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REPORT
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Participation in the Economic Sector

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AFRICAN WOMEN REPORT

Participation of Women in the
Economic Sector

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PREFACE

"The African women report: Participation of women in the economic sector" is an attempt at a consolidated synthesis of the current information in this area. It is therefore the outcome of a critical literature review of a selected number of the current publications that have addressed the issue of African women's economic activities directly or indirectly.

Currently, there is little literature on the economic sector that has devoted its attention exclusively on women from a gender perspective. What has become evident from the review is that while women's participation in economic activities has been addressed, it has been done partially, and often, as only one of other issues. A comprehensive approach to the question of the depth and breadth of what women in relation to men do formally and informally, both in the public and in the private arena, that have relevance to the economic sector in Africa has not yet been embarked upon. This report therefore attempts to fill this gap.

The sources used most heavily include: ILO/JASPA, **African Employment Report 1990**; Mosse, J.C., **Half the World, Half a Chance**, Oxfam 1993; United Nations, **1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women in a Changing Global Economy**; UNIDO, **Development Report 1994 and 1995**; UNIDO, **Participation of Women in Manufacturing: Patterns, Determinants and Future Trends, (Final Report) 1995**; UNDP, **Human Development Report 1994 and 1995**; United Nations, **The World's Women 1995 : Trends and Statistics**; and FAO, **Women, Agriculture and Rural Development: A Synthesis Report of the African Region 1995**.

In the aftermath of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Africa is all poised for the implementation of the **Global and African Platforms for Action** for the advancement of women. This Report is therefore intended for all development actors who want information that may be helpful in their quest for equitable development through the promotion of women in the economic sector.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

This **Report** is the first of a biennial series that will review topical issues of interest to African women from a gender perspective. They are intended to provide a synthesis of information that should be of relevance in the implementation of the **Global and the African Platforms for Action** for the advancement of women.

The choice of focus on the **participation of women in the economic sector** is based on the overwhelming evidence throughout the preparatory process of the regional and global conferences on women held in 1994 and 1995 respectively, that poverty was the number one concern of the African women. The critical area of concern "women, poverty, insufficient food security and lack of economic empowerment" was listed first in the **African Platform for Action**. In the **Global Platform for Action**, the issue appeared also as a critical area of concern and was articulated as "inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and in the productive process itself".

As Africa's economic crisis set in the 1980s and the problems of debt, structural adjustment, war and conflict and natural disasters trapped more than one third of Africa's people in abject poverty, women took a disproportionate share. Feminization of poverty is thus not only manifested in the growing numbers of female-headed households, today estimated at 35% in Africa, but also in the large numbers of refugee and displaced women and their children who make up at least 80% the total number.

The irony of the women's state of poverty is that despite their limited access to land, modern production technology, skills and other resources of production, they still produce 60-80% of Africa's food supply in addition to their family and community maintenance responsibilities. They also constitute only 37% of formal labour according to 1990-1991 figures, most of them in lower level positions while the bulk of the rest are in the informal sector, mostly in the urban areas. Most of women's contribution into the gross domestic product (GDP) therefore remains invisible and therefore unaccounted for.

The invisibility of women's economic contribution is also related to the fact that they are under-represented in the decision-making arena of the economic and socio-political sectors. This report seeks to demonstrate that access to both productive and the decision-making processes are necessary conditions for the recognition of women's critical contribution to the economic welfare of society.

Discussion in this **Report** assumes the **gender perspective**. In so doing, it directs focus on relations between women and men. Distinction is therefore made between women's and men's productive and reproductive roles and how they interact between them in social and economic structures. In using the gender perspective, the issue of power relations as demonstrated by the inequitable distribution of such economic properties as time, incomes, property ownership legal and social entitlements as well as the numerical presence of women in power structures come to the surface. The false differentiation between economic production and social reproduction which has resulted in the marginalization of women despite their indispensable contribution to production is brought out.

The **Report** is divided into four parts. Part II sets the framework in which participation in the economic sector is enacted, examines women in the formal, agricultural and informal sectors as well as their non-monetized roles. Part III focuses on the participation of women in economic decision-making and Part IV discusses the constraints to women's economic activities. Part V draws the conclusion and offers some recommendations.

II. PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR

A. Framework for Participation

As the world underwent turbulent economic changes in the last decade following the global recession of the 1980s, Africa went deeper into debt subsequent to the decline in the price of commodities and the rise in interest rate of earlier loans. Debts were rescheduled and more money borrowed to pay interest. But the only ready lender was the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who also imposed conditions for the loans. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) had to be instituted to mitigate the effects of the world recession and generate enough resources for debt payment.

As Africa set out to restructure as per IMF conditionalities, it instituted cuts in size and salaries in the public sector in favour of the private sector. Poverty rose higher in the 1980s and 1990s than it was in the 1960s and 1970s. The environment deteriorated as large population groups entered into the margin of absolute poverty.

Women have suffered disproportionately and in a variety of ways from SAP policies. As governments reduce public expenditure and thus shift from paid to unpaid economy, women's reproductive role becomes heavier. Government is the largest employer of women and when it is reduced in size it is women more than men who lose their jobs and find themselves with few alternatives.

Structural adjustment policies are also characterized by advocacy for an external oriented economy. Cash crop farming is therefore promoted as a strategy to generate hard currency and ease the debt burden while women are marginalized from extension services and new technologies.

While most of the world responded to global recession and the economics of market forces by organizing itself into large trading blocks, the nations of Africa seemed to be moving to unprecedented fragmentation and destabilization as internal and external conflict become rife in the continent. One of the contributing factors is the economy of affection which acts as the social and economic insurance for the poor along clan, ethnic and tribal lines. As such, it has also nurtured ethnicism which in turn has threatened the solidarity and unity of the state and the viability of national economies. In its extreme form, excessive conflict and internal strife have prevailed and have fed into the justification for increased military spending in many African countries. Between 1990 and 1991, at least 12 countries spent more than 50 per cent of the combined health and education budget on defence.

One of the consequences of the persistent conflict is the huge numbers of refugees, most of whom are women and children. Recent statistics in Africa indicated that in 17 countries, the ratio of female to male refugees ranges from 71% to 121% in a given year. These women face a multitude of problems that are made more acute by their gender.

B. Productive Employment in the formal sector

In Africa, women play an important economic role in productive employment despite their precariousness in the labour market. Their role over the years has been characterized by deliberate exclusion from formal employment to eventual, gradual acceptance into the lower echelons which require low skills, pay low wages, have few promotion opportunities and little job security. Over the last two decades, however, promotion of girls' education and the increase in their school enrolment has been a significant step towards removal of barriers to women's employment. The bulk of women's economic activities at the household, at community levels, in agriculture and in the informal sector are overlooked. Subsequently, the nature and size of their contribution is not adequately captured.

The female labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa was estimated to be about 73 million representing 38% of the total labour force in 1990. In the 1970s it was estimated at 40%. The decline which continued in the 1980s was due to a number of such factors as economic crisis, restructuring policies, high enrolment rates in schools as well as high fertility rates that necessitate that women defer employment in favour of child- and- domestic related non-market activities.

In the modern sector, women tend to be least represented in such sectors as construction, electricity and water, transport and communications, mining and quarry. Women are found in minuscule numbers in administrative and managerial categories while they predominate the lower category of the labour force. They are also found in larger numbers in agriculture, manufacturing, business and social services. While men move faster in from low to skilled categories, women tend to stagnate and therefore earn less. It is also not unusual for women to be hired for jobs for which they are overqualified and compete with men with lower qualifications.

Focus on the African Sub-regions

Women's participation in the economic sector is a function of the prevalent socio-economic and cultural environments. Although there is a positive correlation between the level of economic and industrial development and the demand for female labour force, in the African continent, these conditions are found only in Mauritius and Tunisia. The rest of Africa is characterized by de-industrialization and a worsening of socio-economic conditions that have eroded women's opportunities for economic advancement. This trend varies little as an examination of the African countries reveals following closely the clusters constituted in the recent study by UNIDO entitled "Participation of women in manufacturing patterns: determinants and future trends", 1995. The clustering of the subregions does not so much follow the traditional geographical groupings of the countries. Rather, it groups countries according to similarities in the struggle for economic and gender equity evolution.

(i). West African Sub-region: strive for economic and gender-equity evolution

The sub-region includes the following countries: Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Liberia, Comoros and Mali. Most of these countries which are in traditional West Africa except for Comoros are characterized by decline in the share of agriculture into the GDP and stagnation or decline of the small manufacturing sector. Conflict and internal strife have contributed significantly to this situation. Women employment opportunities in the service sectors were eroded by retrenchment. Their low level of education and skills, the small size of the

manufacturing as well as the gender ideology that work in this sector is unsuitable for women are manifest in their insignificant numbers in manufacturing. Agriculture, however, absorbs 33.48% of the economically active women. The informal sector also absorbs large numbers.

Fertility rates and maternal mortality rates are high in this subregion. Life expectancy rate for women ranges between 43 years in Sierra Leone to 53.3 in Nigeria while the median age of the population is under 17 years which has implications on women's employment patterns. While the growth rate of girls' school enrolment rate in primary and secondary schools is higher than the boys: the enrolment gap is higher in favour of boys. At the tertiary level, enrolment of girls is significantly lower than that of boys. Besides, enrolment per se also dropped in such countries as Togo, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea since the introduction of SAP.

With regard to the social status of women, only two countries have ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) while the number of women in parliament in 1992 varied between 2% to 8%. Most countries have also ratified the International Conventions on Equal Remuneration and on Discrimination of Employment and Occupation but the implementation is low.

(ii) The low gender-equity cluster

This cluster consists of nations with the lowest female economic participation in the productive sector and low social status in terms of literacy, school enrolment rates and legal protection against remuneration protection. The countries include Sudan, Mauritania, Cameroon, Chad, Sao Tome, Cote D'Ivoire, and Djibouti.

Agriculture absorbs 75% of the economically active women. While it contributes little to the GDP, the tertiary sector is the highest contributor varying between 50% in Cote D'Ivoire to 80% in Djibouti. Manufacturing contributes to the GDP around 10% of the total input in Cameroon and Cote D'Ivoire but absorbs less than 4% of the active women. Women's seeming low participation in the economic sector is influenced by cultural values as to what is considered work, what is considered appropriate work for women, and gender discrimination in hiring practices.

The fertility rate averages 6.6 births while the female life expectancy varies between 48.5 years in Chad to 56.8 in Cameroon. Female school enrolment rate is less than 50% mostly due to early marriage at around 16.6 years of age. All countries have ratified CEDAW but only two countries have more than 10% female representation in parliament. Elsewhere, it is less than 5%. Despite the fact that all the countries have signed the international instruments to promote gender equity in the economic sector, there is a large gap in the economic participation of women between the West African cluster and this cluster.

(iii). The moderate gender-equity group

This clusters which comprises 11 countries has a moderate rate of women economic activities but with large disparities in sectoral labour distribution and high percentage of female headed households. The countries are Senegal, Congo, Gabon, Rwanda, Madagascar Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and Swaziland.

The economies are dependent on mining and oil extraction except for Rwanda, Mozambique and Angola which are dependent on agriculture. Economically active women, however, are found in agriculture and are relatively few in the formal sector. Cultural factors and post industrial strategies for development are mostly associated with this situation. Women were not allowed to follow their husbands in the mines during the colonial era which reduced their economic and social status.

There is relatively low gender gap in primary and secondary school level enrolment but there are high drop out rates for girls due to early pregnancy and marriages, limited places for girls in schools, high demand for girls' labour and preference for boys' education as a safety blanket. The initial improvement of women's political and legal status shortly after independence was eroded by political and economic instability. War in some countries has led to high numbers of female headed households, sometimes as high as 50%. Women's political participation in parliament is relatively high at around 16-17% but low in executive positions. Most governments have ratified CEDAW and ILO conventions on equal employment and remuneration but have not allocated the necessary resources for their implementation.

(iv). The mixed bag cluster

This cluster has high rates of female economic participation and very low levels of social development. The countries are, Guinea Bissau, Zaire, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Somali. The agricultural sector accounts for the dominant share of the GDP and the tertiary sector follows. There is a high concentration of economically active women in agriculture and very few in industrial and tertiary sectors. The latter situation is a reflection of the national accounting system which does not record women's non-agricultural activities. Following the economic crisis of the 1980s, most countries continue to struggle against the poor physical and social infrastructure, and in some countries, political instability. All the countries fall under the UNDP category of low human development.

Political instability has resulted in over-allocation of scarce resources to military spending. Subsequent to the internal conflict in Ethiopia, Burundi and Somalia, hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced people have fled into the neighbouring countries which in turn have suffered grave socio-economic and environmental consequences.

The fertility rate varies between 1.2% in Equatorial Guinea to 3.5% in Kenya and the life expectancy rate of women between 40 years in Uganda and 63 years in Kenya. The rate of female headed households is high due to political instability and the AIDS pandemic which has hit severely on women in these countries. Primary school enrolment of girls ranks above 50% in more than half the countries. There are high drop out rates at the secondary level. However, there is evidence of gender sensitive policies in some countries that may reverse this trend. Besides, while most countries in the cluster have not ratified CEDAW, there is a trend of evolution of strong civil organizations which are lobbying for the advancement of women. Representation by women at parliamentary level is only above 11 % in Uganda and Tanzania which have affirmative policy, and in Guinea Bissau.

(v). Northern Africa: the growth of the economic and gender equity

The Northern Africa cluster comprises Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Libya, and Cape Verde. The five Maghreb countries (excluding Egypt) are classified as middle income countries and their

economies depend on oil, manufactured goods, labour export, and the tertiary sector. The share of agriculture in the GDP is negligible.

Women's economic activity rate is growing faster than the males'. The private sector is their main source of employment, mostly in agro-industries where they are likely to work as seasonal workers. There is a trend of declining fertility, higher life expectancy, growing urbanization and a rise of the age of marriage and female headed households. Enrolment of girls in primary and secondary schools has grown following economic growth and favourable policies towards girls' education. Literacy gap between men and women is, however, high and there are few vocational schools for girls.

Economic recession of the 1980s has resulted in growing unemployment for both men and women even though the rates are higher for women. Consequently, there is a backlash on women's employment that is closely linked to the fundamental religious attitude that their employment is secondary to that of the men. In some countries, this is being legitimized by legislative responses. Representation of women in parliament and the cabinet is low, the highest being in Algeria at 10% in 1992. However, all countries have ratified CEDAW and the ILO employment and equal remuneration conventions.

(vi). The Southern Africa Melange: economic growth and gender equity at loggerheads

The Southern African countries are divided into two categories. The first category (Mauritius, Seychelles and South Africa) has a high economic growth rate, high rate of women economic activity, low fertility and high life expectancy. Women are mostly in the service and manufacturing sector, particularly in the Export Processing Zone in Mauritius. In South Africa, they have accessed the professional and managerial/administrative category because of their high levels of secondary and tertiary education. Representation at the parliamentary level is also the highest in Africa despite the fact that they have neither ratified CEDAW nor signed the ILO conventions on equal employment and remuneration.

The other category which comprises Botswana, Namibia and Lesotho has a relatively low level of women economic activity, high population growth rates, and high rates of female enrolment in primary and secondary and tertiary levels where they exceed the males. Despite the high female enrolment rates, however, retention rates are low due to high rates of pregnancy. The economies of the three countries is highly dependent on mining and the tertiary sector. Manufacturing is being encouraged to solve the unemployment problem while agriculture contributes little to the GDP.

With regard to women in these countries the majority of the economically active ones are found in agriculture. Manufacturing is also a significant employer of women particularly because most men work in the mines, a sector that has successfully excluded women to date and has contributed significantly to the large share of female-headed households in this cluster of countries. Despite the demand for women labour in the manufacturing sector, however, their earnings are only two thirds of what men earn. Such disparities are supported by the prevailing customary and Roman Dutch Laws which foster disparities between the male and the female status in such matters as property ownership, inheritance and child custody in favour of men. Similarly, women representation in parliament is also low. None of the 3 countries has signed CEDAW or the ILO Convention on Equality in Employment and occupations. Namibia has signed the Convention on Equal Remuneration.

II. C. EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE

Women in agriculture in 1990 represented 43% of the total labour force in sub-Sahara Africa. They are mostly in food production including harvesting, processing, storage and marketing. Contribution of food to the national economy varies from 8% to 50%. Both men and women engage in agricultural activities, equally in some countries while in others, women are exclusively responsible for food production as the men emigrate in search of better economic opportunities. This situation has resulted in aggravated poverty especially in female headed households where women assume the responsibilities of both men and women.

Women agricultural work is in form of smallhold farming which has contributed enormously to food security in Africa. But it has been adversely affected by such regional trends as SAPs which have reallocated resources from subsistence farming to production for export. Most women are unable to switch to cash crops because of their double responsibility for production and reproduction without access to credit, technology, extension services, marketing information, land, rising prices of basic commodities and agricultural inputs etc. High population growth rates and environmental degradation have also affected growth in agricultural production.

Nonetheless, there is increased recognition of the importance of women's role in agriculture in several African countries which have formulated policies and programmes to end discrimination in land allocation and to increase women's access to productive resources.

D. EMPLOYMENT IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Limited data indicate that women are over-represented in the informal sector, which pays less than the minimum wage and is characterized by strenuous and poor working conditions. The informal sector has grown as an important alternative to agriculture and formal employment in response to the need for increase in family income. Women resort to it as an alternative to occupational segregation, unemployment and underemployment in the formal sector. Their activities are generally service oriented in such areas as provision of domestic services, small scale trade and micro enterprises that produce clothing and processed food.

Women's presence in the informal sector also reflects the cultural attitude of what is suitable work for women in some societies. In most Moslem societies, for example, most of the informal sector activities are done at home where women and children are expected to be. Manufacturers in some countries also contract their work to home-based workers, mostly women, who are paid on a piece by piece basis. Limited statistics also show a positive correlation between the importance of the activity in the informal sector to production and the rate of women participation in it. Although there are not sufficient statistics to substantiate this, it is expected that girl children are heavily involved in the informal sector as they are in agriculture.

The formal institutional credit systems including government institutions consider the informal sector too risky and expensive to invest in because of its structural and organizational nature as well as the problem of presenting acceptable collateral. Women have the added constraint of the gender bias against access to credit and productive resources. The informal sector has created alternatives to circumvent these

obstacles such as the rotating savings and credit associations, money lenders, trade credit dealers, money keepers, informal financial markets etc. Still, in using these alternatives, women have to deal with gender disparities that limit their access to them, which are mostly rooted in cultural and traditional biases.

E. PARTICIPATION IN THE NON-MONETIZED REPRODUCTIVE ROLES

Women's work is greatly undervalued in economic terms partly due to the restricted definition of economic activity and partly due to the existing gender bias towards gender roles. This affects the status of women in society, their opportunities to participate in public life and renders development policy gender-blind.

Household and community work not only contributes to the total output of a nation directly and indirectly, but it also produces and enhances relationships that are indispensable to community and social life. Various studies show that in developing countries, women work longer hours than men and carry 53% of the work burden. The men's share of work constitutes 3/4 of the System for National Accounts activities. Men therefore receive recognition and monetary hard income for their economic contribution while women's work remains unrecognized and unpaid. Several factors contribute to the underestimation of women's work including difficulties in separating production activities from non-market household work.

The consequences of undervaluing women's work reduce women to virtual non-entities who, for example, cannot obtain loans in banks because they do not own property or income. There is need to change the way society is structured for a more just and equitable arrangement. Each member of the family is entitled to the income that is generated by market work. This share should be proportional to their contribution to the total labour paid or unpaid. Non-paid household functions should also become societal responsibilities for women and men with resources allocated to facilitate and streamline them.

III. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING

A. Inequality in power-sharing

An important gender gap exists in the rate and type of participation of women in decision making within the economic sector as in other sectors. In agriculture, for example where their presence predominates, their numbers in decision-making organizations, are low and often confined to the rank-and-file. Among the factors behind this situation are constraints on women's time given their multiple roles, limited ownership rights to resources which are used as a prerequisite for membership, and neglect of issues that are of interest to them by these organizations. To resolve the problem of imbalance in representation, some countries have encouraged women to form their own organizations.

The presence of women at the district, municipal and ministerial levels are equally negligible in Africa. In 1994, for example, only 10 countries had more than 10% representation at the ministerial level while 11 countries had no women ministers. In sub-Saharan Africa, the average representation at the parliamentary level was 8% and 4% in North Africa. Only 12 countries had women representatives in local councils while another 7 countries had women mayors in some of their rural municipalities. The differential in the degree of marginalization between the national and local levels is a partially a reflection

of the double barrel constraint of low level of education among women and the powerful tradition of role casting along gender lines that continue to dominate the rural areas.

B. Measuring gender inequalities in power-sharing

In scanning the state of gender inequalities in Africa by using the UNDP Gender Development Index (GDI), it was clear that while gender gaps were closing in education and health, the gap in income had remained wide and at times had even increased. The **UNDP Human Development Report 1995** thus confirmed that while no country in the world treated women as well as its men, in Africa, women in 35 countries included in the study suffer the double deprivation of low achievement and gender disparity.

It is also important to note that gender equality does not depend on the income level of a society. In fact some notions of equality could be tantamount to increasing women's workload. Besides, acquisition of basic capabilities and living standards does not automatically lead to using them as a source of power to broaden one's option and possibilities. Cultural, political and/or economic barriers could at times lead to under-exploitation of potential and subsequent state of powerlessness.

C. Some implications for lack of decision-making powers

Growing female unemployment since 1985 is an indication of their powerlessness in decision-making. When the economic crisis set in the 1980s, the policy dominant response was structural adjustment programmes that mainly entailed reducing the public sector, Africa's largest employer of women. In particular, SAPs targeted areas where women are found in large numbers such as the unskilled labour category, and the service sector. The female labour force in the modern sector as a result dropped from 6% in 1985 to 5% in 1990, a loss of 2.5 million jobs. SAPs also had a negative impact on the performance of the informal sector, which in turn affected employment opportunities for women. As real wages and employment opportunities dropped in the public sector, the employment performance of the informal sector automatically declined, especially in the trade segment. Other structural problems that reflect women's powerlessness and have contributed to their unemployment include unequal access to education, and sex-labelling of jobs. A clear indication of such inequities is that progress made in women's educational attainment has been disproportionate to progress made in the labour market.

Another consequence of women's exclusion in decision making is the growing feminization of poverty. Women's unequal situation in the labour market as well as their relatively powerless status in the family have led to increasing poverty among them. In the labour market, they earn only a percentage of what men earn in equivalent positions, mostly because of lack of bargaining power, perceived excessive absenteeism, job desegregation etc. The disparity is even greater in sectors where labour is less organized, e.g. agriculture and the informal sector. They are also denied the opportunity for growth and recognition as is demonstrated by the stagnation of their low ratio to men in the past 20 years in the professional administration and management job categories, as well as in clerical and sales work. Additionally, the growing phenomenon of female-headed households in Africa without the usual benefits accorded to the head is a further reflection of the powerlessness of women which has aggravated the poverty level among them.

IV. OVERVIEW OF CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

A. Gender Inequities and the labour market

Gender role casting in Africa has limited the educational opportunities for women and hence their participation in the labour market. It is traditionally believed that for women to play their traditional role of mother and home manager does not require much education. Provisions for women's educational opportunities therefore have remained inadequate. Drop out rates among them are much higher than those of boys due to adolescent pregnancy, inability to pay fees, failure in exams etc. In school, they tend to be steered to the traditional female areas that have limited employment and/or career growth opportunities. They are virtually absent in fields that require science and technology while they predominate the arts, education, social sciences etc.

Job segregation and sex labelling based on culture and perceptions of social propriety has virtually kept women off certain job categories such as messengers, high ranking diplomatic jobs, high profile law-related jobs etc.

In the field of agriculture, the marginalization of women has contributed to the reduction of food output per capita since the beginning of the 1970s. Failure to understand the gender dimension in food production has contributed to the current food crisis. Despite the fact that women grow more than 75% of food in Africa, national figures have greatly underestimated women's agricultural work. Women's farm work has therefore remained unmodernized as agricultural projects and innovations focus on cash crops. The latter have benefited from development aid, the best land and organized market outlets. Women, on the other hand, do not have the benefit of co-operatives to market their products unlike the men who grow cash crops.

Relations between men and women are changing with regard to available household labour. It has led to increased competition as to which crops should benefit from such scarce resources as labour and agricultural inputs. Given the unequal power relations at home, women often find their labour appropriated by their husbands to work in their cash crops farms yet do not have control over the income generated thereof. This cuts on their time to produce subsistence crop and the required surplus for sale for their own and their children's needs.

