFEE BREAK
10:30-13:00 hours	Plenary session 6 Theme: Interactive dialogue on soaring food and fuel prices, climate change and the financial crisis Moderator: Ms. Sheila Sisulu, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme Panelists Dr. Rene Kouassi, African Union Commission Her Excellency Ms. Maria Leissner, Swedish Ambassador on democracy Dr. Adam El Hiraiki, Trade Finance and Economic Development Division, ECA Dr Josue Dione, Director of the Food Security and Sustainable Development Division, ECA
10:30-13:00 hours	Plenary session 7 Open Ended Committee Meeting on the Draft Action Plan Co-Chairs: Ms. Lalla Ben Barka, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECA H.E. ADV. Bience. P. Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AUC General discussion
13:00-14:30 hours	LUNCH
14:30-15:00 hours	Launch of the Third joint ECA/AU Report of "Assessing Regional Integration in Africa" (ARIA III) on the theme: Towards Monetary and Financial Integration in Africa, Moderator: Mr Maxwell Mkwezalamba, Commissioner of Economic Affairs, AUC. Remarks by ECA Executive Secretary Mr. Abdoulie Janneh and AUC Chairperson Mr. Jean Ping Presentation by Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Director, NEPAD and Regional Integration Division, ECA. Presentation of a Congratulatory Stand From the African Statistical Community
15:00-16:30 hours	Bilateral meetings and side events
16:30-17:00 hours	COFFEE BREAK
17:00-18:00 hours	Plenary session 8 Theme: Adoption of the Action Plan Chair: H.E. Jeanne Françoise Leckomba, Minister of Promotion of Women and the Integration of Women in Development, Congo
18:00-18:30 hours	CLOSING CEREMONY Chair: H.E. ADV. Bience. P. Gawanas, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AUC Closing Remarks by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Secretary of ECA • The Chairperson of the AUC

Annex 6: List of Participants ADF-VI

Eminent Persons

1. H.E. Asha-Rose Migiro United Nations Deputy Secretary General, United Nations New York, +212 963 8010, +212 963 8845
2. H.E. Elisabeth Rehn, Independent Expert of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, Saarentie 22,02400 Kirkkonummi, Finland, 358 40 5149369, elisabeth.rehn@kolumbus.fi
3. H.E. Isatou Njie – Saïdy, Office of the Vice-President State House, Gambia, Banjul, P.Box M186, 12 Atlantic Road, Fajara, +220 4227605 / 225717 / 4228730/4224401, +220 4224012, vicepresident@statehouse.gov
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6. H.E. Ms. Ulla Tornaes, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2 Asiatick Plads, 453392000, 4532540533, um@um.dk
7. H.R.H. Ms. Sylvia Nagginda Luswata, Kampala, Uganda, +256 312262672, +256 414234699, nnabagereka_office@one2netmail.co.ug
8. H.E. Archibald Lesao Lehohla, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Leader of Lesotho Delegation, P.O.Box 174 Maseru, Lesotho, 266 22320017/ 266 22314892 266 223 10013, lehohbalpdm@homeaffairs.gov.ls
9. Ms. Marie-Angelique Savane, Former Chairpersons of the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons, +221 33825 13 40, Fax: + 221 33824 9677, masavane@aol.com

Ministers

10. H.E. Nouara Saadia Djaafar, Ministère déléguée auprès du Chef du Gouvernement, chargée de la Famille et de la Condition Féminine, Alger, 06, Rue de l'Indépendance, Place 1er Mai, Algeria, +213 21279024, +213 21651454, mdccfc@yahoo.fr
11. S.E. Genoveva da Conceição Lino, Ministra da Família e Promoção da Mulher, Lunada, Angola Largo 4de Fevereiro no3, Palácio de Vidro, +22 311171/912 505039
12. H.E. Ana Carlos Canene de Vascon-Selho, Minister of Justice, Luanda, Angola, +244 923722087
13. S.E. Mamatou Marie Joe Djossou Meba Bio, Ministre de la Famille et de la Solidarité Nationale, Benin, +229 90030456, +229 21300333
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