To supplement increase their income, some women seek casual wage employment on the farms, especially those who have been left by their husbands to take care of their families alone as they migrate in search of better economic opportunities. Unfortunately, these women do not benefit from credit, labour or agricultural inputs in their husband's absence due to their status as females.

High fertility in Africa is generally considered viable insurance against farm labour shortage (especially girl children), source of security at old age or in widowhood (especially from male children), and a source of social status. Unfortunately, it takes a toll on women who have a one in 17 chance of dying from a pregnancy-related ailment, and/or badly performed or illegal abortions. There is enormous unmet need for safe, appropriate and affordable contraceptives. These should be provided within the framework of broad, integrated reproductive health care for women and men that also addresses such

relevant issues as poverty alleviation, access to health and education etc. The ramifications of the situation to women's economic activities is low productivity and increase in poverty levels.

The growing population pressure in the urban areas, the crumbling physical and health infrastructure and the sordid squalor and poverty have serious gender implications as well. Given women's central role in the welfare and management of their families, it is they who have to scrounge for water, fuel and food in the urban as in the rural areas for the survival of their families.

B. Inadequate employment policies and programmes

Among the existing national and international legal instruments to protect men and women against discrimination in employment, some have provisions that end up discriminating against women. Such is the case with regard to work in mines, quarries and other extractive trades, construction, reconstruction and maintenance-related work. Women are barred from that kind of work except for a few management positions despite the fact that the conditions that originated such regulations no longer exist and as such, their existence discriminate against women. There is also the civil service which often discriminates against married women by linking certain benefits to their husbands. When women claim such worker's benefits as house and vacation travel allowances, they are expected to proof that their husbands have not claimed them already. Such demands are generally not made on men. In addition, the absence of legislation barring discrimination against women through advertising gimmicks and/or job descriptions in favour of men have cost women many employment opportunities. Besides, requirement from employers to provide support services for working mothers such as creches and day care centres should be considered seriously as a matter of equity. The practice of paying women on maternity leave less than what they earn when they are working regularly is tantamount to undervaluing reproductive roles over productive work activities.

Nonetheless, there have been recent policies and programmes to promote women's employment which got impetus from the United Nations Women's Decade 1975 to 1985 and the recommendations of the regional and global conferences on women that have been held since 1975. Some of the efforts made have been of an institutional nature including the creation of women's national machineries to advise governments on the formulation and implementation of appropriate policies to promote women's economic activities. In this regard, some countries offer entrepreneurial development schemes intended to benefit women and men. Most governments have also adopted policies to eliminate discrimination against the education of girls and for adult literacy including women thereby enhancing chances for their employment. National policies to protect workers are contained in such acts as the Employment Act, the National Social Security Act, the Workman's Compensation Act etc. and the specific needs of women are addressed therein. Unfortunately, women in the informal and agricultural sectors are excluded from such coverage.

The United Nations agencies and NGOs have championed the employment generation schemes through the promotion of women's income generating activities. Women themselves have formed mutual aid groups, some more formal than others in response to their growing family responsibilities. The survival of these groups, however, is threatened by such problems as lack of entrepreneurial and organizational skills, access to credit, illiteracy, inadequate financial assistance etc.

There is also the absence of coherent employment promotion policy for the rural sector in spite of its potential for employment, market outlet for agriculture and generation of foreign exchange through production for export and through import substitution.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In reviewing the state of the African women's participation in the economic sector, this **Report** underlines the critical importance of implementing the recommendations offered by the Global and African Platforms for Action. The recommendations are underscored as valid and timely, requiring immediate action in order to accelerate the realization of the vision of sustainable transformation by liberating women's energies and potential to become full participants and beneficiaries in the economic sector.

The **Report** also recommends the undertaking of a comprehensive analysis of the existing economic policies to ensure that the gender perspective is adequately incorporated therein in order to safeguard against disparities between women and men. Gender mainstreaming is therefore recommended as the strategy for attaining the lofty goal of a new development ethic for sustainable development.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Why focus on the participation of women in the economic sector?

1. This publication is the first issue of a recurrent series which are intended to review topical issues of the day that are of relevance to women. The choice of the topic for focus in this particular issue is, of course, highly influenced by the outcome of the fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, 4-15 September, 1995 as well as the contents of the preparatory process.

2. From the start of the preparatory process of the Beijing Conference in 1992, and up to its end in 1995, it became increasingly clear that the problem of growing poverty was the preoccupation of the majority of African women. Accordingly, the African Platform for Action: the African common position for the advancement of women (APA) which was the outcome of the fifth African Regional Conference on Women (held in Dakar, Senegal, 1994) preparatory to the global conference on women, listed one of its priority areas of concern as "women, poverty, insufficient food security and lack of economic empowerment". Similarly, at the fourth World Conference on Women, the Global Platform for Action captured the same preoccupation in a critical area of concern formulated as "inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and in the productive process itself".¹

3. Such regional and global concern is triggered off by the economic crisis that set in the 1980s and has shown little sign of abatement in the 1990s. The factors associated with its prevalence include inadequate technological and industrial advancement; natural disasters especially drought; disruptions from civil wars and political conflicts; external debt which in 1993 stood at \$US 285.4 billion and interest on debt arrears representing at least 40 per cent of the balance; and shrinking external support.

4. The consequence of this gloomy scenario is that more than one third of Africa's population is estimated to be living in abject poverty, unable to meet most of its basic needs. Women bear a disproportionate share of this poverty as more women than men become poorer every day in their low ability to generate adequate income. Feminization of poverty is further demonstrated by the growing numbers of female headed households in Africa, now estimated at 35 per cent compared to 18.4 per cent in 1970. Most of these are refugees or displaced persons of which women and children disproportionately constitute 80 per cent. It should be noted that Africa constitutes 35 per cent of the world's 20 million refugees.

¹ UNECA, African Platform for Action: African Common Position for the the Advancement of Women, Dakar, Senegal, 1994

5. While women experience this degree of poverty and indeed constitute a large proportion of the poorest of the poor, still they produce 60-80 per cent of Africa's food supply in spite of their limited access to ownership of land, housing, modern production technology, skills, and other production resources. Besides, in the course of food production and family maintenance, they play the critical role of environmental management, conservation and protection. This notwithstanding, they suffer the first effects of environmental changes which curtail the sources of firewood, energy, water, food and other resources for household and economic activities. Additionally, only 37 per cent of formal labour is occupied by women (1990-1991 records) who are relegated to the lower level positions while the majority of economically active women in the urban areas are in the informal sector. Thus, the bulk of women's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remains invisible and unaccounted for due to a number of socio-economic reasons that will be discussed later in the report.

6. Conscious of the fact that women constitute the bulk of the poorest of the poor in spite of the critical economic role that they assume in society, this publication sets out to examine the extent of the African women's participation in the economic sector. It also seeks to understand the extent of the discrepancy between the woman's low economic status and her critical contribution to societal welfare in this sector and how this could be resolved.

7. The invisibility of the contribution of women in the economic sector is closely related to their status in the decision-making process that shapes society in general and determines the organization of the economic sector in particular. Indeed they are visibly under-represented in the decision-making arena of the socio-political and economic sectors of society from local, national to international levels. Yet, "it is now generally recognized that women constitute a key national resource whose ideas, creative solutions and concern for cohesiveness of the social fabric can help change the quality of life and society at large"². Besides, full and effective participation in all aspects of public life is a fundamental human right.

8. Participation of women in decision-making with regard to the economic structures and policies is an imperative for the enhancement of their critical contribution to the economic welfare of society. For their role in the economic sector to be fully taken into account and to receive the recognition it deserves, women must have access not only to the productive process itself but also to the decision-making machinery and process. This report will demonstrate that in both areas, women are largely marginalized in different ways. Equity strategies directed at rectifying this situation have to challenge outdated ideas in relation to the women's place, work and potential as a sine qua non for improving their low social status and the low value placed on the work they perform. This report will therefore focus on the status of the African women in this regard, examining what the trend is in the context of the fast changing world.

² ECA "Political Empowerment of Women", paper presented at the fifth African Regional Conference on Women, Dakar, Senegal, 1994

B. Why the gender perspective in focusing on women ?

9. Discussion on structural constraints to women's participation in all aspects of society has been going on for the last century and has been intensified in the last two-and-a half decades. Recently, this on-going debate has taken a new orientation, the gender orientation. This orientation is a dynamic concept which takes away focus from women as a separate category and directs it to the relations between the sexes, that is the gender relations. Thus, when women's issues are formulated in gender terms, they are delimited in terms of what a woman can do in the private and the public sphere, and are automatically compared with the rights, responsibilities and entitlements of her counterpart, the male.

10. The gender perspective used in this study therefore facilitates a comprehensive analysis of issues of concern to women by taking account of the relations between men and women. Distinction is made between men's and women's productive and reproductive roles and how they interact between them. The social and economic structures and trends particularly with respect to education, employment, economic and political participation are also examined in reference to women's and men's productive and reproductive roles. In using the gender perspective, the issue of power relations as demonstrated by the inequitable distribution of such economic properties as time, incomes, property ownership; the legal and social entitlement to all these; and the numerical presence of women in power structures; come into the surface. It also brings out the false dichotomy between the workplace (public) and the home (private) front. This false separation has resulted in the minimization of inequalities within the family. In the economic sector, the false differentiations between economic production and social reproduction have resulted in the economic marginalization of women despite their indispensable contribution to production.³

C. Organisation of the paper

11. This report will comprise four parts as follows, Part I will address the issue of women participation in the economic sector in five sections. Section A will examine the participation of women in the context of the global economic restructuring, and the implications of structural adjustment programs on women's participation. Section B will focus on productive employment of women in the formal sector, giving a regional overview and also focusing on various clusters of countries according to the evolution of both economic growth and gender equity. Special focus will be put on the gender implications as demonstrated by such aspects as wage differentials, type of work, occupational segregation, career movement, social security and protection, participation in unions and other worker associations. Section C will examine the state of women participation in the agricultural sector and the constraints to more effective participation. Section D will look at productive employment in the informal sector. The involvement of women in non-agricultural activities both in the urban and rural areas will be examined. The modalities of social security and other forms of protection that this sector has to offer will also be analysed. Section E discusses participation of women in the non-monetized reproductive roles in the household, the community and society at large. The implications of the labelling of these roles as "domestic", "natural" to women and therefore not "work", hence their non-monetization are also addressed.

³ UNDP "Gender and Governance", UNDP Gender in Development Programme, Occasional Report Series, 1995

12. Part II will analyze women's participation in decision-making within the economic sector. It will be divided into three sections. Section A will focus on women decision makers in the economic sector at the micro and the macro levels. Section B focuses on measuring gender inequalities in employment and unemployment and their link to the absence of women in decision-making. Section C will examine some trends with regard to women's economic empowerment that are related to their powerlessness in decision-making.

13. Part III examines some of the constraints to women's participation in the economic sector. It is in two sections. Section A focuses on gender inequalities in the labour market, while section B appraises some of the existing employment promotion policies and programmes. The last part of this document, i.e. Part IV, will suggest recommendations as to how women's economic empowerment could be accelerated.

II. PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMIC SECTOR

A. Framework for participation

14. The world has undergone turbulent economic changes in the last decade following the global recession of the early 1980s. These changes, in turn, have had repercussions at the national level and have presented challenges and setbacks to the issue of gender equality.

1. Regional implications of global restructuring and their gender-specific impact

(a) Stabilization and structural adjustment policies

15. The macroeconomic changes experienced globally in the 1980s and the 1990s were triggered off by the fluctuation of the price of oil which first quadrupled in 1973, and increased yet again by the end of the 1970s. When the price of oil increased in 1973, oil exporting countries put their money in banks in America and Europe. The banks in turn loaned their money to Africa and other Third World countries to promote their development along the western model. Large amount of money was therefore invested in high cost projects such as road and airport construction, military hardware and luxury imports. But when the price of oil increased the second time around, the industrialized countries entered into a massive recession. As a result, the demand for commodities dropped and their price tumbled in some cases to levels lower than those of the second World War. In one year, Africa lost over \$US19 billion. In addition, in an attempt to protect home industries by stopping imports, industrialized countries increased tariffs, taxes and quotas. By the end of the 1980s, interest rates had soared to 18-20 per cent while private leading sources disappeared. Additionally, bilateral aid stagnated or was cut back.

16. In these circumstances, Africa like other Third World countries could no longer afford to pay its debt without going further into debt. Debts were rescheduled and more money lent to pay interest on earlier loans. But there was only one loaner available, the International Monetary Fund, whose loans were accompanied by conditionalities. Between 1980 and 1992 as Table 1 shows, due to the IMF conditionalities, debt-servicing became a critical consumer of proceeds from exports, and more than half of the countries in Africa were obliged to allocate at least 20 per cent of these resources to the problem.

17. Restructuring in developing countries including Africa entailed instituting programs of stabilization and structural adjustment programs (SAPs) to mitigate the effects of the world recession and to make enough money available for debt payment. SAPs were accompanied by a global shift in economic management towards greater reliance on market forces and criticism of government intervention in the economic process.

18. Although the specifics of each structural package may vary from country to country, what they all have in common is that each package must improve its economy in such a way that it can repay its loan. Characteristically, therefore, there are cuts in government spending particularly on imports and social services. In Africa, the public sector which employs the most women was trimmed in size as in salaries. Education services, food subsidies and social housing were drastically reduced. Other characteristics of SAPs include currency devaluation which causes inflation, and price increase.

Table 1: TOTAL DEBT SERVICE AS A PERCENTAGE OF EXPORTS

Country	Total Debt Service as Percentage of Exports		
	1980	1989	1992
Algeria	27.1	68.9	71.3
Angola	--	--	--
Benin	4.9	6.7	4.1
Botswana	1.9	3.5	--
Burkina Faso	5.9	9.4	6.2
Burundi	9.5	32.9	35.3
Cameroon	15.2	17.3	16.2
Central African Republic	4.9	14.2	9.6
Chad	8.3	5.2	5.4
Congo	10.5	27.0	11.9
Cote d'Ivoire	28.3	40.9	31.9
Egypt	20.8	20.5	15.5
Ethiopia	7.6	38.7	14.2
Ghana	12.5	48.9	26.7
Guinea	19.8	15.2	12.4
Guinea-Bissau	--	--	92.7
Kenya	22.3	33.3	27.1
Lesotho	1.5	4.5	5.3
Labour	8.8	--	--
Libya	--	--	--
Madagascar	17.2	52.0	18.6
Malawi	27.7	28.0	23.8
Mali	5.1	15.0	7.4

Source: World Bank, World Development Report, 1994.

**Table 1: TOTAL DEBT SERVICE AS A PERCENTAGE OF EXPORTS
(Cont.)**

Country	Total Debt Service as Percentage of Exports		
	1980	1989	1992
Mauritania	17.3	20.1	17.2
Mauritius	9.1	9.8	8.1
Morocco	32.7	32.2	23.6
Mozambique	--	23.1	8.1
Namibia	--	--	--
Niger	21.7	32.1	14.2
Nigeria	4.2	21.3	28.9
Rwanda	4.2	18.5	23.4
Senegal	28.6	29.4	13.8
Sierre Leone	22.9	--	20.5
Somalia	4.9	34.1	--
South Africa	--	--	--
Sudan	25.5	9.2	5.4
Tanzania	21.1	16.5	31.5
Togo	9.0	18.2	7.3
Tunisia	14.8	22.6	20.6
Uganda	13.2	77.0	40.2
Zaire	22.5	21.5	--
Zambia	25.3	11.3	--
Zimbabwe	3.8	26.0	32.0

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report*, 1994.

19. In the context of global restructuring, privatization is perceived as an efficient way to increase growth and to strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit and initiative. More importantly, it is seen as a solution to the internal and external public debt. In Africa, the move to privatization led to the reduction and/or the closure of public enterprises and parastatals. The principle of market deregulation and efficient resource allocation were emphasized over the regulatory and distributive role of governments. The move towards greater economic freedom was also associated with the spread of the move towards democratization, and the emergence of greater civil and political freedoms.

20. In Africa, the immediate impact of reduced government spending, privatization and market deregulation was growing poverty and deterioration of environmental conditions. The numbers of people in poverty were higher in the 1980s and 1990s than in the 1960s and 1970s. Table 3 illustrates how hard-hit by poverty the general population was at the onset of the 1990s. The per capita output and employment have declined. While in some countries one worker was able to earn enough to support a family, after the restructuring, it would take two breadwinners and the earnings of a child to support that same family. As the need for social services increased with rising poverty, it was those very services that deteriorated or were reduced. Where the poor had free medicine, today they have to pay for it or do without due to depletion of the foreign currency where drugs are imported. Thus large social groups are on the verge of malnutrition, have no housing or access to education that would help break the vicious cycle of poverty.

21. Against this economic backdrop of global restructuring, what is the situation of women who represent the majority of the poorest?

(b) Gender-specific implications of economic restructuring

22. The suffering caused by the global and national restructuring in Africa fell heavily on those least responsible for the policies that led to the world recession, the debt crisis and SAPs. They are the poorest, the least qualified to pay external and internal public debt, the majority of whom are women. Indeed these restructuring policies have not been gender neutral: women's situation has been replete with hardships that outweigh what is experienced by men in the economic and social sectors.

23. As governments trim public expenditure, they shift it from the paid to the unpaid economy, which automatically increases the burden of the women's reproductive role. This, in turn, has serious implications on their health and that of their children, for example when a patient must be discharged in three days to continue his/her treatment at home under the unpaid care of a woman. While this may be considered a case of efficiency in SAPs language, in reality, it is simply a case of transfer. This happens in such other cases as food shortage, water unavailability, lack of transport from farm to markets etc. A UNICEF⁴ report related that between January and June 1988, more than a quarter of children born in Lagos maternity hospital weighed less than 2 kilogrammes, a sharp drop in birth weight due to malnutrition and stress on the part of expectant mothers. Over the same period, it was found that at least 40 per cent of babies born in Nigeria were unhealthy at birth. This strongly suggested that women and children were paying the price of the debt crisis as food subsidies were cut.

⁴ As quoted in J.C. Moose, Half the World; Half a Chance, Oxfam 1993, p.121

24. The SAPs policy to trim government expenditure in the public service has a more devastating impact on women than men with regard to income per capita. Government is the largest employer of women and once they are laid off, they are likely to have more difficulties finding alternative employment than men. Not only are their skills less competitive than men's but culturally, they are likely to be less employable. Women will also suffer from price liberalization which results in a decline in real income. Restructuring thus changes the pattern of female employment. They move from the formal sector to the informal sector where they are lower paid with little security despite the fact that they are generally overqualified for the jobs they find. More of this will be discussed in the following sections.

25. Policies geared toward greater outward orientation in development often lead to technological changes. New technologies in agriculture for cash crop farming have tended to increase the burden of women who are marginalized from extension services, yet have to divide their attention between subsistence farming for which they are responsible and the cash crop over which they have little control. The choice land has also been reserved for cash crop farming while women have had to make do with what is left, often exhausting it to a point where it is no longer adequate for family needs. Large numbers of impoverished families in the rural areas have emerged as the cost of food skyrockets and the need to supplement subsistence farming increases. The gains of the few women who have been able to go into cash crop farming have been limited by its small scale and the inability to access credit and extension services for these activities. Benefits from cash crops therefore should be weighed against time and labour taken away from production of food for domestic consumption and other women's tasks related to the management of the home.

26. It should be noted that for most African women, they go to work outside the home out of the necessity to augment the family income. SAPS policies, however, have changed qualitative aspects of female employment as they focus on economic efficiency. Working conditions and female employment as determined by market forces do not take into consideration the dual role of women with respect to reproduction and the maintenance of human resources. Such imbalance between productive and reproductive roles often lead to young girls being drawn to those activities at the expense of school attendance, thereby perpetuating the vicious cycle of inequality.

2. Conflict and internal strife: some gender issues

27. One of the predominant phenomena in Africa since the 1970s and especially the 1980s and 1990s is conflict and internal strife. While the rest of the world responded to global recession and the economics of market forces by organizing itself into large trading blocs that go beyond national boundaries, the nations of Africa seem to be moving towards near-disintegration as conflictual factions organized around clans, tribes, religion and other such alliances take over. The economy of affection which is characterized by networks of support, communications and interactions among structurally defined groups, has been the mainstay of the African family and community especially in the face of growing poverty and deteriorating economic conditions in the recent past. One of the major contributing factors is the syndrome of the economy of affection which has emerged as a two faced phenomenon. On the one hand, it has provided the social and economic insurance that is unaffordable for the average citizen in Africa in the wake of SAPs and other restructuring programmes. Unfortunately, it has also nurtured the prevailing ethnicism which seems to be the only basis for sustainable trust and confidence around which cooperation can be built. Thus it has encouraged double standards of loyalty and allegiance which have threatened the

solidarity and unity of the state and the viability of national economies. In its extreme form, it has exacerbated situations where excessive conflict and internal strife have prevailed in many nations.

28. The prevalence of factionalism and ethnic alliances at the expense of national unity has fed into the justification for increased military spending that is well known in African countries. A glance at figures in Table 2 government expenditure on the military as a percentage of health and education budget confirms the high competition for scarce resources. Between 1990 and 1991, at least 12 countries spent more than 50 per cent of the combined health and education budget on defense. Angola, Somalia and Ethiopia spent 208 per cent, 200 per cent and 190 per cent respectively of the health/education budget during the same period. Besides, under SAPs, many countries cut their social services more stringently than their defence budgets. Table 3 on Profile of Human Deprivation shows the number of people in 1992 who did not have access to health services, safe water and sanitation, all of which are basic to minimum human welfare. Out of the 48 African countries studied, in 52 per cent of the countries, at least a third of the population did not have access to health services. In 85 per cent of the countries, more than 1/3 of the population had no safe water and in 75 per cent of the countries, more than 50 per cent of the population had no access to sanitation. The figures in the two tables represent an immense amount of human suffering, from poverty and disease, tanks, rockets, and guns all of which have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths, mutilations, huge refugee population and violation of human of rights.

**Table 2: MILITARY EXPENDITURE & RESOURCE USE IMBALANCES
(AS % OF COMBINED EDUCATION AND HEALTH EXPENDITURE)**

Country	1960	1990-1991
Algeria	31	11
Angola	--	208
Benin	28	--
Botswana	--	22
Burkina Faso	29	30
Burundi	--	42
Cameroon	63	48
Central African Republic	--	33
Chad	--	74
Congo	7	37
Cote d'Ivoire	8	14
Egypt	117	52
Ethiopia	107	190
The Gambia	42	63
Ghana	22	12
Guinea	52	37
Kenya	8	24
Lesotho	--	48
Labour	73	47
Libya	29	71
Madagascar	8	24
Malawi	--	24
Mali	57	53

Source: Human Development Index, 1994, pp. 170-171.

Table 2: Military Expenditure & Resource Use Imbalances
(as % of Combined Education and Health Expenditure)
(Cont.)

Country	1960	1990-1991
Mauritania	--	40
Morocco	49	72
Mozambique	--	121
Namibia	--	23
Niger	43	11
Nigeria	11	33
Rwanda	--	25
Senegal	13	33
Sierra Leone	--	23
Somalia	--	200
South Africa	26	41
Sudan	52	44
Swaziland	--	11
Tanzania	4	77
Togo	--	39
Tunisia	45	31
Zaire	--	71
Zambia	42	63
Zimbabwe	--	66

Source: Human Development Index, 1994, pp. 170-171.

Table: 3

PROFILE OF HUMAN DEPRIVATION

COUNTRY	ESTIMATED POPULATION 1992	POPULATION WITHOUT ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICE 1992	POPL. WITHOUT ACCESS TO SAFE WATER 1992	POPL. WITHOUT ACCESS TO SANITARIES 1992
Libya	4.9	-	0.3	0.2
Tunisia	8.4	0.8	0.1	0.3
Botswana	1.3	0.1	0.5	0.8
Algeria	26.4	2.6	7.9	10.5
Egypt	54.9	0.3	6.3	27.0
Morocco	26.3	9.8	7.0	11.3
Gabon	1.2	0.1	0.4	-
Swaziland	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.5
Lesotho	1.8	0.4	1.0	1.4
Zimbabwe	10.6	1.8	6.8	6.1
Cape Verde	0.4	-	0.1	0.3
Congo	2.4	-	1.9	-
Cameroon	12.2	7.2	5.6	26
Kenya	25.3	5.8	12.7	14.5
Namibia	1.5	0.5	0.7	1.3
Madagascar	12.9	4.5	10.3	12.2
Ghana	16.0	6.4	7.4	9.2
Côte d'Ivoire	12.9	4.5	3.9	8.4
Zambia	8.6	2.2	4.4	5.0
Nigeria	115.9	32.5	58.0	98.5
Zaire	40.0	24.0	26.7	30.2
Comoros	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1
Senegal	7.8	4.7	4.1	3.6
Labour	2.8	1.7	1.3	2.3
Togo	3.8	1.5	1.6	3.0

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1995 , New York

Table: 3

PROFILE OF HUMAN DEPRIVATION**(Cont.)**

COUNTRY	ESTIMATED POPULATION 1992	POPULATION WITHOUT ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICE 1992	POPL. WITHOUT ACCESS TO SAFE WATER 1992	POPL. WITHOUT ACCESS TO SANITARIES 1992
Tanzania	27.9	5.7	13.6	9.5
Equatorial Guinea	0.4	-	0.3	0.2
Burundi	5.8	1.2	2.6	3.0
Rwanda	7.5	1.5	2.6	3.2
Uganda	18.7	5.6	15.9	12.8
Angola	9.9	7.0	6.6	8.2
Benin	4.9	3.5	2.3	2.9
Malawi	10.3	2.1	4.8	-
Mauritania	2.1	1.3	0.6	1.7
Mozambique	15.1	9.2	11.4	11.4
Central African Rep.	3.2	2.2	2.8	2.5
Ethiopia	53.1	28.7	38.4	44.8
Djibuti	0.5	(.)	0.1	0.2
Guinea Bissau	1.0	0.2	0.6	0.8
Somalia	9.3	6.8	3.5	7.7
The Gambia	0.9	0.1	0.2	0.5
Mali	9.8	6.4	5.8	7.6
Chad	5.9	4.1	-	-
Niger	8.3	5.8	3.7	7.5
Sierra Leone	4.4	2.8	2.2	1.6
Burkina Faso	9.5	3.8	2.8	8.4
Guinea	6.1	3.7	2.2	4.6

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1995 , New York

- Based on selected information on UNHCR-assisted refugee populations by country of asylum. The data are not necessarily representative of the total refugee population, as the basis and quality vary greatly

29. The vast majority of the world's refugees are women and children. In 1985, 90 per cent of Ethiopian refugees in Somalia were women and children under 15⁵. Although the figures on Table 4 do not necessarily represent the total picture of the refugee situation, they give a realistic view of what can be found elsewhere: a ratio of female to male refugees that ranges from 71 per cent to 121 per cent in 17 countries in a given year. Women refugees face a multitude of problems made more acute by their gender. They include sexual vulnerability; harassment; discrimination and rape. They have to take on full responsibility for trying to build new lives for their families and sometimes contend with health problems without the support of traditional kin networks. Almost all face acute anxiety, bereavement, and loss while most have to learn to change their traditional behavior and take on new gender roles that are expected of them if they are to survive.

Table 4:

DISPLACEMENT OF WOMEN IN AFRICA

Country	Female Refugees ^d (thousands) 1993	Female Refugees as per cent of Male Refugees ^d 1993
Congo	2.0	87
Cameroon	24.1	121
Ghana	71.4	92
Kenya	140.4	114
Zambia	14.3	99
Nigeria	1.3	38
Zaire	124.2	98
Sudan	179.4	104
Cote d'Ivoire	128.7	105
Central African Republic	16.5	92
Senegal	30.2	110
Djibouti	18.0	112
Benin	61.9	114
Labour	1.1	92
Angola	5.7	112
Burundi	0.9	100
Guinea	287.3	99
Ethiopia	18.3	71

Source: Human Development Report 1995, New York: United Nations Development Program, 1995, pp.64-65.

⁵ Moose, J.C., op. cit. p. 148

30. Internal migration also causes economic disruption. As men flee the "rebels" or join one group or the other, women are left to assume the roles of both men and women. Even as men flee into rebel the urban areas, traditional male skills of farming may become redundant as the family survives on women efforts and community support where possible. As local and national structures are disrupted by armed conflict, women have to cope with maintaining their families with diminishing resources and subsequent tension and instability. As the infrastructure is destroyed and mobility restricted in times of conflict, collection of wood, water and food becomes hazardous. Access to the fields and income generating activities are also severely curtailed.

31. In these circumstances, women have to continuously assess new situations as they evolve and devise innovative tactics for the economic survival of their children and families. Often, unfortunately, some of the options adopted are at the expense of their dignity, moral orientation and health as they resort to such choices as prostitution in exchange for daily bread. It is evident that issues such as links between war and women's reproductive health should be closely studied and appropriate programs established accordingly, e.g. counselling services and medical referral could be crucial for victims of violence etc. They are intricately intertwined with women's participation in the economic sector.

B. PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT IN THE FORMAL SECTOR

1. General Overview

32. Over the years, regional policy frameworks have recognized the imperative of recognizing the importance of women's economic role in development and in food production in particular, both in the development plans and in resource allocation. To cite a few examples, this was expressed in the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980; the Third African Regional Conference on Women in Arusha in 1984; in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), 1986-1990 and the African Platform for Action: African Common Position for the Advancement of Women. Such declarations were based on the awareness of the precariousness of women in the labour market. The colonial labour system, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa, kept women from accompanying their husbands who migrated in search of paid labour especially in the mines and cash crop farms; and in the urban areas where they were used only on an experimental basis in factories or as casual workers in the agricultural sector. On the whole, however, job specialization along sex lines started as early as in 1947⁶ when women were excluded from non-agricultural jobs. Thus, in 1948, in the United Republic of Tanzania, only 3.3 per cent of the women labour force were in formal employment as opposed to 19 per cent of the men. In 1952, 86 per cent of the economically active women were in agriculture.

33. After independence, the pattern did not change - women continued to work in the agricultural sector while men stayed in the non-agricultural sector. Women are not protected with social security etc as they do farm work or other informal economic activities which are not regulated by labour legislation and are characterized by poor working conditions, inefficient tools and back-breaking chores. The few women in the formal sector are in the lower echelons, have low skills and low pay, poor promotion prospects and high job insecurity.

34. Progress has been made in the last 2 decades,⁷ however, to improve some of the aspects that hinder women from participating in the labour market. To this effect formal girls education has been successfully promoted in most countries. The rate of increase of female education has been higher than for the male population albeit with variation in the subregions: between 1982 - 1986 the rate of increase was 3 per cent females and 2.4 per cent males in Sub-Saharan Africa; 2.4 per cent males and 3.05 per cent females in West Africa, 3.8 per cent females and 3.34 per cent males in Southern and Eastern Africa. Table 5 illustrates the steady growth of female enrolment over a 15 year period, compared to that of the male at the primary and secondary levels. In addition, there has been increased awareness of gender inequities by African women as demonstrated by the growth of policy structures for the advancement of women. In 1975, few African countries had national machineries to advise on policy formulation with regard to women's issues. By 1987, more than 40 countries had such machineries. Furthermore by 1985, 32 countries offered family health protection in form of 12-14 weeks maternity leave.

⁶ ILO/JASPA, *African Employment Report 1990*, Addis Ababa

⁷ ILO/JASPA, *op. cit.* p. 61

Table 5: RATIO OF FEMALE TO MALE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT (X100)

Country	First Level		Second Level		Third Level	
	1970	1985/87	1970	1985/87	1970	1985/87
Algeria	60	79	39	71	--	46
Benin	45	50	42	41 ^b	--	20 ^b
Botswana	113	108	83	109	--	71 ^b
Burkina Faso	57	59	39	51	--	29 ^b
Burundi	49	75	25	56	--	32
Central African Republic	49	62	23	41	--	12
Chad	34	38	8	18 ^b	--	9
Congo	78	94	43	77	--	15 ^b
Egypt	61	76	47	65	--	50 ^a
Gabon	91	98 ^b	40	71 ^b	--	40
Ghana	75	78 ^b	38	60 ^b	--	21 ^b
Guinea	46	44	26	34	--	16
Kenya	71	93	42	68 ^b	--	36
Lesotho	150	125	118	148 ^b	--	172
Labour	49	61 ^b	30	30 ^b	--	38 ⁱ
Libya	59	90 ^b	22	71 ^b	--	34 ^b
Malawi	59	77	37	46	--	40
Mali	55	59	28	40 ^b	--	15 ^b
Morocco	51	62	39	65	--	50

^b 1980/84.

^a Excluding Al Azhar University.

ⁱ 1979.

Source: The World's Women: 1970:1990, pp.50-51.

Table 5: Ratio of Female to Male School Enrollment (x100)
(Cont.)

Country	First Level		Second Level		Third Level	
	1970	1985/87	1970	1985/87	1970	1985/87
Rwanda	79	97	49	52	--	16
Senegal	63	68	40	49	--	26
Somalia	33	52	26	53	--	25
Sudan	61	68	39	73	--	68
Swaziland	94	98	77	97	--	62 ^b
Tanzania	65	100	40	62	--	16
Togo	45	62	29	31	--	18
Tunisia	64	80	38	70	--	58
Zambia	80	89	48	54 ^b	--	21

^b 1980/84.

^g Excluding Al Azhar University.

^l 1979.

Source: The World's Women: 1970:1990, pp.50-51.

35. Still women in the formal sector represent only a small percentage of those who are economically active. Economic activities at the household and community levels are overlooked, thus failing to capture the nature and size of women's contribution. Indeed the types of economic activities that women resort to in support of their families and to mitigate the effects of SAPs and other restructuring programmes have been overlooked.

(a) Conceptual and data problems

36. The conventional definition of employment includes 4 categories, namely: self employed; employer; unpaid family worker and wage workers. Other range of economic activities engaged in by women are however not included, for example, subsistence (non-market) production, unpaid domestic maintenance at home and in family farms etc. Official definition of employment is thus inadequate as an indicator of the participation of women in the labour market. In this context data are needed on women's control of their economic power, their labour time, the means of production, their output and the proceeds of their output. Women's involvement in the labour market through the household and through enterprise-related activities should also be qualified. Such an undertaking would be an attempt to correct the overall poor statistical base in the region; the undercoverage of informal sector activities; the sampling procedures of surveys which discriminate against female oriented activities, the methodologies that underestimate women's activity rates in the modern and rural sectors since most women are engaged as casual or temporary workers; and the operational problems that mostly have males as the interviewers and interviewees, presumably as heads of households.

37. Furthermore women's employment in Africa remains inadequately quantified. The main sources of such data are the population census every ten years which provide crude statistics on the labour force; agricultural surveys undertaken every five years, which focus on the paid agricultural labour force, output production etc., annual human resource surveys conducted in known enterprises; ad-hoc time-use charts; informal sector surveys; and household and labour force surveys.

38. The limitation of population and agricultural surveys in providing data on women employment is that the long inter-censal period does not allow for time series data analysis on such important female labor aggregates as size, activity rates, occupational and sectorial distribution of employment etc. Besides those census do not normally target the informal and agricultural sectors, where the bulk of the economically active women predominate. The questionnaires used in the census avoid women-specific issues thus making it impossible to outline patterns of female employment. Any data on women that may be collected on an ad-hoc basis in sectoral ministries is for their internal consumption and is therefore not coordinated into a common data base. Users of such data are therefore forced to rely on data collected by international organizations such as the ILO Year Books of Labour Statistics which usually have limited data on Africa both by country and gender disaggregation.

41. ECA figures on Table 6 on the distribution and ratio of economically active population by sex confirm this trend between 1970 and 1990 in the five subregions of Africa. There was a drop of economically active women in agriculture in all the subregions even though the sector continued to absorb the highest number of women. It should be noted, however, that the number of women absorbed in industries and services increased especially in services where the ratio of women to men practically doubled. In fact the ratio of women to men increased in all the sectors despite the drop in absolute numbers in the agricultural sector. While this may seem inconsistent with the general drop of the rate of women participation in sub-Sahara Africa, the cases of Tunisia, Cape Verde, Mauritius, and Namibia that employed atypically large number of women in the industrial and service sectors could explain the situation. The overall rates of women in the labour force, however remained lower than they were in the 1970s.

(c) Female labour force by sector

42. In 1985, the estimated breakdown of female labour force by ILO/JASPA⁹ indicated that 75% were in agriculture, 18% in the informal non-farm sector, and 6% in the modern sector. The concentration of women in agriculture therefore had dropped from 84% in 1970 to 76% in 1980. In the modern sector, on the other hand, the proportion of women rose from 2% in 1970 to 6% in 1985, a 400% increase. Involvement in the informal sector also grew by 250% in the 1970s and 1980s.

43. Between 1970 and 1985, an average of 1.2 million women per annum were engaged in the various economic activities, 50% of whom would go into agriculture, 35% in the informal sector and 15% in the modern sector. Paid job opportunities for women thus increased from 11.5% in the 1970s to 19% in the early 1980s. The absorbing capacity of the informal sector declined during the same period from 40% to nearly 32%. Labour mobility was mostly evident in the urban areas where women move from the informal into the formal sector and vice versa.

2 Women in the modern sector

44. Between the period 1970 - 1985¹⁰ the rate of female employment grew from less than one million to 4 million, corresponding to an annual growth rate of 10%. The total female labour force thus grew from 1.9% in 1970 to 5.9% in 1985. As a share of the total modern sector employment, it grew from 12% in 1970 to 19% in 1985. In 1985 women in the formal sector represented 2.5% of the total labour force employment as opposed to 11% for men.

45. The size of women in the labour market fluctuate from country to country, with Botswana having the fastest growth rate: from 6% in 1970 to 25% in 1985; Malawi from 1.5% to 6% in the same period; in Tanzania from 0.6% to 2%; Swaziland from 9% to 20%; Labour from 3.6% to 9%. In Ethiopia, it declined from 0.9% to 0.8% in the same period. In 1985 the highest rate was in Mauritius at 59%.

⁹ ILO/JASPA 1990, op. cit. p.67

¹⁰ ILO/JASPA 1990 op.cit. p.71

(b) Women in the labour market

39. The female labour force in sub-Saharan Africa was estimated to be about 73 million representing 38% of the total labour force in 1990⁸. In the 1970s it was estimated at 40%; a decline was registered in the 1980s, reflecting the economic crisis and the restructuring policies that were adopted to rectify the situation. The decline occurred in spite of the fact that the women population increased from 47% in 1976 to 50% in 1990. During this period, the female economically active population not only dropped from 16% to 14% but also the female activity rates in the overall economic activity dropped from 27% to 23%. Table 6 demonstrates this trend by country between 1980 and 1990.

Table 6: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION AND RATIO (WOMEN TO MEN) OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION BY SECTOR AND BY SEX

Subregion		Agriculture			Industries			Services		
		1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990
North Africa	F	54.0	44.8	37.6	14.0	20.5	23.7	32.0	34.8	38.8
	M	56.7	47.9	39.8	16.0	20.7	24.2	27.3	31.3	36.1
	Ratio (F/M%)	95.2	93.5	94.5	87.5	99.0	97.9	117.2	111.2	107.5
West Africa	F	77.1	73.8	69.9	5.4	6.0	7.2	17.5	20.1	23.0
	M	74.3	69.8	65.4	10.9	12.5	14.2	14.8	17.6	20.4
	Ratio (F/M%)	103.8	105.7	106.9	49.5	48.0	50.7	118.2	114.2	112.7
Central Africa	F	95.5	91.2	89.1	1.0	1.7	2.1	3.5	7.1	9.0
	M	74.5	66.1	59.8	11.3	13.8	16.9	14.2	19.4	23.4
	Ratio (F/M%)	128.2	138.0	150.0	12.3	12.3	12.4	24.6	36.6	38.5
East and Southern Africa	F	85.2	80.3	76.0	3.1	4.6	6.1	11.7	15.0	17.9
	M	71.8	66.6	61.6	12.7	14.9	16.4	15.2	18.6	22.1
	Ratio (F/M%)	118.7	120.6	123.4	24.4	30.9	37.2	77.0	80.6	81.0
Total Africa	F	82.3	77.2	72.4	4.1	5.7	7.2	13.6	21.1	20.0
	M	69.6	63.5	57.8	12.9	15.1	17.6	17.4	21.2	24.5
	Ratio (F/M%)	118.2	121.6	125.3	31.8	37.7	40.9	40.9	80.7	81.6

Source: ECA Division of Statistics

40. The situation has been explained mostly by the decline of the subsistence sector where most active women were concentrated, and the growth of the industrial sector. According to ILO/JASPA African Employment Report 1990, between 1970 and 1985, the modern sector of the African economies created only 3 million jobs for women while the agricultural female labour force declined by as much as 5.5 million people. During the same period, more women than men enrolled in schools, thus delaying entry into the labour market. Equally important is the high demographic growth rates which kept women occupied in the non-market services related to child care and domestic services.

⁸ ILO/JASPA 1990 op. cit. p.65

46. The public sector absorbs more women than the private and parastatal sectors. In 1988, women in the private and parastatal sectors represented 14% of the employees in Burundi while they represented 40% of the employees in the civil service; in Togo, it was 5% and 21%; and in Benin 6% and 21% respectively during the same period. With regard to the various sectors in wage employment, women tend to be least represented in construction where they accounted for 3% of the labour force in 1987 regionally; in electricity and water at 6%; in transport and communication at 8%; and in mining and quarry at 9%. In agriculture on the other hand, they represented 17% of the paid labour force, 21% in manufacturing, 26% in finance, insurance, real estate and business services while community, social and personal services led with 27%.

47. Generally, the bulk of the women are found in the lower category of the labour force such as agricultural labourers, production related workers etc. Their numbers among managers and administrators are insignificant. Thus, the share of unskilled workers between 1978 and 1987 was as high as 85% of the female labour in the Comoros while in Rwanda, Sao Tome, Ghana, Togo and Burundi, women were less than 1% in the administrative and management levels. In Uganda and Kenya where they were highest in the latter category, they represented 3.5% and 3.1% respectively. During the same period, women were also heavily outnumbered in the paid labour force except for unusual cases as in Botswana where they constituted 64%, 60% and 50% in services, profession and clerical categories, respectively. In Sao Tome they represented 60% and 53% of services, and professional and technical workers while in Ghana, they were 52% of the service workers force.

48. Table 7 provides a regional overview of the occupational groups women predominate. The average proportion of women to men in the administrative and managerial category was 18% in 1990 in the 23 countries that had available data. In contrast, the proportion of women to men in the professional and mechanical category was 61.9% in the 24 countries with data in the same year; 72.3% in the services category for 21 countries; and 101.1% in the clerical and sales category in the 20 countries with available data. This trend has changed little in the past 25 years except in a few isolated cases as the Table illustrates. Men move faster than women from the low skilled into the skilled category and it seems that even new employment opportunities that have opened up in the last decade for women are primarily in the low skilled category. This builds on the already existing occupational inequity. The predominance of women in low skilled jobs sometimes in spite of qualifications for higher level jobs, leads to lower earnings in relation to men as discussed above. In Zambia¹¹, for example, women with relatively high levels of education operated as bank tellers and insurance clerks while their male counterparts were entering executive, administrative and managerial positions. Women are therefore at times put in a position where they compete with men with lower qualifications, a situation that is unknown to males. In times of crisis, women tend to be disadvantaged by the wage policies adopted by governments.

¹¹ ILO/JASP 1990 op. cit. p. 83

WOMEN AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Table 7:

Country	Economic Activity Rate (age 15 +)		Administration and Municipal		Professional and Technical		Craft and Sales		Services	
	Female (%) 1994	Female as (%) of M 1994	Female share (increase/decrease) 1978-1998	Female (%) as (%) male 1998	Female share (increase/decrease) 1978-1998	Female as (%) of Male 1998	Female share (increase/decrease) 1978-1998	Female as (%) of Male 1998	Female share (increase/decrease) 1978-1998	Female as % of Male 1998
Mauritius	29	35	125	17	13	71	88	44	-20	70
Seychelles	57	72	69	40	0	139	45	143	-17	141
Igbo	9	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Botswana	41	49	-	56	-	159	-	151	-	238
Tunisia	26	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Algeria	8	11	-1	6	32	38	100	13	-42	23
South Africa	41	54	311	21	1	88	-	-	-2	196
Egypt	9	12	134	12	18	39	251	40	-40	9
Namibia	25	30	-	26	-	69	-	-	-	-
Gabon	43	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Morocco	21	26	-	-	-	67	-	52	-	42
Zimbabwe	43	49	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-
Congo	50	61	-	-	-	94	-	70	-	134
Cape Verde	33	36	-	30	-	119	-	116	-	82
Senegal	51	60	-	17	-	32	-	59	-	46
Guatemala	39	46	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ghana	51	63	-	-	-	130	-	144	-	209

Table 7 (cont.)

Country	Economic Activity Rate (age 15 +)		Administration and Managerial		Professional and Technical		Clerical and Sales		Services	
	Female (%) 1994	Female as (%) of M 1994	Female share (Increase/ Decrease 1970-1990)	Female (%) as (%) male 1990	Female share (Increase/ decrease) 1970-1990	Female as (%) of Male 1990	Female share (Increase/ decrease) 1970-1990	Female as (%) of Male 1990	Female share (Increase/ decrease) 1970-1990	Female as % of Male 1990
Kenya	55	62	-	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lesotho	63	69	-	-	52	47	230	136	115	29
Madagascar	53	60	-42	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zambia	35	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comoros	57	63	-	-	-	35	-	140	-	13
Togo	45	52	-	6	-	35	-	140	-	1
Nigeria	45	51	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arab States	18	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Equatorial Guinea	52	63	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zaire	44	52	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sudan	26	30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cote d'Ivoire	47	54	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	75	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central African Rep.	65	74	-	10	-	23	-	146	-	13
Mauritania	25	29	-	8	-	26	-	33	-	81
Senegal	51	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 7 (Cont.)

Country	Economic Activity Rate (age 15 +)		Administration and Managerial		Project and Technic		Clerical and Sales		Services	
	Female (%) 1994	Female as (%) of M 1994	Female share (Increase/Decrease 1970-1990)	Female (%) as (%) male 1990	Female share (Increase/decrease) 1970-1990	Female as (%) of Male 1990	Female share (Increase/decrease) 1970-1990	Female as (%) of Male 1990	Female share (Increase/ decrease) 1970-1990	Female as % of Male 1990
Djibouti	57	64	-	2	-	25	-	-	-	-
Benin	75	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rwanda	77	83	-	9	-	47	-	48	-	35
Malawi	55	62	-	5	-	53	-	58	-	39
Uganda	59	65	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Laos	35	41	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Gambia	56	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chad	22	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea Bissau	55	61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Angola	50	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burundi	76	82	-	16	-	44	-	-	-	-
Somalia	51	59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mozambique	76	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea	55	61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burkina Faso	75	81	-	16	-	35	-	168	-	28
Ethiopia	50	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mali	15	17	-	25	-	23	-	130	-	71
Sierra Leone	37	45	-	9	-	47	-	191	-	18
Niger	78	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-Saharan Africa	52	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1995

(a) Focus on the African Subregion

49. Participation of women in the economic sector is mostly a function of the prevalent socio-economic and cultural environments. The differences in women's participation tends to support the theory that there is a U-shaped relationship between female economic activity rates and economic development. In traditional economies, high rates of women's economic activity are consequences of their important role in subsistence agriculture and micro-scale production activities mainly linked to food processing. As the modern sector grows, female labour force is displaced as demand for male labour increases. The situation changes once again at a later stage of industrialization when demand for female labour once again rises. Industrial development may also help reduce the influence of sociocultural barriers to female employment. The manufacturing sector for example, employs a large number of women in Africa as elsewhere in the world. Countries with a high level of women participation in the economic sector also have a high level of urbanization, relatively low fertility rates and the highest female school enrolment rates both in primary and secondary levels.

50. Thus, there is a positive association between the level of economic and industrial development, primarily based on export promotion. Once the economy expands, its labour demand expands hence the demand for female labour. But these conditions have only happened in Mauritius and Tunisia. The rest of Africa tends to be characterized by trends of de-industrialization observed since the 1980s and the subsequent worsening of the socio economic conditions of women and their possibilities for advancement. This trend varies very little even as we focus on the different subregions. In so doing, the section draws heavily from the recent study by UNIDO on women in manufacturing entitled Participation of women in manufacturing patterns: determinants and future trends 1995. The UNDP concept of the gender equity is also utilized in the qualitative analysis of the gap between women's and men's participation in the economic sector. The focus on the subregions as clustered by UNIDO is therefore based on the commonalities among countries with regard to women's economic participation in the formal sector, their social status in relation to that of the men as manifested by their access to education, their health status in terms of fertility rates and life expectancy, and their participation in decision-making. Consequently, in some cases, countries within the traditional ECA subregions are clustered with others outside the geographical area.

(i) West African subregion: strive for economic and gender-equity evolution

51. Since the economic crisis of the 1980s, the West African subregion is characterized by decline in the share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), stagnation or decline of the small manufacturing sector, and a significant increase in the service sector. Political instability, conflict and internal strife have also contributed to this situation. Nigeria is a dramatic example whose per capital income dropped from \$US 1,030 in 1980 to \$US 250 by 1989, thus plummeting from a middle income to a low income country. Similarly, Liberia's economy declined and increased its indebtedness, moving from middle to low income during the same period. The growth rates predicted by SAPs never materialized, rather, further decline was registered by some countries in West Africa. SAPs were also expected to make domestic industries more competitive and efficient in the production of new exports. However,

devaluation resulted in decline in imported inputs for local industries while liberalization exposed local industries to competition with imported goods. This led to the process of de-industrialization.

52. With regard to the public sector, it was the biggest employer in the subregion prior to the economic crisis of the 1980s. But SAPs demanded its reduction which had negative impact on employment and income. Retrenchment of public employees in Ghana led to the loss of 60,000 civil service jobs. Between 1970 and 1986 in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea and Togo, official minimum wage fell by 45% while in Nigeria, it fell by 60% between 1970 and 1986.

53. Women found opportunities for formal employment in the service sectors. But they also suffered heavy losses with retrenchment. The manufacturing sector offers very few opportunities for female employment due to a combination of its small size, women's low education and training opportunities as well as the gender ideology that sees it as unsuitable work for women. The relatively high rate of participation in the economic sector is therefore in agriculture at 33.48%, as table 8 demonstrates. The rest, undoubtedly, is in the informal sector which as in agriculture has little correlation between efforts put and fruits reaped.

54. The West African subregion is characterized by high fertility and maternal mortality rates. Life expectancy is also low although it is slightly higher for women than for men. The lowest life expectancy for women is in Sierra Leone at 43 years, Guinea 44 years, The Gambia 45 years and highest in Ghana at 56.8 years followed by Nigeria at 53.3 years. The median age of the population is under 17, thus exhibiting a high dependency ratio, with implications of women's employment pattern. The percentage of female headed households is rather low compared to other subregions, the highest being in Ghana at 35% followed by Nigeria at 29%. The political instability in Liberia and Sierra Leone would probably bring these figures to quite a high level.

55. Concerning investment in education, health and other social services, between 1960 - 1980, the subregion spent a relatively high percentage of its GDP towards the sectors. With the introduction of SAPs, however, there were changes. Expenditure in this area almost doubled in Burkina Faso between 1980 and 1987 while moderate expansion was noted in the Niger and stagnation in Ghana, Benin and Mali. In Nigeria, The Gambia and Sierra Leone, the rates fell. In this context despite a higher growth in girls' school enrolment than boys, the gap is still large in favour of boys. At the secondary level, school enrolment declined in most of the countries except in Ghana where it levelled off. The difference in the enrolment of primary and secondary levels between boys and girls is large in favour of girls, but the drop since the introduction of SAPs is significant in Togo, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. Enrolment of girls at the tertiary level throughout the subregion leaves a lot to be desired.

56. Turning to the issue of the social status of women in the subregion, Nigeria and Mali are the only countries that have ratified Convention of Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In 1992, 8% of the parliamentary seats were occupied by women in Ghana and the The Gambia; 6% in Labour, Togo, Benin; and Burkina Faso and 2% in Nigeria¹². Few women ministers occupy cabinet posts despite the democratization process going on in Benin, the Niger and Mali. In Labour, however, the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Transitional Government is a woman as well as the Minister of Trade and Industry in Ghana. Besides, most countries have ratified the International Conventions on Equal Remuneration and on Discrimination of Employment and Occupation even though the implementation rate is still very low.

57. Table 8 therefore illustrates the general situation of the majority of African women. In countries that have suffered serious economic declines in the 1980s, they have to fight even harder for their survival and the survival of their families despite the fact that they are least equipped to do so. With a secondary school enrolment rate of 11.15%, an average fertility rate of 6.68 children per woman and a high dependency ratio given the median age of the population of under 17 years, it is no wonder that the subregion is characterized by high maternal mortality rates.

¹²

Table 8: **THE WEST AFRICAN MELANGE: STRIVE FOR ECONOMIC AND GENDER-EQUITY EVOLUTION**

INDICATOR	Ghana	Nigeria	Togo	Cent. African Republic	Sierra Leone	The Gambia	Niger	Benin	Burkina Faso	Guinea	Labour	Comoros	Mali	Mean
Women's economic activity rate	28.50	26.16	29.88	43.55	23.38	37.47	47.97	44.32	49.11	36.36	21.28%	36.53	10.17%	33.48
Women's participation rate in the agriculture sector	46.00	65.70	63.70	68.70	76.40	90.40	91.60	63.90	83.40	79.90	78.60%	81.40	74.80	74.19
Women's participation rate in the tertiary sector	35.70	26.60	28.10	26.50	18.70	6.80	8.20	31.40	12.40	11.10	19.30%	17.00	21.20	20.23
Participation rate of women in (industry) manufacturing	18.40	7.70	8.20	4.80	4.90	2.80	0.20	4.70	4.20	8.90	2.10	8.90	2.10	5.58
Share of the agricultural sector in GDP	45.31	38.13	34.99	42.71	32.18	28.55	41.77	39.06	40.57	23.20	42.60	43.34	49.75	38.63
Share of the tertiary sector in GDP	38.79	33.11	41.25	44.13	51.35	57.64	40.96	45.82	29.69	44.12	43.37	43.67	33.02	42.07
Share of government expenditure in GDP	4.00	8.00	20.00	29.00	17.00	28.00	28.00	21.00	13.00	26.00	21.00	17.00	27.00	19.92
Debt service ratio	26.90	29.05	7.43	9.54	7.61	12.68	14.62	5.09	9.32	12.30	3.47	6.64	9.81	11.88
Share of manufactured goods in total exports	15.80	2.09	5.40	69.91	53.34	60.97	71.53	3.94	2.72	38.74	82.17	32.98	25.44	35.77
Urbanization	33.80	36.80	27.20	48.30	33.70	24.40	20.90	39.00	9.60	27.00	48.10	28.90	19.90	30.58
Total fertility (births per woman)	6.30	6.60	6.60	6.20	6.50	6.20	7.10	7.10	6.50	7.00	6.70	7.00	7.10	6.68
Female headed households	35.00	29.00	12.00	25.00	20.00	20.00	10.00	12.00	5.00	10.00	18.00	5.00	15.00	16.62
Female primary enrolment rate	67.00	63.00	80.00	48.00	39.00	58.00	21.00	44.00	28.00	21.00	24.00	81.90	17.00	45.53
Female secondary enrolment ratio	29.00	17.00	12.00	7.00	12.00	12.00	4.00	7.00	5.00	5.00	7.00	27.00	1.00	11.15
Ratification of ILO convention 100	100	100	100	100	100	0	0	0	100	100	100	0	100	69.23
Ratification of ILO convention 111	100	100	100	100	100	0	100	100	100	100	0	100	100	84.62
Ratification of CEDAW	100	0	100	100	100	0	100	100	100	100	100	0	100	76.92
GDP indicator (+ is in favour of men; - is in favour of women)														
Gender gap in economic activity rate	0.20	0.30	0.26	0.08	0.34	0.19	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.20	0.42	0.19	0.67	0.23
Gender gap in agricultural activities	0.07	0.02	0.07	-0.07	-0.15	-0.09	-0.04	-0.04	0.01	-0.07	-0.08	-0.04	0.05	-0.03
Gender gap in tertiary activities	-0.19	-0.21	-0.34	0.06	0.02	0.33	0.15	0.05	0.15	0.14	0.02	-0.09	-0.20	-0.04
Gender gap in industry (manufacturing) activities	0.11	0.30	0.24	0.34	0.67	0.61	0.92	0.47	0.20	0.27	0.73	0.74	-0.19	0.41
Gender gap in life expectancy	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.05	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	-0.02	-0.01	-0.04	-0.03
Gender gap in literacy rate	0.12	0.19	0.22	0.25	0.32	0.30	0.23	0.63	0.35	0.39	0.21	0.07	0.19	0.27
Gender gap in secondary school enrolment	0.22	0.14	0.52	0.43	0.26	0.41	0.41	0.42	0.35	0.51	0.44	0.20	0.42	0.37

Source: UNIDO, "Participation of Women in Manufacturing," 1995

(ii) The low gender-equity cluster

58. This cluster of countries consists of nations with low female economic participation in the productive sector and with low social status in terms of literacy and school enrolment rates as well as inadequate legal protection against remuneration discrimination. They are the Sudan and Mauritania in North Africa, Cameroon and Chad in Central Africa, Sao Tome, and Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa and Djibouti in Eastern Africa.

59. In the cluster, less than 25% of the women above the age of 15 are recorded as being economically active with the lowest rate in Mauritania, Chad and the Sudan. However 75% are involved in agriculture, which is, of course, a higher proportion than the men. The definition of economic activity is highly influenced by cultural values hence the low official statistics.

60. The tertiary sector, (trade, tourism, transport, administration, social and financial services) has the highest contribution to the GDP. The share in Cote d'Ivoire is 50% while in Djibouti it is almost 80%. The contribution of agriculture is less than half of what is contributed by the tertiary sector. The share of manufacturing is above 10% only in Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire. Women participation in this sector is therefore only 4%. Besides the usual problem of undercounting women's contribution as self employed and unpaid labour, gender discrimination in hiring practices and cultural prejudices about what is appropriate women's occupation in a Muslim culture must be playing a significant role in this situation. This is more so considering that there is a predominance of light consumer industries in food processing and textiles in these countries, which normally attract more women than men and yet the participation of women is relatively low.

61. These nations which are classified by the UNIDO study as having the lowest female economic participation in Africa have an average fertility rate of 6.6 births with Cote d'Ivoire leading with 7.4 births and Chad having the lowest rate of 5.8 births. Chad also has the highest maternal mortality rate of 800 per 100,000 and the lowest female life expectancy of 48.5 years while Cameroon has the highest female life expectancy of 56.8 years.

62. The primary school enrolment rate is below 50% except in Cameroon while Chad has the lowest at 35% in primary and 2% in secondary levels. The latter is correlated with the early marriage age of 16.6 years.

63. Although all countries in the cluster have ratified CEDAW, only in Cameroon and Sao Tome is women representation in parliament more than 10%. In other countries the share is less than 5%. None of the countries has signed the ILO convention on equal remuneration, but all have signed the convention on discrimination in employment except Mauritania. Nonetheless, their impact on female employment in the industrial sector and women's unemployment in general has been minimal.

64. As Table 9 demonstrates, the most distinguishing characteristic between this cluster and the West African cluster is the large gender gap, 0.39, in the rate of economic activity. Yet the countries in the cluster have signed the international instruments that promote gender equity in the economic sector. Consistent with this gap is the low representation of women at parliamentary level. Cultural and religious factors must play an important role in influencing this situation.

Table 9:

THE LOW GENDER - EQUITY CLUSTER

INDICATOR	Cameroon	Cote d'Ivoire	Mauritania	Sudan	Chad	Sao Tome and Prince	Djibouti	Means
Women's economic activity rate	26.05%	28.28%	13.30%	13.94%	14.81%	31.67%	36.91%	23.57%
Women's participation rate in the agriculture sector	71.10%	68.30%	81.20%	77.70%	82.90%	68.30%	85.00%	76.36%
Women's participation rate in the tertiary sector	23.60%	25.30%	13.20%	15.30%	15.40%	26.40%	13.40%	18.94%
Logarithm GDP/Capital	6.95	6.38	6.35	6.27	5.28	5.91	6.73	6.27
Share of the agricultural sector in GDP	24.12%	26.58%	29.73%	40.24%	44.04%	23.46%	3.31%	27.35%
Share of the tertiary sector in GDP	42.62%	52.02%	45.51%	44.89%	43.82%	55.02%	79.60%	51.93%
Share of government expenditure in GDP	15.00%	34.00%	31.00%	30.00%	14.00%	46.00%	34.00	29.14%
Debt service ratio	16.17%	32.38%	20.68%	7.05%	4.52%	35.58%	4.45%	17.26%
Share of manufactured goods in total exports	13.41%	11.36%	0.67%	3.67%	1.87%	28.10%	12.35%	10.20%
Urbanization	43.10%	41.70%	49.50%	22.80%	31.30%	50.60%	81.50%	45.79%
Total fertility (births per woman)	6.9	7.4	6.7	6.3	5.8	6.3	6.5	6.58
Female headed households	25.00%	10.00%	20.00%	24.00%	20.00%	30.00%	20.00%	21.29%
Female primary enrolment rate	93.00%	37.020%	42.00%	41.00%	35.00%	10.00%	38.00%	42.29%
Female secondary enrolment ratio	23.00%	16.00%	10.00%	20.00%	2.00%	15.00%	12.00%	14.00%
Ratification of ILO convention 100	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ratification of ILO convention 111	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	86%
Ratification of CEDAW	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	86%
GDP indicator (++is in favour of men: - is in favour of women)								
Gender gap in economic activity rate	0.32	0.31	0.56	0.57	0.57	0.22	0.19	0.39
Gender gap in agricultural activities	-0.12	-0.15	-0.15	-0.15	-0.06	-0.37	-0.10	-0.16
Gender gap in tertiary activities	0.04	0.08	0.34	0.33	0.04	0.19	0.18	0.17
Gender gap in industry (manufacturing) activities	0.55	0.36	0.40	0.27	0.69	0.70	0.76	0.53
Gender gap in life expectancy	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.02	-0.04	0.02	-0.03	-0.02
Gender gap in literacy rate	0.16	0.24	0.29	0.44	0.28	0.20	0.46	0.30
Gender gap in secondary school enrolment	0.19	0.40	0.40	0.15	0.64	0.05	0.20	0.29

Source: UNIDO, "Participation of Women in Manufacturing," 1995

(iii) The moderate gender-equity group

65. The UNIDO study clustered together another set of countries that have a moderate rate of women economic activities albeit with large gender disparities in sectoral labour distribution and a high percentage of female headed households. Eleven countries fall into this category to include Senegal, in West Africa, the Congo, Gabon and Rwanda in the Central African Republic while the rest are in Southern Africa namely Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique and Swaziland. These countries span Africa, south of the Sahara, have different colonial history and political structures, yet have similarities in some socio-economic aspects.

66. The economies are dependant on mining and oil extraction with the exception of Rwanda, Mozambique and Angola which have agriculture as the biggest contributor to the GDP. While the industrial base is significant, the manufacturing sector's contribution to the GDP is only important in Zambia and Zimbabwe, as Zambia leads the continent with 40% contribution from copper refining. Swaziland, Mozambique and Senegal follow based on the processing of agricultural products.

67. The highest percentage of economically active women, however, are involved in the agricultural sector which is less productive economically; cultural factors and post-industrial strategies, on the other hand, are responsible for the low levels of participation in the formal sector. As men migrated to work in the mines during the colonial era within Southern Africa, they were requested to leave their wives behind, thus reducing their economic and social status. The carry-over effects of this practice are still visible and felt today. In Zimbabwe, for example, women comprise only 16% of the workers in the formal sector, mostly concentrated in the service sector. Only about 7% constitute the manufacturing sector except in the informal sector where they represent about 67% of the small scale enterprises including manufacturing related activities.

68. The ongoing civil war in Angola and Mozambique has penalized development efforts. The military budget of Angola according to the UNDP Human Development Report 1994¹³ therefore was 20% of the GDP 1990-91, the highest in Africa and the combined budget for education and health. As a result of the war, both countries and Malawi have the highest rates of female headed households at 50%. Fertility rates are highest in Rwanda and Malawi at 8 and 7.6 respectively. Swaziland, Gabon, the Congo and Zambia have more than 100% enrolment of girls at the primary school level while Senegal and Malawi have 49% and 60% respectively. Angola and Mozambique as is expected have the lowest rates. Secondary school enrolment exceeds 30% only in Swaziland, Zimbabwe and the Congo. The reasons for discontinuing school after primary school include preference for boys education as a safety blanket in families, early pregnancy and marriages, limited places in schools and high demand for girls' labour force in the family.

¹³ UNDP Human Development Report 1994, op cit . p. 171

69. The exposure of some of the countries in this cluster to the socialist philosophy may have contributed to the initial improvement of women's political and legal status shortly after independence. However, this process was slowed down by economic crises and political instability. Today, traditional views are used to discriminate against women in politics, the labour market, the division of labour and income distribution within the household. Zimbabwe provides a good illustration of this retrogression. In the early 1985 after independence, women constituted up to 35% of parliamentarians. Today they are less than 12% . The Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs that had been set up to formulate policies and co-ordinate activities related to the promotion of the advancement of women has been abolished. Women's issues are being looked after by a unit in the Ministry of National Affairs and Employment.

70. Thus, although women's participation in parliament is relatively high at around 16 - 17%, (Swaziland is the exception being a Kingdom) the cluster lags behind, with regard to putting women in executive positions. Out of 32 cabinet posts in Zambia, for example, only one seat was held by a woman in 1994. Until 1994, no women had ever been in the executive position of the ruling party in Malawi. Rwanda briefly took the lead in appointing the first woman Prime Minister who, unfortunately, was brutally murdered shortly after. While most governments in the cluster have signed CEDAW and the leading ILO conventions on equal employment and remuneration, they have not allocated the necessary finances for their implementation.

71. To summarize, this cluster as well shown in Table 10 has a relatively low gender gap in secondary level enrolment at 0.19, and a moderate economic activity rate at 34.18%. However, the gender gap in the most important areas of the economy, i.e. mining and oil extraction, is glaring at 0.66. Education skills have obviously not been sufficient to overcome the old prejudice of excluding women from the mining sector. Besides, neither the international equity instruments nor the socialist influence during the struggle for independence have produced lasting transformation into a gender-sensitive society.

Table: 10

THE MODERATE GENDER-EQUITY GROUP

INDICATOR	Malawi	Senegal	Madagascar	Zimbabwe	Swaziland	Gabon	Angola	Rwanda	Congo	Mozambique	Zambia	Means
Women's economic activity	35.53%	34.53%	35.39% ⁵³	26.41%	31.90%	32.07%	31.90%	47.09%	30.72%	51.06%	19.35%	34.18%
Women's participation rate in the agriculture sector	89.60%	87.20%	87.90%	78.30%	77.00%	80.20%	85.50%	97.00%	79.80%	96.50%	80.40%	85.40%
Women's participation rate in the tertiary sector	5.90%	9.90%	9.30	17.40%	17.80%	15.70%	12.40%	1.90%	17.10%	2.60%	16.40%	11.49%
Participation rate of women in (industry) manufacturing	4.50%	2.90%	2.90%	4.20%	5.20%	4.10%	2.10%	1.10%	3.10%	0.90%	3.20%	3.11%
Logarithm GDP/Capita	5.48	6.12	5.90	6.38	6.59	8.16	5.97	5.39	7.06	6.42	5.93	6.31
Share of the agricultural sector in GDP	33.86%	20.40%	32.60%	12.30%	16.02%	8.82%	44.24%	41.98%	14.83%	39.15%	17.04%	25.57%
Share of the tertiary sector in GDP	49.24%	48.52%	52.40%	46.27%	51.51%	41.16%	37.22%	38.22%	51.59%	18.42%	33.39%	42.54%
Share of MVA in GDP	10.77%	19.22%	11.62%	28.05%	24.94%	7.36%	3.29%	12.27%	9.08%	24.65%	40.04%	17.39%
Share of government expenditure in GDP	24.00%	33.00%	10.00%	36.00%	29.00%	32.00%	57.00%	89.00%	34.00%	37.00%	22.00%	36.64%
Debt service ratio	24.19%	12.54%	18.77%	31.94%	3.04%	16.52%	7.24%	23.33%	11.93%	9.40%	29.32%	17.11%
Logarithm of MVA/capita	3.35	4.69	3.23	4.97	5.27	5.36	2.28	3.52	4.58	2.98	5.01	4.11
Share of manufactured goods in total exports	4.98%	18.87%	19.76%	29.73%	13.50%	2.88%	12.40%	2.62%	16.48%	46.83%	4.78%	15.71%
Urbanization	12.50%	39.50%	25.10%	28.90%	35.50%	47.40%	29.80%	8.30%	41.60%	29.50%	51.70%	31.80%
Total fertility (births per woman)	7.60	6.20	6.50	5.30	6.50	5.30	6.30	8.00	6.30	6.20	7.20	6.49
Female headed households	30.00%	36.00%	36.00%	35.00%	40.00%	30.00%	50.00%	25.00%	50.00%	60.00%	45.00%	39.73%
Female primary enrol. rate	60.00%	49.00%	90.00%	93.01%	106.00%	113.00%	35.00%	68.00%	153.00%	48.60%	116.00 %	84.69%
Female second. enrol. rate	3.00%	11.00%	18.00%	45.00%	47.00%	27.00%	7.00%	7.00%	50.00%	5.00%	13.00%	21.18%
Ratification of ILO convention 100	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	81.82%
Ratification of ILO convention 111	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	90.91%
Ratification of CEDAW	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	81.82%

GDP indicator (+is in favour of men; -is in favour of women)

Gender gap in economic activity rate	0.16	0.21	0.20	0.30	0.21	0.24	0.22	0.04	0.22	0.04	0.41	0.20
Gender gap in agricultural activities	-0.15	-0.09	-0.13	-0.11	-0.13	-0.14	-0.18	-0.06	-0.28	-0.17	-0.11	-0.14
Gender gap in tertiary activities	0.51	0.28	0.39	0.09	0.11	0.11	0.33	0.61	0.35	0.71	0.11	0.33
Gender gap in industry (manufacturing) activities	0.57	0.54	0.59	0.59	0.57	0.66	0.77	0.71	0.72	0.90	0.65	0.66
Gender gap in life expect.	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	-0.05	-0.04	-0.02	-0.03
Gender gap in literacy rate	0.26	0.27	0.08	0.07	0.03	0.15	0.26	0.24	0.16	0.26	0.09	0.17
Gender gap in secondary school enrolment	0.31	0.33	0.03	0.19	0.02	0.13	0.30	0.15	0.12	0.27	0.26	0.19

Source: UNIDO, "Participation of Women in Manufacturing", 1995

(iv) The mixed bag cluster

72. The UNIDO study identified yet another cluster of sub-Saharan countries with high rates of female economic participation and very low levels of social development. They span Western, Central and Eastern Africa to include Guinea Bissau, Zaire, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Ethiopia and Somalia.

73. In this cluster, the agricultural sector accounts for the dominant share of the GDP, income, employment, food supply and export earnings. Second to agriculture in contribution to the GDP is the tertiary sector. In the 1980s most of the countries experienced significant decline in the GDP due to the fall in commodity prices and the reduction in government spending which affected the tertiary sector. All countries in the cluster continue to struggle to raise the low per capital income, poor physical and social infrastructure and for some, political instability. They all fall under the UNDP Human Development Report category of low human development.

74. Political instability has resulted in over-allocation of scarce resources to military spending. In 1991, Ethiopia's GNP was \$US 120 out of which \$ 14.9 was allocated to the military¹⁴. In 1989, Kenya allocated 9.1% of its GDP to defence and 6.6% to health; The United Republic of Tanzania allocated 15.8% to defence and 5.7% to health. Military expenditure in Zaire in 1990-91 was 71% that of education and health combined while in Burundi it was 41%.¹⁵

75. Burundi, Ethiopia and Somalia have suffered devastating internal conflict and wars that have given rise to hundreds of thousands of refugees (700,000 from Burundi in 1993; 700,000 from Somalia etc.) Most of these refugees have generally taken refuge in the neighboring countries of Kenya, Uganda, The United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire. The countries have suffered serious socio-economic and environmental consequences, e.g. excessive use of rural road networks to transport relief food; cutting down of forests for fuel wood by large numbers; or excessive overcrowding in the urban areas with limited social infrastructure.

76. The group of countries under this cluster have the highest concentration of women in agriculture and the smallest in tertiary and industrial activities. In Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zaire, over 85% of the female labours force is employed in household farm activities and less than 10% in wage employment. Participation in manufacturing is low, the highest being in Equatorial Guinea at 5%, followed by Kenya and Uganda at 4%. This is a reflection of the size of the manufacturing sector, but also the traditional attitudes towards appropriate work for women as well as historical trends that kept women out of the formal sector until recently. The low participation in the tertiary sector, on the other hand, is a reflection of the national accounting system where women's activities that are non-agricultural are not recorded.

¹⁴ UNDP Human Development Report 1994, op. cit. p. 170

¹⁵ Ibid.

77. In Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Zaire fertility rate is above 2.5%, while in Equatorial Guinea it is 1.2% and 2.2% in Burundi. Kenya has the highest with 3.5% followed by Uganda at 3.3% and Tanzania at 3.2%. Life expectancy for women in Kenya is highest at 63 years followed by Zaire at 53, Tanzania at 52, Equatorial Guinea and Burundi at 49 years and the lowest in Uganda at 40 years.

78. There is a high incidence of female headed households in these countries (see Table 11), indicating the impact of the political instability, increasing absolute poverty and the increasing female urban migration.

79. The AIDS pandemic has hit these countries much more than any other region of Africa. Women have become victims of this plague at a much higher rate than men due to their relative powerlessness both economically and politically. The AIDS Support Organization in Uganda reports that AIDS has infected 5 times more women than men between 15 - 25 years while the incidence of infected prenatal cases rose from 6% in 1987 to 30% in 1992. In Kenya the same problem is recorded at 8.9%. Undoubtedly, this has had a negative effect on the rate of women's economic activities, thus aggravating the level of poverty as the numbers of orphans multiply each year.

80. With regard to primary school enrolment, Kenya, Equatorial Guinea, and Uganda lead with more than 90% while the rates are lowest in Ethiopia and Somalia at 31% and 10% respectively. In Guinea Bissau, the rate is 48%, 63% in Tanzania and Burundi and 67% in Zaire. Secondary school enrolment is slightly above 40% in Tanzania and Kenya while in the rest of the countries there is a large gap between boys and girls. Poor academic performance, economic hardships, and adolescent pregnancy were given as the leading reasons for the gap in Kenya. Such recent gender sensitive policies in Kenya as allowing return of pregnant girls into school after delivery or lowering entry points into university for girls, will serve to improve the situation. At the tertiary level only Kenya and Tanzania had about 27% enrolment by 1992. There was also a steady growth of girls moving into the science subjects from 14% in 1980 to 21% in 1989.

81. The 1992 figures indicate that Uganda which has an affirmative action policy for women's participation into political life had 13% of the parliamentary seats occupied by women. Guinea Bissau also had 13%, Tanzania which also has an affirmative policy similar to Uganda had 11%, Burundi 10%, Zaire 5% and Kenya 3%. Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zaire, Burundi, Guinea Bissau and Equatorial Guinea have not ratified CEDAW. Kenya and Somalia have. In these countries, however, there is a trend of professional associations and pressure groups to lobby for the advancement of women, e.g., Association of Women Lawyers; Association of Women Entrepreneurs, etc are concerned with women's rights and access to resources. They are also lobbying for gender specific changes needed to sustain the growing democratic culture.

82. This group of countries is indeed a mixed-bag cluster as Table 11 illustrates based on the high rate of economic rates of women with relatively low gender gap in the area, and the contrastingly high

82. This group of countries is indeed a mixed-bag cluster as Table 11 illustrates based on the high rate of economic rates of women with relatively low gender gap in the area, and the contrastingly high gender gap in secondary level enrolment (0.28) and the industrial sector (0.58). Consistent with the latter gender gaps is the low rate of ratification of the international instruments on gender equity. Given this pattern, one is persuaded to speculate that perhaps the high rate of women's economic activities is highly related to the fact that they are in agriculture which is traditionally the highest absorber of active women and requires informally acquired skills. It is possible, however, that the combination of the ongoing progressive policies in education and politics as well as the active involvement of the women themselves in the fight for their rights may rectify the gender gaps observed in some of the countries in this cluster.

Table: 11

THE MIXED BAG CLUSTER

INDICATOR	Kenya	Uganda	Burundi	Tanzania	Zaire	Equatorial Guinea	Ethiopia	Guinea	Somalia	Means
Women's economic activity rate	31.94%	36.69%	48.99%	45.20%	26.96%	33.14%	55.55%	37.37%	33.09%	38.77%
Women's participation rate in the agriculture sector	80.40%	82.00%	97.80%	87.30%	92.50%	76.80%	87.26%	90.00%	83.00%	86.34%
Women's participation rate in the tertiary sector	15.60%	14.50%	1.10%	11.70%	5.50%	18.20%	9.00%	7.50%	15.40%	10.94%
Participation rate of women in (industry) mfg.	4.10%	3.60%	1.10%	1.00%	2.00%	5.00%	1.57%	2.50%	1.60%	2.50%
Logarithm GDP/Capital	5.85	5.34	5.37	4.61	4.41	6.00	4.54	5.49	4.54	5.13
Share of the agricultural sector in GDP	27.30%	51.43%	50.90%	57.72%	31.44%	49.99%	43.11%	44.19%	68.88%	47.22%
Share of the tertiary sector in GDP	51.16%	36.81%	31.20%	31.46%	37.38%	40.27%	36.46%	42.44%	16.54%	35.97%
Share of MVA in GDP	11.69%	4.26%	12.42%	5.11%	1.37%	0.80%	8.92%	5.49%	2.42%	5.83%
Share of government expenditure in GDP	26.00%	19.63%	20.00%	40.00%	18.00%	21.00%	25.36%	22.00%	7.00%	22.33%
Debt service ratio	27.04%	42.68%	34.98%	32.43%	15.03%	9.52%	9.46%	87.14%	12.06%	30.04%
Logarithm of MVA/capita	0.46	-0.58	2.98	1.12	-0.53	1.70	2.12	3.10	0.82	1.24
Share of manufactured goods in total exports	16.39%	1.26%	4.31%	15.39%	30.42%	4.89%	25.32%	2.25%	8.14%	12.04%
Urbanization	25.20%	10.90%	5.80%	35.70%	40.80%	29.40%	12.26%	20.80%	37.90%	24.31%
Total fertility (births per woman)	6.80	7.30	6.80	7.10	6.10	5.90	6.80	5.80	6.60	6.58
Female headed households	30.00%	36.00%	37.00%	25.00%	30.00%	36.00%	15.00%	10.00%	38.00%	28.61%
Female primary enrolment rate	92.00%	91.00%	64.00%	63.00%	67.00%	120.40%	31.07%	42.00%	10.00%	64.50%
Female secondary enrolment ratio	25.00%	9.00%	4.00%	4.00%	17.00%	11.00%	14.52%	5.00%	5.00%	10.50%
Ratification of ILO convention 100	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	89%
Ratification of ILO convention 111	0%	0%	0	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	0%	33%
Ratification of CEDAW	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	22%
GDP indicator (+ is in favour of men; _ is in favour of women)										
Gender gap in economic activity rate	0.20	0.17	0.05	0.05	0.28	0.20	0.24	0.18	0.18	0.17
Gender gap in agricultural activities	-0.03	-0.01	-0.07	-0.07	-0.29	-0.29	-0.05	-0.12	-0.15	-0.12
Gender gap in tertiary activities	-0.04	-0.09	0.79	0.18	0.64	0.32	0.19	0.50	0.20	0.30
Gender gap in industria (manufacturing) activities	0.43	0.37	0.66	0.77	0.84	0.63	0.14	0.41	0.81	0.58
Gender gap in life expectancy	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.03
Gender gap in literacy rate	0.14	0.25	0.16	0.04	0.13	0.36	0.34	0.25	-0.15	0.17
Gender gap in secondary school enrolment	0.18	0.31	0.23	0.15	0.36	0.52	0.14	0.36	0.30	0.28

Source: UNIDO, "Participation of Women in Manufacturing", 1995

(v) **Northern Africa : the growth of the economy and gender equity**

83. The North African subregion was described by the UNIDO study as being characterized by high participation of women in the manufacturing and tertiary sectors. The countries include Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and Cape Verde which is usually in the West Africa subregion.

84. The five Maghreb countries are classified as middle income by the United Nations although the 1994 Human Development Report classified Egypt as low income. While Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya depend on oil, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt depend on manufactured goods whose share in the GNP is 69%, 52% and 31% respectively. The three countries also export labour to the oil-rich Middle East countries while Cape Verde exports to the USA, Europe and Senegal. The share of manufactured goods in Cape Verde to the GNP is 19%. The share of the tertiary sector in the GNP is relatively high in this cluster while that of agriculture is negligible. In Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamaharia, the share of agriculture in the GDP is less than 10% while it is highest in Cape Verde at 21%.

85. Women's economic activity rate is growing faster than men's: 45% in Egypt and Morocco, and 118% in Tunisia according to 1993 figures¹⁶. Women's highest source of employment in these countries is the private sector. The manufacturing sector concentrates mostly in the agro-industrial sector and employs both permanent and seasonal workers. Women are more likely to be employed as seasonal workers. The trend reveals declining fertility, higher life expectancy and growing urbanization, except for the Libyan Arab Jamaharia where fertility is still high. There is a trend in the rise of the age of marriage and a higher life expectancy, the highest being in Cape Verde at 67.9%. The phenomenon of female headed households by economic responsibility, whether as a result of death, divorce, separation, migration or for economic reasons, is growing. In Morocco, the rate is estimated at 25%, in Egypt at 30% and at 40% in Cape Verde. Disaggregated data along the reasons behind the phenomenon are inexistent.

86. In the Maghreb countries and Cape Verde, enrolment in primary schools has grown dramatically not only because of economic growth, but also because of positive policy towards girls education, favorable change of attitude of parents with regard to the education of their daughters, and growth in urbanization. Similar progress has also been made in enrolment ratio for girls at the secondary school level with the exception of Morocco and Cape Verde. And although recent data is not readily available, according to 1990 statistics, secondary school enrolment for girls was 15.3% in the Libyan Arab Jamaharia, 12% in Egypt, 7.3% in Morocco and 6.8% in Tunisia.

¹⁶ Moghadam, valentine M., *Social Protection and Women Workers in Asia*, WIDER Working Paper no. 110, June 1993

87. The literacy gap between men and women is relatively high. There are few vocational training schools for girls compared to boys other than those that focus on such traditional skills as sewing, dressmaking, and secretarial/commercial skills.

88. In the 1960s, women employment opportunities expanded as the private sector also expanded especially in Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia following the economic policy of import substitution and export. Thereafter, following the oil boom in the 1970s, a good number of males emigrated in search of high paying jobs, thus creating labour shortage that was filled by women. The public service continued to grow too, expanding health, educational and social services that are traditionally provided by women. With increased awareness to issues related to the advancement of women, gender sensitive policies began to be formulated barring discrimination on the basis of sex. It was so in the case of Algeria's constitution which was revised to this effect in 1976 while Egypt guaranteed jobs to graduates from secondary school and above. The 1956 Personal Status Code of Tunisia¹⁷ is perhaps the most progressive legal mechanism for promoting women. It abolishes polygamy, guarantees free choice of spouse, gives both spouses the right to initiate divorce, raises age of marriage to 17, legal maturity at 20 for both men and women, and right of custody of children to wives in case of divorce, or death of husband since 1981. It guarantees right for equal employment, tenure and remuneration, right of women to sign contracts and to buy assets, and to family planning and abortion under certain circumstances.

89. The economic recession of the 1980s, however, and the introduction of SAPs and growing debt burden have resulted in growing unemployment for both men and women. As in other subregions, women's rates of unemployment and underemployment are higher than men's¹⁸. In the urban areas, the growing unemployment rates of women are accompanied by a backlash with regard to women's employment based on the fundamental religious attitude that their employment is secondary to that of the male. The emerging political climate is being legitimized by legislative responses such as the 1984 Family Code of Algeria that stresses the vocation of women as homemakers and the responsibility of men as breadwinners.

90. Representation of women both in the cabinet and parliament is very low in the Maghreb countries and Cape Verde. Out of 24 cabinet posts in Algeria in 1991, two were held by women in the ministries of youth and health. In Egypt, women held 2 out of 27 posts in the Ministry of Social Insurance and in Social Affairs. One woman held a cabinet post in the Libyan Arab Jamaharia while there were no female ministers in Tunisia and Morocco. The highest representation in parliament in 1992 was found in Algeria at 10%, followed by 7% in Cape Verde, 4% in Tunisia, 2% in Egypt and 1% in Morocco. All countries in the clusters, however, have ratified both CEDAW and the ILO employment and equal remuneration conventions.

¹⁷ Baffoun, Alya, "Feminism and Muslim Fundamentalism: The Tunisian and Algerian Cases", Africa Development 19(2) 1994

¹⁸ Baffoun, Alya op. cit..

91. From the figures in Table 12, this cluster suggests a correlation between gender equity and economic growth. As the Maghreb countries began to prosper economically, the women's rate of participation in the labour force began to increase both in the tertiary and industrial sectors. Of course there was also the issue of demand for their labour following the emigration of male labour to oil-rich countries in search for even better economic rewards. Other changes towards gender-equity subsequent to the favourable economic conditions included increased school enrolment for girls and better health infrastructure that resulted in lower fertility and higher life expectation for both men and women. But when the economic crunch set in, priority was given to male employment while traditional and religious justification for reverting to this inequality was evoked through such official channels as revised constitution. The current gender gap of 0.68 in the economic activity rates and the inadequate representation of women at the highest decision-making levels are therefore not an accident despite the ratification of the international instruments for the promotion of gender equity and equality.

Table 12

NORTH - AFRICA: THE GROWTH OF ECONOMY AND GENDER EQUITY

INDICATOR	Morocco	Tunisia	Cape Verde	Egypt	Algeri	Lybia	Means
Women's economic activity rate	12.69%	15.23%	20.94%	5.46%	4.17%	4.58%	10.51%
Women's participation rate in the agriculture sector	29.20%	20.60%	20.40%	13.00%	5.00%	25.80%	19.00%
Women's participation rate in the tertiary sector	33.40%	26.40%	55.60%	66.30%	69.60%	52.40%	50.62%
Participation rate of women in (industry) mfg.	37.50%	53.00%	24.00%	20.70%	25.40%	21.80%	30.40%
Share of the agricultural sector in GDP	16.05%	19.27%	20.73%	18.58%	6.56%	7.53%	14.79%
Share of the tertiary sector in GDP	52.44%	46.56%	49.71%	50.46%	41.23%	44.15%	47.43%
Share of government expenditure in GDP	21.00%	41.00%	19.60%	52.00%	23.00%	37.00%	32.27%
Debt service ratio	31.40%	22.53%	11.18%	20.52%	71.19%	5.21%	27.13%
Share of manufactured goods in total exports	54.17%	68.85%	19.26%	30.66%	2.18%	5.34%	30.08% 7.18%
Urbanization	49.40%	55.10%	30.00%	48.10%	53.30%	71.70%	51.27%
Total fertility (births per woman)	4.20	3.40	5.30	4.00	4.90	6.70	4.75
Female headed households	17.00%	10.00%	40.00%	30.00%	20.00%	11.00%	21.33%
Female primary enrolment rate	52.36%	107.00%	103.60	89.00%	90.00%	121.00%	93.83%
Female secondary enrolment ratio	29.00%	42.00%	16.00%	73.00%	53.00%	86.20%	49.87%
Ratification of ILO convention 100	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	67%
Ratification of ILO convention 111	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Ratification of CEDAW	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gender gap in economic activity rate	0.59	0.63	0.43	0.80	0.82	0.83	0.68
Gender gap in agricultural activities	0.15	0.12	0.45	0.34	0.68	-0.41	0.26
Gender gap in tertiary activities	-0.02	0.12	-0.49	-0.34	-0.25	0.03	-0.16
Gender gap in industria (manufacturing) activities	-0.14	-0.14	0.08	0.06	0.11	0.21	0.03
Gender gap in life expectancy	-0.03	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02
Gender gap in literacy rate	0.12	0.07	0.21	0.18	0.11	0.16	0.14
Gender gap in secondary school enrolment	0.19	0.14	-0.01	0.12	0.13	0.20	0.13

Source: UNIDO, "Participation of Women in Manufacturing", 1995

(vi) **The Southern African Melange: economic growth and gender equity at loggerheads**

92. According to the UNIDO study, Southern African countries fall into 2 groups with regard to women's participation in the economic sector. There are those that have high GDP and manufacturing value added (MVA) per capita, high women participation in the tertiary sector but low participation in agriculture. Mauritius, Seychelles and South Africa fall into this category. Botswana, Namibia and Lesotho on the other hand have a moderate female economic activity rate with a high representation in the manufacturing wage employment, high labour migration and high female school enrolments.

93. In Mauritius and Seychelles, the economic activity rate of women has increased in the last 10 years by almost 5%. In South Africa, it increased by 1% but it has the highest participation rate and the lowest gender gap among the 3 countries. The service sector, i.e., trade, commerce, tourism, domestic work, social and financial service, absorbs the largest percentage of women. The highest growth in women employment in the manufacturing sector between 1980 and 1990 has been in the Seychelles. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development in Mauritius in 1993 showed that women comprised 46% of the total employed labour force while 55% of them were employed in the textile industry. In South Africa¹⁹ women comprised 43% of the employed labour force and 30% of the manufacturing employment. Women have also accessed the professional and managerial categories in both South Africa and Mauritius. In 1991, they occupied about 30% of the professional posts and almost 20% of the administrative and managerial posts.

94. In Mauritius, the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) which has existed for the last 20 years is the engine of economic and employment growth. It employs over 90,000 workers, 70% of whom are women and account for 65% of gross export earnings. South African manufactured exports are diversified but dominated by the mineral sector. In the Seychelles, manufactured exports are low comprising mostly processed fish in an industry that employs a significant number of women.

95. The female life expectancy is one of the highest while fertility rates in Mauritius and Seychelles are the lowest in Africa. Primary school enrolment rates are over 100% for both male and female in South Africa and Mauritius. School enrolment at secondary level is also higher for females than males in both countries. For all 3 countries, male enrolment is higher at the tertiary level.

96. In Seychelles, Mauritius and South Africa, representation at parliamentary level in 1991 was 16%, 7% and 3% respectively. The favorable situation in Seychelles can be explained by the socialist oriented policy while the apartheid philosophy in South Africa explains the poor status of women. The 1994 democratically elected majority government improved the situation, however, and women currently occupy almost 25% of the parliamentary seats and 2 cabinet posts. It also appointed a committee on women and is in the process of formulating policy including setting up structures to

¹⁹ Thompson, Bee and O'regan, Catherine "Collective Bargaining and the Promotion of Equality: The case of South Africa", Equality for Women in Employment: An Interdepartmental Project. Geneva: ILO, 1993

promote women's economic and social interests. Mauritius has had a National Women's Council since 1985 that is the focal point for women's issues and coordinates 400 women's organizations. None of the three countries has ratified CEDAW or the ILO Convention on employment and remuneration..

97. The remaining Southern Africa countries, viz Lesotho, Botswana and Namibia are relatively homogeneous culturally, geographically and economically in spite of the fact that Lesotho is the least developed of the three. The proportion of female headed households is higher in Botswana at 40% followed by Namibia at 36% and Lesotho at 25%. The situation is created by the old tradition of the males migrating to the mines in South Africa in search of work.

98. Female economic activity is lower than that of the region in Botswana and Namibia. In Botswana and Lesotho, 75-82% of economically active women are in agriculture in subsistence farming mainly. In Namibia, on the other hand, women dominate the tertiary sector. Due to unpredictable weather conditions and shortage of arable land because of deserts and high mountains in Namibia and Botswana, food import from South Africa is important. Agriculture, therefore, contributes only 6% to the GDP in Botswana, 10% in Namibia and 16% in Lesotho.

99. The economies of the 3 countries are organized around the capital intensive mining industries and livestock production, both of which are male domains. The tertiary sector, however, has the largest contribution to the GDP. In Lesotho and Botswana the government is the largest employer for both the men and women while in Namibia it is the private sector. In all three countries, foreign investment in labour intensive industrial development has been adopted in an attempt to solve the employment problem. Consequently between 1985 - 1990, the manufacturing labour force has been growing at the rate of 10% per year in Botswana and 8% in Lesotho. In Namibia growth in this sector has been slow although there has been growth in fisheries. Thus, manufacturing is the largest employer of women who constituted 37% of total manufacturing employment in Botswana and 10% in Namibia in 1992. Lesotho has the highest rates of male emigration whereby 30% of its labour force is out of the country. Consequently, in 1986, women constituted 63% of the manufacturing labour force. Women preponderate in the semi skilled jobs in the export oriented factories and in the food processing plants, where their wages, generally, are only 2/3 of men's with similar educational background.

100. In Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia, population growth rates are high. Women outnumber men in total numbers as well as in enrolment rates at primary and secondary school levels. In Lesotho they also outnumber men in vocational and technical schools, as well as in the university. Unfortunately high pregnancy rates neutralize the high enrolment rates as is the case in Namibia where secondary school retention rate was only 14% for girls compared to 20% for boys in 1991. By the age of 17, 19% of the girls are already sexually active and by 19, 45% are already mothers or expecting. At the higher schools, more boys also end up staying in school than girls.

101. Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia have adhered to customary and Roman Dutch Laws which foster disparities between male and female status. Women's share in parliament, therefore, is only 7% in Namibia, 5% in Botswana and 2% in Lesotho. Botswana and Namibia have only two women cabinet

posts each out of 20 ministers. Lesotho, a monarchy, is even less gender-sensitive and in spite of the visibility of women everywhere they are hardly found at top policy decision-making organs.

102. None of the three countries has signed CEDAW or the ILO Convention on Equality in Employment and Occupations. Namibia, however, has signed the Convention on Equal Remuneration. Gender inequalities are thus evident in such issues as property ownership, inheritance, child custody and access to land and credit whereby women are treated as minors. The visibility of women due to high school enrolment and high employment rates tend to make the impact of gender inequalities even greater.

103. The Southern African countries are a cluster with a truly mixed bag (see Tables 13(a) and 13(b) of relatively high economic growth, minimal gender gap in educational enrolments even at the secondary level where in some countries women are even more than men, and a relatively large gender gap in economic participation rates (0.40 and 0.31). Large gender gaps are particularly evident in the industrial sector. Representation of women in decision-making at the highest level is also poor. The high levels of education that women have enjoyed have therefore not been sufficient to break the old discriminatory practices of keeping them out of the mines and decision-making.

Table 13 (a):

THE SOUTHERN AFRICA MELANGE: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND GENDER EQUITY AT LOGGERHEADS

INDICATOR	Mauritius	Seychelles	South Africa	Means
Women's economic activity rate	19.49%	20.59%	33.68%	24.59%
Women's participation rate in the agriculture sector	22.50%	7.10%	7.24%	12.28%
Women's participation rate in the tertiary sector	62.80%	71.90%	70.02%	68.24%
Participation rate of women in (industry) manufacturing	14.80%	21.40%	8.92%	15.04%
Share of the agricultural sector in GDP	10.95%	5.66%	4.66%	7.09%
Share of the tertiary sector in GDP	55.74%	73.86%	44.68%	58.09%
Share of government expenditure in GDP	28.00%	60.00%	34.00%	40.67%
Debt service ratio	8.13%	7.07%	1.00%	5.40%
Share of manufactured goods in total exports	62.31%	0.06%	31.67%	31.35%
Urbanization	40.50%	70.50%	49.21%	53.40%
Total fertility (births per woman)	1.90	2.80	5.49	3.40
Female headed households	19.00%	10.00%	45.00%	43.60%
Female primary enrolment rate	130.93%	94.00%	105.00%	109.98%
Female secondary enrolment ratio	56.00%	29.80%	45.00%	43.60%
Ratification of ILO convention 100	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	67.0%
Ratification of ILO convention 111	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ratification of CEDAW	0%	0%	0%	0%
GDP indicator (+is in favour of men: -is in favour of women)				
Gender gap in economic activity rate	0.49	0.44	0.26	0.40
Gender gap in agricultural activities	0.02	0.28	0.46	0.25
Gender gap in tertiary activities	-0.12	-0.18	0.01	-0.09
Gender gap in industria (manufacturing) activities	0.29	0.29	0.42	0.33
Gender gap in life expectancy	-0.05	-0.06	-0.05	-0.05
Gender gap in literacy rate	0.07	-0.04	0.01	0.01
Gender gap in secondary school enrolment	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.03

Source: UNIDO, "Participation of Women in Manufacturing", 1995

Table: 13(b)

INDICATOR	Lesotho	Botswana	Namibia	Means
Women's economic activity rate	40.12%	23.29%	13.26%	25.56%
Women's participation rate in the agriculture sector	81.40%	7.10%	46.50%	67.80%
Women's participation rate in the tertiary sector	14.30%	20.30%	51.00%	28.53%
Participation rate of women in (industry) manufacturing	4.30%	4.40%	2.50%	3.734%
Share of the agricultural sector in GDP	16.06%	5.69%	10.81%	10.85%
Share of the tertiary sector in GDP	48.17%	30.27%	50.60%	43.01%
Share of government expenditure in GDP	41.00%	45.00%	35.00%	40.33%
Debt service ratio	5.30%	3.27%	2.82%	3.80%
Share of manufactured goods in total exports	52.80%	89.10%	89.64%	77.18%
Urbanization	21.70%	30.30%	29.00%	27.00%
Total fertility (births per woman)	5.80	6.40	5.70	5.97
Female headed households	25.00%	36.00%	40.00%	33.67%
Female primary enrolment rate	115.00%	112.00%	99.00%	108.67%
Female secondary enrolment ratio	30.00%	7.00%	47.00%	28.00%
Ratification of ILO convention 100	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	33.0%
Ratification of ILO convention 111	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ratification of CEDAW	0%	0%	0%	0%
GDP indicator (+ is in favour of men; - is in favour of women)				
Gender gap in economic activity rate	0.12	0.28	0.52	0.31
Gender gap in agricultural activities	-0.02	-0.15	-0.17	-0.11
Gender gap in tertiary activities	0.03	0.02	-0.20	-0.05
Gender gap in industria (manufacturing) activities	0.18	0.68	0.86	0.57
Gender gap in life expectancy	-0.04	-0.05	-0.02	-0.04
Gender gap in literacy rate	-0.15	0.11	0.02	0.01
Gender gap in secondary school enrolment	-0.19	-0.04	-0.11	-0.12

SOURCE: UNIDO, "Participation of Women in Manufacturing", 1995

(vii) Observations from focus on the African subregions

104. In focusing on the subregions, an attempt is made to determine whether any patterns emerge on the participation of women in the economic sector. The UNIDO study on women in manufacturing suggests that high participation of women is correlated to high urbanization, low fertility rates and high school enrolment. It further suggests that as the modern sector grows, demand for male labour also grows and women labour is edged out until the country attains the industrialization stage when once again, female labour is solicited in greater numbers.

105. An attempt at a qualitative analysis of the gap between women's and men's participation in the economic sector in specific subregions, however, reveals patterns that do not quite conform to the above suggestions. For instance, in the case of Southern African countries such as Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, women have acquired relatively high school enrolment rates at the secondary and tertiary levels. Yet, women are not only excluded from the industrial sector, i.e. mining, but they are also not present in significant numbers at the managerial levels of the tertiary sector. Instead, they are found in relatively large numbers in the professional and administrative categories.

106. In Mauritius, Seychelles and Tunis, all in the middle income category, the rate of economic activities among women is categorized as relatively high. Closer examination of the nature of their participation, however, reveals that women's participation is indeed in the industrial sector, but at the lowest levels, particularly in the area of textile and food processing. While women are in high demand in the EPZ of Mauritius, for example, well educated women are experiencing unemployment problems because the jobs available only require low skills and generally offer poor employment benefits. Similarly in Tunisia, the industrial sector uses both permanent and seasonal workers, the latter of whom are mostly women.

107. Participation in certain economic sectors therefore seems unrelated to either women's education status or the state of development of a given country. Instead, both traditional and patriarchal values that determine roles according to gender rather than skills and individual preferences continue to play an important part in the dynamics of women participation in the economic sector. The quantitative and qualitative nature of their participation continue to depend on the traditional values unless women can become part of the decision making process and influence the policies and laws within which participation is enacted.

C. Employment in agriculture

108. In 1990, 55 million women were in the agricultural labour force representing 43% of the total labour force in Sub-Sahara Africa ²⁰. They were mostly involved in food production. In agricultural work, a set distribution of tasks exists with men normally carrying out the heavy tasks of clearing and preparing the land for planting while women plant, weed, harvest, store, market and process the food. Rural women are also involved in the mixture of farm and non-farm income generation activities. While in countries like the The Gambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Nigeria, there are as many men as women involved in agriculture, in Sudan there are seven men for every ten women, suggesting high incidence of male emigration. This often results in households that are headed by females. The phenomenon has disrupted distribution of labour along gender lines with the consequence of aggravated poverty. Such households have tended to have small holdings, opting for crops that do not require heavy physical labour such as vegetable production.

109. In Africa according to the FAO Report 1995 ²¹, 73% of the rural population consists of small farmers and in sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture accounts for approximately 21% of the labour used to produce food both for household consumption and for sale. Agriculture is therefore important to the national economy and as a source of employment (see Table 14). It contributes as low as 8% of the GDP in the Congo and a high of 50% in the United Republic of Tanzania while it employs from 40% of the population in Morocco to 85% in Burkina Faso and Tanzania. Smallhold subsistence farming, of which the majority are women, occupies a critical place in agricultural economy. It is as much as 95% in Benin and 69% in Morocco while in Namibia, 90% of the population in communal farming (which is 41% of the country's land area) are dependent on subsistence farming. In Zimbabwe the communal land sectors in which smallholder farming is practiced occupies 42% of all land and harbours 80% of the female population.

²⁰ ILO/JASPA 1990 op.cit.p. 68

²¹ FAO "Women, Agriculture and Rural Development: A Synthesis Report of the Africa Region", Compiled from the national sectoral reports for: Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, 1995

Table 14: **Importance of Agriculture to the National Economies**

Country	Contribution of Agriculture to GDP	Population Employed / Involved in Agriculture (%)
Benin	40	70
Burkina Faso	45	85
Congo	8	52
Mauritania	22	--
Morocco	15-20	40
Namibia	11	79
Sudan	40	80
Tanzania	50	85
Zimbabwe	11	71 ^a

Source: FAO, "Women Agriculture and Rural Development, 1995

^aThe definition of the population employed/involved in agriculture varied among the reports. While some countries cited official national figures of the economically active population, which in some cases excluded subsistence farmers, others gave estimates of the proportion "involved" or "dependent upon" agriculture which may include subsistence farmers.

^aUNDP, 1994.

110. Smallholder subsistence farmers substantially contribute to national agricultural production and food security. But in the past 10 to 15 years, various regional trends have had an impact on the women's role in agriculture. The structural adjustment policies adopted by most African governments have opted to reallocate resources from subsistence production to the production of export crops. women are unable to switch to cash crop farming due to the double burden of productive and reproductive tasks; and low access to credit, technological packages and marketing information; Rising food prices for basic food products as well as commodities and agricultural inputs also encourages women to remain at the subsistence level. Besides, as governments reduce their involvement in such areas as marketing and pricing for subsistence agriculture, farmers are left responsible for the development of their own marketing skills, markets etc, areas in which they have little prior experience.

Similarly, as government cuts spending in social services demand on women's time and energy increases to make up for the short falls.

111. High population growth, unequal resource allocation and inheritance laws which entail land parcelling, lead to overexploitation of trees, water and other resources and subsequent environmental

degradation. This limits the development of agriculture in most of Africa. Besides, various surveys²² indicate that allocation of land to women as opposed to requiring that they provide labour on the land of their male relatives is on the increase as the agricultural potential of land decreases. This is closely related to the emigration of the male population as population pressure in the rural areas mounts and the returns from agriculture shrink. Rural women are thus left responsible single handedly for both agricultural work and the maintenance of the household. This phenomenon has been a major constraint to the potential of their switching to cash crop farming.

1. Constraints to women's effective participation in agriculture

112. Although in most of Africa women are responsible for most of the food production and work on both family farms and as wage labourers, most of them do not have legal control over the land they farm even in female headed households. Development projects have made matters worse by designating land ownership to men under the land reform policies.

113. Agricultural extension services for women are limited even where they (women) constitute a large share of agricultural producers or where there are constraints on communication between men and women. Extension workers are almost always men, constituting only 7% of women in Africa in the late 1980s²³. Subsequently even among the innovative farmers in Africa only 69% female farmers received extension visits as opposed to 97% male farmers during the same period.

114. Most of women's work lies in the margin of major development efforts and programmes. Yet without the complementarity of women's work, such efforts and programmes would barely work even though men own such assets and inputs as land, credit, seeds, livestock, technology and infrastructure. Thus, while most banks require collateral such as being a wage earner or a property owner which are out of reach for most rural women, limited education, complicated loan procedures and long distances further constrain women's access to credit. In these circumstances, women accessed only 14% of borrowed resources in commercial banks in Zaire between 1980 and 1990, a situation that is similar to most other developing countries. Rural women,²⁴ received less than 10% of the credit to small farmers and 1% of the total credit to agriculture. Multilateral bank allocations are similarly skewed to a point where in 1990, out of 5.8 billion dollars allocated for rural credit, only 5% reached rural women. Financial systems therefore need to respond to the needs of low income women and their economic activities.

115. Technological changes have also tended to ignore gender considerations. While mechanization may increase efficiency and reduce men's work load, at times they have increased women's work load. This was the case in Sierra Leone where women's tasks for planting and weeding increased in the

²² FAO 1995 op. cit. p.4

²³ FAO 1995 op. cit. p.27

²⁴ UNDP Human Development Report 1995, p. 39

expanded rice fields which were cleared by machines without simultaneously mechanizing weeding, which is done by women. In cases where planting and weeding have been mechanized, the cost of machines has rendered them inaccessible to the poor women.

116. Some macroeconomic policies have been a major constraint to women. While structural adjustment and stabilization usually affect men in their role as producers, they affect women in their multiple roles as mothers, household managers, community workers and producers of goods and services. Their burden of economic adjustment thus becomes greater in several ways: they are primarily responsible for feeding the family and therefore have difficulties in making ends meet; they work for more hours, informally, formally or both to make up for the lost income; and they lose gains made earlier as a result of reduced government spending in services such as health and child care, family planning and education. Removing food subsidies also affects women's health whose nutritional needs are subordinated to men's.

117. Nevertheless, there is increased recognition of the importance of women's role in agriculture in several African countries. Policies and programmes have therefore been formulated to end discrimination in land allocation, to create a fund for women's income generating activities (Burkina Faso), and to increase women's access to productive resources including land, irrigation, credit technology, extension services and training. The creation of the national machineries for women's advancement was also a critical step in ensuring that the needs of women and constraints were put on the national policy agenda. Unfortunately the machineries', technical, financial and political capacity have been limited. Operating from the national capitals, they also tend to have an urban bias with little direct impact on the rural population. Furthermore, for those the national machineries being mainly located in the ministries that deal with welfare and social issues, isolation from planning ministries means that women's needs are not given adequate attention in the development of national strategies and plans.

D. Employment in the informal sector

1. The concept of the informal sector

118. The International Conference on Labour Statistics in 1993 agreed to define the informal sector as informal own-account enterprises in the household sector owned and operated by own-account workers, which may employ contributing family workers and other employees on an occasional basis. Their objective is the production of goods or services to generate employment and income for the owners. They operate on a small scale at low level of organization, with little division between labour and capital as factors of production. Besides, they may or may not have fixed premises, and may be operated by one or several members of a household or in partnership. The enterprises may operate all year round or during part of the year or just occasionally, on a casual basis. This definition does not include those engaged in non-market production and subsistence agriculture although they may be included within production by the System of National Accounts (SNA).

2. Characteristics of the Informal Sector

119. Limited data indicates that women are over represented in the informal sector which pays less than the minimum wage and is characterized by strenuous and poor working conditions. In Zimbabwe and the Congo, for example, 2/3 of production in the informal sector is done by women. In 1985 - 86, 50% of economically active women were in the informal sector compared to 10% of the men. In Nigeria²⁵ 94% of street food vendors are women.

120. Women resort to the informal sector as an alternative to occupational segregation, unemployment and underemployment in the formal sector. Their activities are mostly characterized by provision of domestic services, small scale trade, and micro enterprises that produce clothing and processed food. They are usually one person operations with limited capital and little access to credit, technology and with low returns.

121. In the 1980s and 1990s, as economic crisis and SAPs reduced employment opportunities, the informal sector has grown in response to the need for increased family income. Thus, although the largest female labour force in Africa south of the Sahara is found in agriculture particularly in West Africa, trade is also competing effectively in Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Benin where it thrives even at the subregional level. Most women are found in small scale activities earning low incomes but working long hours. Their income has become indispensable for both rural and urban livelihoods.

122. In Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia, Zaire and Burundi an important proportion of women are workers in the urban area buying and selling manufactured goods from wholesalers and also trading in processed foods and handicrafts. More and more, they operate in fully licensed premises. Among them are the few who buy their goods from overseas for the middle class urban clients that can afford them. The statistics on this category of economic activities are, of course, not available.

123. While the economic recession of the 1980s has led to the growth of women's participation in the informal sector, it is also closely related to the cultural attitude of what is suitable work for women. In Moslem countries, most of the informal sector activities which consist largely of handicrafts and garments are carried out at home. They also involve children. In Morocco, these activities also include carpet weaving for which permits are required not only for selling but also tax purposes. This notwithstanding, the activities are not included in the labour force statistics. Manufacturers also tend to contract out some of the work to home based workers who are paid on a piece by piece basis. These workers are not protected by the labour laws and are not accounted for. Yet they play an important economic role in supplementing household income or earning an income to support the increasing number of female-headed households.

²⁵ 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, New York 1995, p. 69

124. Similar to the formal sector, there is a difference in the participation rates in the informal sector between men and women. In Africa except Egypt, more than 1/3²⁶ of the economically active women outside the agricultural sector work are in the informal sector. This average figure varies from country to country, thus being as high as 72% in Zambia and 62% in The Gambia. On the whole, the informal sector accounts for about 60% of the urban labour force and contributes about 20% of the GDP.

125. The importance of the informal sector versus overall production varies from country to country. In Africa, informal activities have more importance than in other regions. There is also an indication from the limited statistics available that there is a correlation between the importance of the area of activity in the informal sector and the degree of women's participation. In Egypt, for example, the contribution of the informal sector to production was the lowest among all the six countries observed, as was the participation of women. The reverse is true in Zambia. In the six countries²⁷ studied by the *World's Women 1995*, viz Zambia, Burundi, the Congo, the The Gambia, Mali and Egypt, the informal sector contributes 19 - 51% of the total production in manufacturing, transport and services. More specifically, in these countries, the informal sector produces up to 33% of the total outputs in manufacturing, the highest percentage being 48% in the The Gambia and the lowest 21% in Egypt. Transport industry is generally not highly developed in the informal sector. Its highest contribution is in Egypt at 29% and 45% in Mali. But in services (excluding transport) the informal sector contributes as high as 15 - 57%.

126. While the degree of women participation in the informal sector varies from area to area, it is evident as illustrated on Table 15 that women are generally more than men in the sector. In transport, however, their participation is extremely low while in industry the percentage is quite significant though still lower than men's. The relatively low participation of women in this area in Mali and Egypt therefore could be explained by the Moslem influence which encourages women to work in the confines of their homes.

127. With regard to child labour, it is difficult to obtain hard statistics since they either work illegally or are in subsistence activities in the rural areas where the work is seldom fully measured in conventional data collection. According to estimates, however, based on data collected by ILO in 1990, sub-Saharan Africa leads in having the highest rate of girlchild labour between age 10 - 14 years at 20%. The lowest rates are reported in Northern Africa, with a rate of 4.6% for girls in the same age bracket. The reported rates for girls are lower than those for boys.

128. It should be noted, however, that girls' economic activities are likely to be underestimated in the same way as those of adult women's activities are. Female economic activities in the home such as carrying water, grinding, husking rice and other food production activities are likely to be estimated as "natural" girl chores and therefore statistically ignored. Time use statistics in rural India and Nepal

²⁶ The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics, New York 1995

²⁷ World's Women 1995, op. cit. p. 115

show girls from 6-14 years spending more hours per day than boys working. Girls in Africa are observed to be in similar situations despite absence of data. According to the ILO 1990 estimates, economically active children are more likely to work in agriculture at the rate of 75% and 80% for boys and girls respectively. The rest are likely to be in manufacturing, trade, restaurants and hotel and in other services.

Table 15 : PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR SELECTED COUNTRY STUDIES

A. Percentage of informal production and labour force

AFRICA		Percentage of informal production				Percentage of informal labour force							
		Mfg.	Transport	Services	Total	Mfg.		Transport		Services		Total	
						Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Burundi	1990	35	8	18	25	60	31	0	13	21	17	32	21
Congo	1984	39	10	36	33	43	39	0	11	60	21	57	25
Egypt	1986	21	29	15	18	5	22	0	31	3	18	3	21
The Gambia	1983	48	16	57	51	100	38	0	13	60	23	62	25
Mali	1990	45	45	37	40	35	63	0	50	33	39	34	45
Zambia	1986	41	7	48	39	81	31	0	8	71	31	72	29

Source: **WORLD'S WOMEN 1995; Trends and Statistics**

129. The informal sector is a major source for human resource development as it offers training ground for unskilled workers at a low cost. Women and young people learn a trade as apprentices. Through this process entrepreneurship is also promoted with the potential for transforming informal enterprises into small and medium scale operations. The skills learned could also be used in the formal sector. There are modern entrepreneurs who began their businesses in the informal sector in many African countries. In particular, women entrepreneurs have made effort to formalize their small and medium size businesses through the establishment of national association of women entrepreneurs in most countries. Some sub-regions have created association at the level as well. These efforts culminated in the establishment of the African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE) which brought together the national associations at the regional level. AFWE is an important network for sharing information, organizing trade fairs and exchange tours.

4. The informal financial sector

130. One of the major reasons why the African informal sector is unable to invest in capital is the lack of access to institutional credit. The formal backup system and government institutions consider it risky and expensive to invest in the informal sector not only because of its structural and organizational nature but also because of the absence of acceptable collateral on the part of the applicants.

Consequently, a large gap has grown between the formal sector enterprises and those in the informal sector.

131. It is particularly difficult for women in the informal sector to have access to credit due to barriers that lead to gender disparities. Some of the barriers include traditional customs that exclude them from owning property which could be used as collateral; legal stipulations that bar women from obtaining credit; bureaucratic procedures that overwhelm applicants with limited education; and concentration of financial institutions in the urban areas which renders them inaccessible to rural women.

132. To overcome this, the informal sector has created new types of financing markets that have proven effective at a price. The Rotating Savings and Credit Associations provide one such example whereby the members contribute a fixed amount of money to a common pool which is then allocated to each member in turn. The constraints in this include the problematic issue of deciding the order in which the money should be allocated; the danger of some members quitting after they receive their share; and the fact that it is a closed system for members only.

133. Money lenders and trade credit dealers extend credit to individuals either in cash or kind respectively. When they are in limited numbers though, they become unreliable and expensive, sometimes charging as much as 100% fee on loans for a short period of 9-12 months.

134. Money keepers, on the other hand, hold funds from individuals in an informal savings account until it is needed. The system operates as a financial management service whereby a fee is charged for safe keeping of savings from appeals of family and friends. No interest is paid. A slightly different form of this is the system whereby savings in a group are contributed towards a prior agreed upon project of a community development nature.

135. There are also the informal financial markets with appropriate finance instruments tailored to the client who may want to either save or borrow. The system is adjusted to the forces of supply and demand with sponsors required according to the perceived risk factor. Adjustments are therefore reflected in the interest rates charged while collaterals and guarantees are required according to the cultural milieu. Table 16 illustrates the diverse alternatives that both women and men resort to but also demonstrates their viability along gender lines.

136. Except when specific efforts are made to increase women's access to credit, banks and other lending institutions not only accord insignificant number of loans to women (10% to 40% of total number of loans) but often give such small amounts that women are locked into micro projects indefinitely. Traditional beliefs that men should be responsible for finances coupled with ideas that women are financial risks perpetuate the practice of refusing credit to women.

137. There is a need to reduce the fragmentation of the capital market and to unify the interest structure. Besides, the high interest rates charged in the informal sector could be decreased if there

E. Participation in the non-monetized reproductive roles

A. Valuing of Women's Works

138. Women's work is greatly undervalued in economic terms, partly due to the restricted definition of economic activity and partly due to the notion of value itself. This affects the status of women in society, their opportunities to participate in public life and renders development policy gender-blind. If women's contribution to household and community work was to be adequately recognized and accounted for, the implications for social and economic policy as well as social norms and institutions would be far reaching.

139. When household and community work remains unvalued by the System of National Accounts (SNA), society underestimates its total product while the contributors of the product go unrecognized and unrewarded. The case of an employer who marries his housekeeper, who perform the same services unpaid thereby contributing to the fall of the national income is a graphic illustration of the value of women's work.

140. But the unaccounted household and community products also have human values that may not be reflected by the market value. They not only benefit the individual, but they also have an interactive quality that produces and enhances relationships which are indispensable to community and social life. The System of National Accounts therefore needs to expand its dimensions to include the invisible work of society so that those performing it can get the recognition that they deserve.

141. Various studies and surveys²⁸ have been carried out in an attempt to cost the household and other types of work done, mostly by women but also men, without pay. Their focus has been mostly on the use of time. What has become evident from the studies is that in both industrial and developing countries, women work longer hours than men and that women carry 53% and 51% of the work burden in developing and industrial countries respectively. Similarly, men's share of work constitutes 2/3 of SNA activities in industrialized countries and 3/4 in developing countries. Men therefore receive recognition and monetary hard income for their economic contribution while women's work remains unrecognized and unpaid.

142. In Africa, women's economic contribution is higher than in other regions. Their work constitutes 44% of all market hours due to their work in agriculture and services²⁹. In Latin America, for example, women's contribution to the market hours is 28%, and 36% in Asia.

143. A contributing factor to the under estimation of women's work is the fact that it is difficult to separate production activities from non-market household work, i.e., SNA and non-SNA work. Tasks

²⁸ UNDP Human Development Report 1995 Chapter 4; INSTRAW, Measurement and valuation of unpaid contribution: accounting through time and output, Santa Domingo, 1995

²⁹ UNDP Human Development Report 1995 op.cit. p. 90

such as preparation of meals and child care are continuous through out the week, day and night. The intensity and the drudgery of such work as carrying water from a distance, collecting firewood, cleaning and grinding grains are hardly captured in the SNA records. In addition, as work increases and demands on poor women's time, the tendency is for them to intensify their work to increase their output, i.e, they work harder and for longer hours to produce more. In such circumstances, they may opt for activities that allow them to combine tasks such as street vending and child care rather than straight farming. Hours of leisure and/or sleep are thus reduced.

144. Time use surveys³⁰ thus indicate that while women carry a total of 53% of the work burden, men carry only 47%. But there are variations between the rural and urban areas where women and men carry 55% and 45% respectively in the rural areas, while men and women assume 49% and 51% respectively in the urban areas. Women thus spend an average of 4% more time working in the rural areas than men and 6% more time in the urban areas. The proportion of time spent by women in economic activities also varies between the urban and rural areas. In the urban areas, paid economic activities occupy 31% of women time and 38% in the rural areas. The difference is, of course, explained by the agricultural work done by the rural women, mostly in family owned farms, and the limited opportunities to enter into the organized labour market. On the average, only 34% of women's work is paid while men spend no more than 25% in unpaid work.

145. Another contributing factor to gender inequities in productive activities is environmental degradation which has differential impact on women than men. Generally, men are the beneficiaries of income from tree felling and livestock industries either as employees or owners. The subsequent deforestation and overgrazing, however, causes soil erosion, loss of fuel wood, and penury of water resources. This, in turn, increases the time and energy women spend in wood and water collection. To maintain the same output girl children are coopted to provide their labour. In Kenya according to the UNDP 1995 Report³¹, for example, such work costs the women as much as 45 hours a week and only 20 hours of men's time. In general girls spend 7 times as much time as men in wood and water collection and 3.5 times as many hours as boys. In the Sudan, time spent in gathering wood fuel has increased fourfold. Fifteen hours and 17.5 hours a week in Mozambique and Senegal respectively are spent by women collecting water and where desertification is advancing, as much as 4 hours a day in search of drinking water.

³⁰ UNDP Human Development Report op. cit. p.92

³¹ Ibid.

B. Policy implications for invisible contribution

146. The invisibility and at best under-valuing of women's work bring to focus the issue of equality of rewards and opportunity. In most economic transactions, women become virtual non-entities due to this absence of value to the work that they do. Thus, they cannot obtain loans in banks, for example, because they do not own property or income. Status in contemporary society is associated with income earning power. Despite women's total work burden and the fact that men's market-place work is highly dependent on women's non-market work, women's economic status is undervalued and impotent.

147. It is also important to recognize that women's work is worth more than a price tag. Its adequate recognition, therefore, need not necessarily be predicated to a monetary value or a radical change in the way families are organized. One of the attempts to address this dilemma has been to estimate the monetary value of household and community work in order to highlight the problem. The unpaid activities at global level therefore have been valued at \$US 16 trillion or 70% of the official estimated global output of US\$ 23 trillion³². The figure which includes unpaid work of both women and men also includes the value of women's underpayment in their market work. Of the \$US 16 trillion, \$US 11 trillion is the non-monetized invisible contribution of women. If women's unpaid work was valued, therefore, they would emerge not only as equal bread-winners but perhaps the main bread winners.

148. If women contribute a larger share of total labour than men, yet receive a much smaller share of the goods and services produced, there is need to change the way society is structured for a more just and equitable arrangement. Each member of the family is entitled to a share of the income generated by market work. This share should be proportional to their contribution to the total labour paid or unpaid.

In this context, for husbands to share their incomes with their wives becomes an entitlement rather than a privilege. Similarly, right to property and inheritance changes to reflect this new arrangement as well as the accompanying laws to regulate it. Access to credit, for example, would therefore adjust the demand for collateral accordingly while entitlement to social security, tax incentives etc. would reflect this perspective.

149. As for the non-paid household functions that are considered women's tasks, once given the recognition they deserve, they would become societal responsibilities for both men and women. At the policy level, resources would be allocated to facilitate and streamline such activities as child care, care of the elderly, community work etc. and men would share in family work more equitably. It would liberate both men and women to assume the roles of their choice rather than being locked in restrictive social roles.

³²

Ibid.

150. It is important to carry out extensive and accurate national research on time-use by women and men and the nature of unpaid work in order to allow for policy decisions and structural changes that are grounded on reality rather than theoretical conjecture.

III. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING

151. All economic activities, formal or informal, monetized or non-monetized, are enacted within a policy framework that is concretized by rules, regulations and structures at all levels. The outcome of the activities are thus highly influenced by the nature of the policies and structures which are formulated and put into force by decision makers. Who the decision makers are, therefore should be of interest to all economic actors. As discussed above, however, there remains an important gender gap in the rate and type of participation and remuneration of economic activities. The bias against women in all aspects of their economic activities is undoubtedly closely related to their absence in the process that determines the operative policy frameworks. This part of the report will examine the gender inequalities in decision-making with regard to economic activities and what their implications are:

A. Inequality in power sharing³³:

152. Despite the large numbers of women in the agricultural sector, and although they are members of various agricultural/rural organizations, their numbers in these organizations are normally low and confined to the rank-and-file level. Limited time and energy are important constraints in their participation. Besides, limited formal ownership rights to land resources which are often used as criteria for membership, the tendency of the organizations to have a commercial bias and to neglect issues of concern to women farmers limit the latter's participation. In some countries, women's groups and cooperatives have been created to balance their lack of representation in existing rural organizations (Congo, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Zimbabwe). Table 17 illustrates a typical situation whereby out of nine countries, 1/3 of the countries do not have a single woman as a member of the existing rural organizations while only in two countries are women office bearers found.

³³ Data in this section was obtained from FAO Women, Agriculture and Rural Development op. cit. and Table 21 which is extracted from UNDP Human Development Report 1995

Table 17: **Women's Participation in Rural Organization (per cent)**

Country	Pre-cooperatives and Cooperatives		Credit Associations		Farmers Associations	
	Members	Officers ^a	Members	Officers	Members	Officers
Benin	11		25	12 ^b		
Burkina Faso	20 ^c 6 ^d					
Congo						
Mauritania						
Morocco						
Namibia					30-60	
Sudan	15	18			2	
Tanzania	44 ^e		15			
Zimbabwe			63		75	2.5

Source: FAO, "Women, Agriculture and Rural Development", 1995

^a Office bearers, board members and supervisory committee members

^b 12% of supervisory committee members and 14% of administrative council members are women

^c Pre-Cooperatives

^d Cooperatives

^e Data is for Zanzibar

153. In government ministries, it is rare that a woman holds a ministerial position in such technical ministries as agriculture or lands in spite of the fact that women constitute the majority of farmers in Africa. Yet it has been shown that where women's participation is increasing, additional policy attention is given to women's issues and concerns. Women's representation is highest in Namibia in the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation and in the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing with 22% and 25% women decision makers respectively. In Zimbabwe, on the contrary women decision makers in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Water Development are 0.1% and 0.3% for the Department of Tsetse Control and Development.

154. Women representation is also low in governmental and parastatal committees which address complex legal and political issues. In Namibia, the two commissions of relevance for rural women include Technical Committee on Commercial Farmer Land and the Commission of Inquiry into Traditional Leadership which have one woman and no women respectively. The National Task Force

on Agricultural Policy comprises 7 members of whom only one is a woman. In the parastatal Agricultural Development Authority in Zimbabwe, women account for only 6% of the policy makers.

155. Women representation is equally low in the local power structures where decisions concerning land allocation are made. In Mauritania and Morocco, women are rarely represented in municipalities. In Mauritania, out of 208 municipalities created in 1986, there is only one woman mayor while in Morocco women occupied only 0.3% of municipality seats in 1993 up from 0.2% in 1983. In Namibia, women's participation is higher at 31.5%, thanks to affirmative action efforts during the first elections of local authorities. In the United Republic of Tanzania women currently represent 25% of the Village Assembly and in Zimbabwe they represent 10% in the Village Development Committees which are elected democratically to control the development and use of land resources in their villages.

156. Similar low levels of women representation are found at the district and provincial levels such as the district councils in Zimbabwe (10%), regional councils in Namibia (3 out of 95 members) and regional administration officers in the United Republic of Tanzania (20%). In Tanzania there are no livestock officers and only one regional community development officer as of the time this report was written.

157. At the home front, the sharing of decision-making between gender in the household varies substantially from country to country and among different cultural and ethnic groups within the same country. Women tend to have decision-making powers over their own plots while men make decisions on household plots. When the husband is not present, women's decision making power increases on the agricultural activities but not on sale or the use of proceeds from sales. Yet, some studies show that the improvement of household food security and nutritional levels is associated with women's decision making role in the use of household expenditures. Similarly, women's reaction to economic incentives depends on their role in decision making over the allocation of the income.

158. Table 18 summarizes the continental state of women in decision-making both at the local and national levels. Out of the 44 countries for which data was available, only in 10 countries was the share of women at the ministerial level more than 10%; in 11 countries, there were no women at the ministerial level at all while in only one country (Seychelles) was women share at the ministerial level up to 31%. With regard to participation of women at the parliamentary level, it stands at 8% in Sub-Saharan Africa and 4% in North Africa. Only 14 countries had more than 10% women's share at this level and 4 countries had no women at all. At the local level as already discussed above, participation of women fall even more drastically. Only 12 countries had women representatives in local councils; similarly, only 7 countries had women mayors in some of their rural municipalities.

Table 18: WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Country	Local Municipalities or equivalent		Parliamentary Upper & Lower Chamber		Executive
	(a) Female Council Members (%) 1990 - 94	(b) Female Mayors (%) 1990 - 94	a) Seats held by women as of 30/06/94	b) Share of seats held by women as of 30/06/94	a) Share of women at Ministerial Level (%) as of 31/05/94
Mauritius	1	0	2	3	3
Seychelles	-	-	9	27	31
Botswana	-	-	2	5	6
Tunisia	14	0	11	7	4
Algeria	-	-	12	7	4
South Africa	-	6	116	24	7
Egypt	1	0	10	2	4
Namibia	-	-	5	7	10
Gabon	-	-	7	6	7
Zimbabwe	-	4	18	12	3
Congo	4	-	2	1	6
Cape Verde	9	8	6	8	13
Swaziland	-	0	8	8	0
Cameroon	8 (before 1990)	18	22	12	3
Ghana	8	-	15	8	11
Kenya	3	-	6	3	0
Lesotho	-	-	1	2	6
Sao Tome/ Principe	-	-	6	11	0

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1995

Table: 18 (cont.)

WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Countries	Local Municipalities or equivalent		Parliamentary Upper & Lower Chambers		Executive
	a) Female Council (%) 1990 - 94	b) Female Mayors (%) 1990 - 94	a) Seats held by women as of 30/06/94	b) Share of seats held by women as of 30/06/94	a) Share of at Ministerial Level (%) as of 31/05/94
Madagascar	-	-	5	4	0
Zambia	1	6	10	7	6
Comoros	-	-	1	2	0
Togo	-	-	1	1	5
Nigeria	-	1	14	2 (dissolved)	3
Equatorial Guinea	-	-	7	9	4
Zaire	-	4	31	4	7
Sudan	-	-	14	5	0
Cote d'Ivoire	-	3 (before 1990)	8	5	8
Tanzania	2	0	28	11	13
CAR	-	-	3	4	5
Mauritania	-	1	0	0	0
Senegal	8	0	14	12	7
Benin	-	0	4	6	10
Rwanda	1	0	12	17	9
Malawi	-	-	10	6	9
Uganda	-	-	47	17	10
Laos	-	-	2	6	5
The Gambia	-	-	4	8	0
Chad	-	0	9	16	5
Guinea Bissau	-	-	19	13	4
Angola	-	-	21	10	6
Burundi	-	-	8	10	7

Table 18 (cont.)

WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Countries	Local Municipalities or equivalent		Parliamentary Upper & Lower Chambers		Executive
Somalia	-	-	-	-	0
Mozambique	27	-	39	16	0
Guinea	-	3	-	-	9
Burkina Faso	-	18	6	6	17
Ethiopia	-	-	1	1	10
Mali	-	0	3	2	10
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-	0
Niger	-	-	5	6	5
Sub-Saharan Africa	-	-	-	8	6
Arab States	-	-	-	4	1

159. These figures underline the extent of women's marginalization in power sharing at all levels and the subsequent marginalization in economic and other activities. The differential in the degree of marginalization between the national and local levels is a partial reflection of the impact of the double barrel constraint of low level of education among women and the powerful tradition of role casting along gender lines that continue to characterize the rural areas.

B. Measuring gender inequalities in power-sharing

160. One of the widespread ways of measuring gender inequalities is to focus on the gap between men and women with regard to the human development index (HDI) variables viz. education and literacy; longevity as a health variable; and employment as a means of accessing basic resources to develop capabilities. The UNDP Human Development Report 1995³⁴ goes a step further and examines simultaneously the overall achievement of all people with regard to the HDI variables as well as the gender gap. The outcome of the computation gives the gender-related development index (GDI). A high GDI is a necessary condition for the participation of women in decision-making in critical numbers.

³⁴

See Chapter Three of the Human Development Report 1995

161. When the GDI was applied to scan the state of gender inequalities in Africa, it was clear that while gaps in education and health had been closing, the gap in income had remained wide and at times had even increased. Furthermore, data disaggregated by gender on wages in the rural areas and in the informal sector were difficult to obtain. Out of the 130 countries studied by UNDP, 41 countries were in Africa. Sierra Leone, Mali, the Niger and Burkina Faso occupied the bottom four places not only in the overall human development in these countries, but also in the gap between men's and women's achievement. The UNDP Report thus confirmed from its findings that while no society treats its women as well as its men, women in 35 countries in Africa (out of 45 countries world-wide) suffer the double deprivation of gender disparity and low achievement. Only 7 countries out of the 41 African countries studied, i.e. Botswana, Tunisia, the Libyan Arab Jamāhiriya, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Algeria and Cape Verde had a GDI of more than .5 out of a possible maximum of 1.0, ranging from .696 to .502. That only 32 countries in the world had a GDI value of 0.8 and above clearly indicated the slow rate of progress globally towards gender equality.

162. The GDI should not be used as an absolute measure of gender equality. Rather, it should be an indicator of the status of certain elements of a highly complex issue. For example, while a rise in overall achievement in human development may have an overall positive effect on the GDI, it can also easily camouflage the stagnation or even decline towards gender equality. This was the case in Botswana³⁵ whose real income improved fifteen fold between 1970 and 1992, but women's share of the labour force dropped from 45% to 35% and the literacy gap between the two widened despite improved educational attainment by both men and women.

163. It is also important to note that gender equality does not depend on the income level of a society. Some notions of equality could be also tantamount to increasing the workload of women, e.g., where more opportunities are created for women to participate in the paid labour market while their responsibilities for non-paid work remain unchanged. Fight for economic equality therefore has to be based on a comprehensive appraisal of the implications both on men and women. China, for example, outranks Saudi Arabia by ten GDI ranks yet the per capita income of China is only 1/5 that of Saudi Arabia. It is political will rather than income per se that is needed to meaningfully pursue gender equality. And there are indications to suggest that this political will is not altogether lacking in African countries when the relatively low difference between the human development achievement and the gender inequality index is noted. In most African countries this difference is less than 10%. For example it is 9% in Botswana and 5% in Zimbabwe and Ghana. Countries with more than 10% difference include Mauritius, the Sudan, Chad, Mali, Sierra Leone and Mauritania. Most Arab states, however, have a high percentage difference of the GDI and HDI despite considerable progress made in the past 20 years in the education sector.

164. As focus on gender inequalities become intensified, it becomes increasingly clear that acquisition of basic capabilities and living standards is not automatically tantamount to using them as a source of power to broaden one's option and possibilities. Women often acquire specialized higher education but are kept from taking jobs that require use of those skills by cultural, political and/or economic barriers. Their potential is therefore underexploited due to their powerlessness.

³⁵ UNDP Human Development Report 1995, op. cit. p. 82

165. The UNDP Human Development Report 1995 developed an instrument³⁶ to measure the disparity between men, and women empowerment. The index uses the variables of income per capita in dollars (unadjusted); access to professional opportunities and participation in economic decision-making through professional and technical as well as administrative and managerial jobs; and access to political opportunities and participation in political decision-making through election and/or nomination into parliament. The Report indicates that in most developing countries the proportion of women in professional and technical jobs is lower than men's, with 40% as the average ratio of women to men. Botswana ranks among the countries with the highest record at 60%. With regard to administrative and managerial positions, the share of women is even smaller at less than 10% in developing countries. Annex 1 provides details on the African situation in this respect.

166. The World's Women Report 1995³⁷ underscores that women are still the minority in management jobs although a marked improvement was registered in sub-Saharan Africa from 8 to 14% between 1980 - 1990. By 1994, there were only about 2.8% women as chief executives, 4.5% in the economic sector; 6.9% in the law and justice sector; 12.5% in the social sector; and 4.4% in the political sector. The political powerlessness of women which influences appointments and decisions in the economic and law and justice sectors is a serious obstacle to their advancement. The situation is even more grave in North African countries where there were no women in decision making positions in the economic and political sectors. Although they were relatively well represented in the law and justice sectors at 16.7% compared to 6.9% in sub-Saharan Africa, it might well be that they are perceived to be basically harmless since there is relatively little room for interpreting a law that is heavily influenced by religion.

C. Some implications for lack of decision-making powers

167. The concept of human rights is predicated on the provision of equality of choices to both women and men. In this context, the rate of economic and political participation should be determined by women's exercise of free choice rather than the structural barriers related to their roles in society. Unfortunately, the current trends in female unemployment and the feminization of poverty are examples of outcomes of such structural barriers as will be examined below briefly.

1. Trends in female unemployment

168. Between 1970 and 1985 African women made considerable gains in the total employment within the non-agricultural sector, occupying almost 1/4 of the total jobs created during the period³⁸. In the informal sector, the share of women in employment rose from 29% to 35% during the same period as seven million women entered the sector, representing 37% of the increase in total women labour force. On the whole, open unemployment of women declined from 6% of the total female labour force in 1980 to 1.2% in 1985.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ The World's Women 1995, op. cit. Chapter 6

³⁸ ILO/JASPA 1990 op.cit. pp. 66 - 67

169. Unfortunately, since 1985, female unemployment has been on the rise³⁹. In the Niger, for example, female unemployment had dropped by 50% in the early 1980's; since 1985, however, the annual increase has been estimated at 31%. In South Africa, black female unemployment increased by 59% between 1985 and 1990. In the Sudan, Angola and Senegal respectively, the rates of unemployment were 18%, 22% and 6% during the same period. Among the totally unemployed women accounted for 25% in the Sudan, compared to 23% in 1984; 40% and 48% in South Africa in 1985 and 1986 respectively.

170. Among the contributing factors to this situation are the retrenchment policies that have been adopted as part of the structural adjustment programmes. Thus in 1987⁴⁰, the percentage of women retrenched was as high as 21% of the total retrenched personnel in Benin; in Senegal they represented 20% of those retrenched from parastatals; and 31.5% of the retrenched in Ghana. Women are concentrated in the unskilled labours category which was targeted for redundancy and restructuring, hence the heavy losses. In addition, the low level of education among women makes them more vulnerable than men. In Ghana 40% of those retrenched had no education at all and almost 70% had less than 10 years of schooling. Yet another factor that led to women's vulnerability in the retrenchment process is the areas that were earmarked, namely community, social and personnel services; and finance and business services. In Benin, the highest proportion of those retrenched i.e, 31%, was from banking.

171. The structural adjustment programme also introduced policies which discontinued guaranteed employment schemes for graduates, de-emphasized public employment as the main source of employment growth and introduced policies of deregulation of the labour market. This signalled the weakening of employment opportunities for women who find the public sector more inclined to absorb them than the private one. The drop in female labour force in the modern sector from 6% in 1985 to 5% in 1990, a loss of 2.5 million jobs for women illustrates the point.

172. The introduction of SAPs had a negative impact on the performance of the informal sector also which in turn, affected employment opportunities for women. With the decrease of real wages and public sector employment, the employment performance of the informal sector also declined⁴¹. The trade sector was the most affected and yet is the most favourable for income generating activities both for the newly unemployed and those whose real wages are declining. As the informal sector thus became saturated, the growth rate of female labour force in the informal sector declined from 6% between 1980 and 1985 to less than 2% during the 1985-1990 period. Similarly, the share of females in the informal sector employment dropped from 17.9% in 1985 to 17.7 in 1990.

³⁹ ILO/JASP 1990 op. cit. pp. 74 - 75

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ ILO/JASPA, African Employment Report 1988, Addis Ababa, 1989

173. One of the exceptions to this trend was Mauritius where unemployment for women fell from 16.7% in 1985 to 10% in 1987. This situation can be explained mostly by the growth of the manufacturing sector in the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) which has provided employment mostly for girls in the 16 to 20 years age group. The manufacturing industry has concentrated on knitwear and textiles, paper products, jewellery etc. which have a relatively high capacity for absorbing women. It should be noted, however, that unemployment rates for girls aged 25 and above is still higher for women than for men. Besides women with relatively high level of education are experiencing difficulties being absorbed in the EPZ due to the unprotective conditions of employment.

174. Botswana also provides another exception to the trend of growing unemployment for women who outnumber men 64:36 in such occupations as "sales workers", and 60:40 in professional and technical categories while they are at par in clerical jobs. They also constitute 25% of the labour force in the managerial level compared to 18% in Uganda. The relatively high enrolment rate of females compared to males at the primary level may have played a decisive role in this situation.

175. In general, otherwise, at the regional level, structural problems such as unequal access to education, structural adjustment policies as well as the traditional and cultural stereotypes that slot women into specific type of jobs have acted as barriers to women's equal employment opportunities and access to decision-making opportunities.

2. Feminization of poverty

176. Out of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty in the world, 70% are female, partly as a consequence of women's unequal access to economic opportunities⁴². For the rural women in absolute poverty, the number rose by 50% in the past 20 years⁴³. Among the factors being linked to the feminization of poverty are the unequal situation in the labour market and their status and power in the family.

177. Income: In the past 2 decades, participation of women in the labour force globally rose by 3.9% only from 35.6% in 1970 to 39.5% in 1990, compared to 58% participation of men in 1990. Progress made by women in the labour market has been disproportionate to the progress made in educational attainment. All regions of the world have a higher unemployment rate for women than men who are also the first to be fired during economic crisis.

178. Women's wages are considerably lower than that of the men as indicated by available data. It must be noted, however, that adequate, comparable and consistent data are lacking⁴⁴. Available comparable data indicates that women earn 75% of what men earn in non-agricultural labour⁴⁵. The ratio varies from 92% in the United Republic of Tanzania to 75% in the USA to 45% in Bangladesh. In Africa, available comparable data from 6 countries (see table 19 below) indicate an average rate of

⁴² UNDP Human Development Report, op. cit. p. 36

⁴³ 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, New York 1995, Chapter II

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ UNDP Human Development Report 1995, p. 37

67.8% of men's earnings. In sectors where labour is less organized, unionized or transparent as in the agricultural sector, the disparity is likely to be worse.

Table 19 WAGE DIFFERENTIALS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN AFRICA IN NON-AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Country	Female Wage as Percentage of Mens Wage
Tanzania	92.0
Kenya	84.7
Egypt	79.5
Zambia	78.0
Swaziland	73.0
Central African Republic	72.6

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1995, P. 36

179. The reasons for such disparity are varied. The best known include women's lack of bargaining power through organized unions; inadequate maternity leave; perceived rather than real greater absenteeism compared to men; and job desegregation. Women are also often denied opportunities for growth and recognition in their endeavours. The figures presented on Table 20 are explicit on the status of the female-headed households in the eight countries reviewed.

Table 20: POVERTY RATES IN HOUSEHOLDS HEADED BY WOMEN AND MEN

Sub - Saharan Africa	Difference in percentage of population in women-and men-headed households below the poverty line*	Percentage of households headed by a woman	Women per 100 men in the poorest quantile based on adult equivalents
Botswana	-2.7	62	192
Cote d'Ivoire	4.2	8	123
Ethiopia	2	8	127
Ghana (urban)	5.7	31	141
Ghana (rural)	5.3	28	140
Madagascar	11.6	10	109
Niger	-	-	113
Rwanda	-7.4	11	132

Source: World's Women 1995

IV. OVERVIEW OF CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

180. This report has focused on a number of factors that impact negatively on women's economic activities. In particular, their lack of adequate access to productive resources and decision-making have been discussed in some detail as well as their implications. This section presents a consolidated overview of other constraints that may or may not have been discussed directly in the report thus far, in an attempt to put women's economic activity status in perspective. In so doing, gender inequalities that result from gender blind structures and policies are briefly recapitulated.

A. GENDER INEQUALITIES AND THE LABOUR MARKET

1. Unequal access to education

181. The general tendency in the African culture to allocate societal roles according to gender has limited the educational opportunities for women and hence their participation in the labour market. It is assumed that for a woman to play her traditional role of mother and home manager, she does not require much education. In Ethiopia⁴⁶, for example, the first school for girls was not built until 1931 by the Orthodox Church which, along with the Mosque, were solely responsible for delivering formal education. In the United Republic of Tanzania⁴⁷, it was not until after 1974 that the majority of women had an opportunity to go to school when the Musoma Resolution was passed to institute universal primary education. In Kenya⁴⁸ as in many African countries, there is still a lag in opportunities for higher education for girls. Out of 372 schools in 1990, girls had access to only 46.2% including mixed schools. Besides while boys had 200 single sex schools, girls had only 107.

182. The high drop out rates for girls compared to boys in both primary and secondary schools is a major obstacle to their obtaining adequate education. Factors such as adolescent pregnancy, inability to pay fees and failure in exams all contribute to this phenomenon. In Tanzania the drop out rate in 1980 was 21.7% for girls compared to 17.9% for boys. In Kenya the enrolment and drop out imbalance in primary school is 18.4% against girls.

183. In vocational education and institutions of higher learning, women tend to specialize in the areas where occupational opportunities are likely to be limited or relatively low paid such as the arts, education and the social sciences as depicted in the example on Table 21. These are, of course, considered the traditional female areas to which they are oriented in high school. The employability and upward mobility potential is therefore curtailed right from high school. The virtual absence of women in the sectors that require scientific and technological knowledge is thus closely related to the attitudinal and mental conditioning that science and mathematics are too difficult and unsuitable for girls in school and at the work place.

⁴⁶ ILO/JASPA 1990 op. cit. Page.50

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Table 21: **Zambian Technical Training Institutions Graduation by Program**

Programme	# of Women	% of Women	# of Men	% of Men
Craft, technicians Technologists, engineers	48	3	1,798	97
Science and Paramedical	47	20	198	80
Applied Arts and Business	211	23	711	77
Secretarial	463	96	19	4
Teachers Training	71	18	330	82
Other	93	32	199	68
TOTAL	935	22	3,246	78

Source: CSO Women and Men in Zambia: Facts and Figures, 1991, in the Zambia National Report, p.22

2. Segregation and sex-labelling of jobs

184. Certain categories of jobs are considered to be unsuitable for women based on culture and perception of social propriety. Thus, in most African countries, it was rare to find women as guards and messengers until recently. The same case applies to high ranking diplomatic jobs such as ambassadors and under-secretaries. In Kenya⁴⁹, for example, in the decade of the 80s, ambassadors and under-secretaries increased from 31 to 54 while the numbers of women in the category rose from 1 in 1975 to 4 in 1985. The number of female Assistant Secretaries III, however, rose by 8% during the same period indicating the tendency to accept that this level was more appropriate for women in a field of men.

185. A similar trend is observed in the field of law where women are barely visible in such high-profile categories as Resident or District Magistrates. In the health profession, women are usually the invisible nurses, or the nutritionists who are placed at the bottom of the professional occupational ladder. Tables 22 and 23 demonstrate women's category and level of employment in the public service in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania respectively. Within the job groups in Table 22 which are organized hierarchically, the largest numbers of women are found in the lowest seven categories. In the highest 5 categories, they are absent in the highest two, and represent 4.1%, 5.1% and 6.0% in the other three. With regard to the job categories in Table 23, the highest percentage of women is in the nursing and midwives group where they represent 69% of the employees. They also make up a quarter of the teachers and a third of the clerks while elsewhere their numbers are insignificant. The picture in other African countries does not differ significantly from Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.

⁴⁹ ECA "Political Empowerment of Women" presented at the fifth African Regional Conference on Women, November 1994

Table 22: Employment in the public sector, by job group (1991)

JOB GROUP	CUMULATIVE			PERCENTAGE
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	FEMALE
A	41,477	12,060	53,537	22.5
B	9,235	2,815	12,050	23.4
C	18,257	6,004	24,261	24.7
D	24,885	10,457	35,342	29.6
E	15,122	3,318	18,440	18.0
F	62,470	14,296	76,766	18.6
G	18,249	4,595	22,844	20.1
H	9,931	2,344	12,275	19.1
J	5,460	823	6,283	13.1
K	5,032	916	5,948	15.4
L	2,748	472	3,220	14.7
M	1,203	163	1,366	11.9
N	603	47	650	7.2
P	280	15	295	5.1
Q	140	6	146	4.1
R	78	5	83	6.0
S	17	0	17	0.0
T	4	0	4	0.0
	215,191	58,336	273,527	

Source: ECA, "Political Empowerment of Women", 1994

Table 23 . **Tanzania: High - and Middle Level employees, by specialty (1980)**

POST OR SPECIALTY	TOTAL	WOMEN (%)
Physical scientists	597	6
Architects, ship officers	868	3
Aircraft, ship officers	70	1
Life scientists	2,255	1
Medical, dental, veterinary	1,937	12
Statisticians, Mathematicians	112	11
Nursing, Midwives	2, 174	69
Economists	552	10
Accountants	1,978	8
Jurists	104	12
Teachers	14,861	27
Authors, journalists	184	13
Sculptors, painters, photographers	415	4
Performing artists	55	3
Other professions	2,290	16
Administrators, managers	1,636	3
Clerical	9,677	31
Sales workers	633	14
Service workers	616	18
Others	7,973	8
Total	48,987	27

Source: ECA, : "Political Empowerment of Women", 1994

3. Marginalization of women in agriculture

186. In Africa, there has been a reduction of food output per capita since the beginning of the 1970s⁵⁰. In the 1930s Africa was a net food exporter; by the 1960s, 10% of its food had to be imported; by the 1980s, Africa was growing only 86% of its food. Food imports in Sub-Sahara Africa was equal to agriculture exports earnings by 1980.

187. Several factors undoubtedly have contributed to the food insufficiency including rapidly growing populations, growing environmental deterioration, political instability, as discussed earlier, failure of long-term planning, misplaced development priorities, economic crisis, falling commodity prices, national and international conflicts, the breakdown of traditional systems of agriculture such as shift cultivation in the cause of prolonged droughts etc.

188. But failure to understand the gender dimension in food production has also contributed to the current food crisis. Despite the fact that women grow more than 75% of food in Africa, national figures have significantly underestimated women's agricultural work. For example, in the 1970 census, national figures for women's agricultural work in Egypt⁵¹ were only 3.6%. A more accurate report showed that in the south of the country, 25-70% of the women were planting, tilling, and harvesting while half of the women were levelling and ploughing the land.

189. Women's agricultural work is overlooked because, like housework, it is unpaid and sometimes invisible as it takes place in the farm, or with livestock in and around the homestead. Analyses⁵² made on the multiple demands on women's time show that they have heavier and longer working days than men by as much as 43%. For instance, they contribute 2/3 of all hours spent in marketing in Africa and as one study⁵³ showed, women farmers work 56 days a year more than men. Besides, traditionally, most African women do independent work; they are not supposed to rely on their husbands or families. Rather, they are expected to have a separate sphere of work. (see Table 24 for a sample of division of labour in agricultural work). This, however, is different from the official conceptual model of the African farming family, with a male farmer who provides for his wife and children. It is no wonder women's work is invisible.

190. How has this failure to understand woman's work contributed to the food crisis? Women's independent farming work has remained unmodernized. They still irrigate with buckets from wells they have dug themselves in fields with fences they have built to keep out goats and sheep. They weed, harvest and hoe by hand or with digging sticks. They grind and pound food by hand. Development inputs into African agriculture have been concerned with cash crops such as coffee, rice, cotton, and cattle ranching. Women farmers do not have the benefit of cooperatives to market their products unlike the men who grow cash crops. In general men have complete control of the cash that comes from the cash crops, both for export and for urban consumption.

⁵⁰ Moose, J.C., op. cit. p. 125

⁵¹ Mosse, J.C., op. cit. p. 126

⁵² Barret, H.R. and Brown, A.W. (1989) "Time for development? The case of women's horticultural schemes in rural The Gambia", Scottish Geographical Magazine, 105; 1, pp 4-11

⁵³ FAO (1984) Women in Agriculture; No 1: Women in Agricultural Production, Rome: FAO, p.6.

191. Agricultural projects and innovations have benefited cash crop farming and the men who are in charge of it. Of the development aid given to Sahel, less than 1/5 is given for subsistence food production. In 1982, only 0.05% of total United Nations allocations to the agricultural sector went to programs of rural women. Far more funds were allocated to large-scale, high technology agricultural projects. In the same year, only 15% of those enrolled in African universities to take agricultural courses were women⁵⁴. Thus, using indigenous agricultural techniques and often pushed out to poor, marginal land, it is no wonder that women farmers have been unable to increase their productivity of crop yields to levels found in other parts of the world.

192. Whitehead asserts that there is enough research to establish "widespread systematic sexual discrimination against women in agriculture delivery systems"⁵⁵. Women's crops are not targeted for improvements and even innovative women farmers may be ignored for less dynamic male farmers. New technologies and seed varieties are not offered to women and if they are, it is not in ways that have taken into account current farming practices as in the case of Zaire⁵⁶ where improved cassava varieties and use of ox traction were introduced at women's expense. The need to increase food led to projects designed to improve productivity and efficiency i.e. food output. Thus, the use of cassava fl00, a new species was introduced but it needed to be harvested as soon as it was ready failing which it became inedible. This contrasted with the local species which could keep for long periods even after maturity and could be harvested as a life-saver when needed. The new species thus increased the work of women who are responsible for harvesting and post harvesting work. Similarly, the introduction of ox-traction for digging and levelling the fields ready for planting (men's work in Zaire) was efficient in clearing a lot more land than would otherwise have been cleared manually. However, once planting is done, the rest of the work on the farm is assured by women. Their work was thus increased as crop land was increased for their care while they still had to cope with their regular chores such as water collection, transportation of produce, grinding etc. Any time saved by ox-traction was taken up by farming in the larger fields. With this realization, efforts were made to use ox-traction to assist women in their chores.

193. With regard to cash crop agriculture, both men and women may grow them. And while there may not always be shortage of land for subsistence farming, relations between men and women are changing with regard to use of household labour. There is also increased competition as to which crops should benefit from the scarce resources of both labour and agricultural inputs. Women find their labour and time appropriated by their husbands for work in their cash crops fields yet they do not have control over the income generated by the sale of the cash crops. In addition, they have less time, and sometimes less land available for their agricultural work, and as such may find it hard to produce a surplus to sell for cash for their own and their children's needs.

⁵⁴ "Advocates for African Food Security/ Lessening the Burden for Women" (1987) Case Studies from Africa: Towards Food Security, p. 69

⁵⁵ Whitehead A (1991) " Food crisis and gender conflict in the African countryside" in Bernstein, H, Crow, B. and Macckintosh, m, (eds) The Food Question London: Earthscan Publications, p. 59

⁵⁶ Mosse, J.C. op. cit. p. 128

194. It must be pointed out, however, that the development of commercial agriculture has benefited some women who have found opportunities to increase their income. At the other end of the scale, there is an increasing number of women who maintain households without adequate land to meet consumption needs and therefore find themselves in the ranks of the casually employed rural female wage workers. However, for those women whose husbands have migrated into the urban areas, they are left responsible for all the agricultural work, yet, they are unable to benefit from credit, agricultural inputs or labour because the land is not in their name. As long as development planners continue to ignore the independent nature of women's own farming work, they continue to assume that women's work can be used as unpaid family labour on their husbands field. The increase in demand for their labour and time lead to increase in tension, conflict and violence against them. The loss of autonomy and the imposed dependence on the family unit is a source of much conflict.

4. Population pressure and urban poverty

195. In Africa, there are social and economic pressures towards high fertility. Where few resources exist beyond the family members, children provide labour and income for family survival. Sons are particularly important as security for old age. Given the high rates of infant and child mortality in Africa, families need to have more children to ensure that at least some of them survive. Many women and men want male children in quest for status, to make provisions for widowhood support, to ensure a family labour force to work on the land and contribute to the family income etc.

196. High fertility takes a toll on women⁵⁷, though, and in Africa, they have a 1 in 17 chance in a lifetime of dying because of a pregnancy-related complication (compare this with a 1 in 9,850 chance in Northern Europe). Between 1/4 and 1/3 of the half a million women who die each year of pregnancy-related complications do so following badly performed abortions. Many more fall seriously ill as a result of illegal abortions. There is enormous unmet need for safe, appropriate and affordable contraception as part of a broader package of reproductive health care for women. But the gender roles of millions of women precludes them from taking decisions over their fertility. Lack of adequate facilities, counselling and follow-up also preclude those who may be in a position to take decisions, thus nullifying their positions of choice. The impact of such situations is similar to that of coercive policies with regard to reproductive health. As for ramifications on women's economic activities, they range from low productivity to inability to play their productive role altogether, thus exacerbating the already critical state of poverty.

197. While the availability of the social and technical means of birth planning is a basic human right, services offered in Africa and in the South in general have been underpinned by a strong demographic rationale. A range of services that take into consideration the needs of women at different stages in their lives is essential. An integrated response is needed to tackle the interlined problem of poverty, and rapid population growth. It must include poverty alleviation, improvements in the health, education and autonomy of women as well as challenge the inequitable access to resources both within and between countries. All these issues are comprehensively addressed in the Dakar-Ngor Declaration on

⁵⁷ ECA, African Platform for Action: African Common Position for the Advancement of Women, Addis Ababa, 1995

Population and Development as well as the recommendations of the recent International Conference on Population and Development.

198. The growing population pressure has resulted in the explosion of the urban population which is growing at the rate of 5% per year. It is therefore expected that city sizes will double in 12 years. In many developing countries including Africa, 60% of this rapid growth is explained by high fertility rates which outpace significantly mortality rates, and only 40% by rural-urban migration.⁵⁸

199. Few cities in Africa are able to provide sanitation, water, housing, educational and health infrastructures for more than a minority of the urban dwellers. Most of the housing used by the poor is make-shift or decrepit. In some cities, the bulk of the population lives in slums and shanty towns which are estimated to be growing at the rate that is twice as fast as that of the cities as a whole. In these conditions, it is needless to say that health problems abound especially among children. At least 1 in 4 children in these conditions die of preventable diseases made worse by malnutrition before age 5. According to the World Commission on Environment and Development⁵⁹, growing cities need massive investment which should be increased by 65% between 1985 and 2000 in order to ensure the capacity to produce and manage their urban infrastructure. In the context of SAPs and the trimmed down economies, it is unlikely that such a target could be reached.

200. Poverty in the cities is a gender issue given women's central role in the management and welfare of their families. If city life is difficult, it is the women who bear the brunt of the difficulties. If water, fuel, and food are difficult to find, it is women who have to scrounge for them as in the rural areas.

201. The paradox at the heart of urban life, however, is that most of those who move there consider themselves to have made a positive move. At least they find work there even if in the informal sector. The concentration of commerce, industry, administration and amenities in the urban areas means there is a growing middle class which needs houses, services and food. Their houses are built by the unskilled migrant labour; they employ servants while vegetables, flowers, fruits, and other goods are sold by poor women and men. Many of the services that make life easy and convenient for the middle class are provided by those in the informal sector, most of whom are women.

⁵⁸ Moose, J.C. op.cit. p. 132

⁵⁹ As quoted by Moose, J. C. op. cit. p. 133

B. Inadequate employment policies and programmes

1. Outdated labour laws and practices

202. Various policies in African countries as well as international labour instruments exist to protect both men and women against discrimination in employment. Special protection is also accorded to women who are lumped together with youth with regard to various industrial job categories. Some of these provisions, unfortunately end up encouraging discrimination in employment against women. These include work in mines, quarries and other extractive trades; construction, reconstruction, maintenance, repairs or demolition, railways, train-ways, telephones etc. except under certain specified circumstances.

203. Women are also barred from underground work unless they are in management positions, in health, welfare services or research which do not involve manual labour. Considering that the conditions that precipitated such regulations in the 19th century in Great Britain no longer exist, this is an area that requires reform in keeping with international standards on the protection of workers against discrimination.

204. Another common form of discrimination against women concerns housing allowance for married women, mostly in the public service where certain benefits are paid in kind. In some countries, those women living with their husbands are automatically excluded from such benefits on that basis unless they are able to successfully argue otherwise. There is also the case of maternity leave for women which are paid at lower rates than earned annual leave. Reproduction and child care roles are thus undervalued in relation to productive work activities.

205. Absence of legislation with regard to "equal pay for work of equal worth" also creates a constraint. Gimmicks in title or job categories are used to discriminate against individuals doing similar work. When there is an attempt to cover up preference for men for certain jobs over women, such vague distinctions in job announcements as "marketing officer" versus "marketing analyst" or "nurse" versus "nursing officer" are used. The absence of appropriate legislation to fight such practices makes it difficult to challenge.

206. It is also not unusual to find regulations concerning workers' benefits that exclude women from becoming contributors. Such was the case with regard to the National Social Security Fund Act in Kenya until it was amended in 1975 to end the discrimination. On the other hand, there are those benefits for which workers may be asked to contribute but cannot benefit from by virtue of their job status. The Kenya National Hospital Insurance Act of 1966 covers all workers without distinction yet benefits resulting from the contributions are only given to higher salaried workers. This excludes most of the women in the rural areas. Such discriminatory practices should be eliminated.

207. Other discriminatory practices include working women having to prove that their husbands will not claim travel allowances to go on leave before they can receive theirs. This was the case in the United Republic of Tanzania where such practices contradict the terms and conditions of employment where by all workers are entitled to leave with pay and to travel allowances for spouses and children.

208. Lack of day care centers or creches where working mothers can leave their children during the day is another form of discrimination against them. The few day care centers that exist are out of reach for the majority of the women due to their exorbitant costs. Yet for women, demand for such facilities may be a real risk to their jobs including initial employment, given the employer's resistance to the additional expenses.

2. New impetus to policy formulation

209. Recent policies and programmes to promote women's employment got their impetus from the declaration of the United Nations Women's Decade 1975 - 1985, the formulation of the Arusha strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985 etc. The Arusha Strategies complemented by the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women formulated major objectives for women's employment. The objectives were recommended mostly to governments to:

- (a) integrate women in policy formulation and planning with a view to achieving their greater involvement in the development process and improving their access to means of production.
- (b) eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment;
- (c) promote women's employment through setting up new employment schemes especially in the industrial sector and supporting industries that employ large numbers of women and those owned by women;
- (d) support women in the informal sector activities in order to improve their role and working conditions and to promote and support women's entrepreneurship development;
- (e) provide equal access to education and training for both men and women.

210. More awareness was created by such policy instruments as the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) and the Action Plans of the Women's Global Conferences in Mexico in 1975 and in Copenhagen in 1980 which have resulted in valiant efforts by governments to address women's employment needs. Some of the efforts made have been of an institutional nature such as the creation of women's national machineries to advise governments on the formulation and implementation of appropriate policies to facilitate the greater participation of women in the labour market. By 1987, 40 such machineries had been created with the active encouragement of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and by 1995, nearly every African country had such a machinery. Most of the machineries have programmes of action to promote various aspects of women's participation in the labour market; improvement of their working conditions; identification and implementation of development projects for women at local and grassroots levels; and promotion of equity through legal and institutional reform. Some of the programmes are reviewed briefly below as they exist in the urban and rural areas.

3. Some programmes to promote women's economic activities

211. Some countries offer such institutional support as entrepreneurship development schemes intended to benefit women as well as men in small scale industries and other activities in the informal sector. Botswana⁶⁰, for example, provides training and advisory services in entrepreneurship as well as credit to women to start small scale industries and for their expansion. Mauritius⁶¹ under its scheme in the Development Bank of Mauritius in 1984, offers loans without security to small entrepreneurs. The scheme includes such incentives as non-refundable grants of 20% of the loan and a low interest rate of 2% per annum. Unfortunately, in 1988, only 7% of the loan was given to women.

212. While the activities performed by women's institutes are well articulated and integrated in the national development programmes in some countries, effectiveness is hampered by lack of human and financial resources. Allocation of resources tends to favour the women's associations under the ruling party women's wings. Yet such associations suffer from such problems as low productivity; gap between supply and demand of their outputs; high administrative costs paid to superfluous professionals and administrators of the projects; and lack of adequate skills.

213. Most African governments have also adopted policies to eliminate discrimination against the education of girls. They have also adopted policies for adult literacy including women, thereby enhancing opportunities for their employment. However, eradication of unequal access to education between boys and girls remains a challenge as discussed above.

214. With regard to employment, relevant laws protecting workers are contained in such acts as the Employment Acts that deal with wages, leave, housing and welfare; National Social Security Act; the Industrial Training Act; the Factories Act; and the Workmen's Compensation Act. The specific needs of women workers have been addressed through such provisions as paid maternity leave.

215. The bulk of the women workers who are in the informal sector, however, are excluded from such legal frameworks. They have neither maternity nor sick -leave benefits. The existing social security schemes do not cover them either. Instead, they often report stories of harassment from tax collectors or even officials from municipalities with regard to "hawking".

216. Schemes to generate direct employment have been mostly championed by NGOs and the United Nations agencies. They have been active in many African countries, assisting in the formulation and implementation of income generation activities for women. The emphasis on most of the projects include arts and crafts, farming, alternative sources of energy, credit and labour saving technology. The success of such projects has been limited, however, by failure to help the women to organize themselves into production units or cooperatives with access to sustainable credit and follow up technical assistance. Entrepreneurial skills in such areas as book-keeping and management are taught only in a few projects. Availability of raw materials locally has also been a major constraint.

⁶⁰ ILO/JASPA 1990 op. cit. pp. 96-97

⁶¹ Ibid.

Furthermore, collaboration among the involved organizations has been inadequate and as such has minimized the benefits of sharing similar experiences and knowledge exchange.

217. Women, on the other hand, have been actively organizing themselves around their multiple roles. In an attempt to enhance their self reliance, they have formed mutual aid groups some of which are more formal than others. The United Nations Women's Decade served as an important impetus to such groups even in countries where they did not exist traditionally. The worsening socio-economic crisis and the increasing burden that has fallen on women in the care and maintenance of their households have served to sustain the groups. Their activities range from large scale farming, commodity trade, property rental, transportation, professional and church activities to home improvement.

218. The mutual aid income generating groups, however, are plagued with a number of problems. One well-known constraint is failure to match groups with projects they can handle depending on such aspects as their evolutionary stage and financial base. Another common problem is lack of mechanisms for follow-up of group activities once an organization has been helped to set itself up. Without adequate preparation for the group to be self sustaining, the rate of survival of the groups is quite low. Many groups also consist of members who are illiterate with few entrepreneurial skills such as book-keeping, accounting, budgeting etc. Besides, it is rare that market surveys are conducted before groups launch various ventures, whether agricultural or non-agricultural. A number of the projects thus turn out to be unremunerable pursuits. Inadequate financial assistance to women's groups at the beginning of their income generating activities is also a well known constraint and when it dries up groups are forced to fold up. It is imperative that such groups are encouraged to ensure that their resource base is sustainable before they embark on a project that may end up worsening their economic situation.

219. With regard to the rural sector, few countries, if any, have a coherent employment promotion policy. Yet, it can provide employment and an alternative source of income for the landless and an increasing number of artisans and traders. It also has a great potential for supplementing incomes of households during slack seasons particularly for small scale farmers or household with very little land. Besides, it can stimulate agricultural production by providing essential inputs such as farm tools, and market outlets for agriculture. Employment in the rural areas is therefore one of the commodities and services required to meet basic needs while at the same time it could contribute to skill formation and the development of entrepreneurship. Finally it could assist in generating and in saving foreign exchange through production for export and through import substitution.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

220. This report depicts an upward trend in the rate of women employment in the 1970s and the 1980s up to 1985. Thereafter, however, the growth eroded drastically and continued to drop consistently at a rate that was twice as high as that of the men. The trend was largely influenced by the retrenchment policies that targeted the low unskilled categories in the 1980s following the economic crisis that set in by mid-decade and persisted to the present in most African countries.

221. Agriculture continued to be the highest absorber of the economically active women. Optimal productivity, however, was greatly hampered by the marginalization of women as beneficiaries of updated technology and skills, inadequate access to productive resources, and the consequences of SAPs that put disproportionate burden on women as subsidies and social services were reduced to bare minimum.

222. Persistent unequal access to economic activities contributed to the feminization of poverty. The number of women living in absolute poverty rose by 50% in the past 20 years. Some of the factors that contributed to this situation included unequal access to education, marginalization to low levels of employment, sex-labelling of jobs to exclude women, unequal remuneration, unequal access to reproductive resources, inadequate participation in political activities and decision-making etc.

223. In the area of education, there was some improvement in the rate of enrolment of girls at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in most parts of the continent during the last 20 years. However, the gap in total enrolment and retention rates between girls and boys remained a source of concern. Moreover, the observed progress in women education was not reflected in the labour market. Africa, like other regions, had a higher unemployment rate of women than men. Besides, women already in the labour market continued to earn less than men.

224. Increasingly, the informal sector became the answer to those women whose path to employment and/or economic growth was blocked. They became self-employed in their micro and medium-size enterprises. As they gained access and control to capital and other productive resources, they developed their potential to heights that would otherwise have remained buried under gender stereotypes and subsequent marginalization.

225. The general trend for the rate of participation of women in the labour market was positively correlated to their level of education and the level of economic development as depicted by growth in industrialization. Simultaneously, employment of women, continued to be closely tied to role labelling and gender stereotypes. Consequently, correlation between the level of education and the quality of employment was not always evident. Access by women to decision-making in critical numbers therefore remains a necessary condition in the search for lasting solutions to this problem.

226. Women economic activities ranging from remunerated to unremunerated ones, are performed in the workplace as well as in the home front, both in the formal and in the informal sectors. Structural, attitudinal, cultural, religious factors etc. continued to obstruct the economic progress of women. Unequal access to education and training, hiring and remuneration, promotion and job mobility are some of the better documented examples. Besides, there is a tendency to undervalue and under-record women's unremunerated work, particularly their contribution in agriculture and their production of goods and services in family enterprises. As for their domestic and community work, it is just not recorded or recognized in quantitative terms and as such, it cannot be valued in the national accounts. Additionally, rigid role allocation that does not allow for adequate sharing of family responsibilities are among the problems that interfere with effective participation of women in the economic sector.

227. Wage employment patterns indicate that women were more likely to be absorbed in the public than the private sectors. Thus SAPs and other adjustment policies impacted on women disproportionately. Employment creation strategies, on the other hand, were not based on sufficient gender analysis that would reveal female and male employment patterns, thereby indicating possibilities of optimizing certain tendencies or instituting change for best results.

228. The virtual absence of support structures that would facilitate women's optimal involvement in economic activities also eroded the quality of women's contribution in the economic sector. Similarly, attitudinal obstacles that have restricted women's access to such areas as science and technology, economic management and decision-making have further curtailed the scope of their contribution. In particular, women's near-absence in the fora where decisions that influence the distribution of time between remunerated and unremunerated work, access to resources and by extension, economic power, has resulted in the continuation of policies and programmes that perpetuate inequalities between women and men as individuals, in the family and in society.

229. It is therefore necessary to undertake comprehensive analysis of the existing economic policies to ensure the adequate incorporation of the gender perspective thereby ensuring absence of disparities between men and women as actors and beneficiaries in the economic sector.

B. Recommendations

230. **The African Platform for Action: the African common position for the advancement of women** addressed the issue of women's participation in the economic sector. Finding the economic status of women unsatisfactory, the APA retained **"women's poverty, insufficient food security, and lack of economic empowerment"** as one of the eleven critical areas of concern that require specific prescriptive measures to improve women's situation. Similarly, the Global Platform for Action, the outcome of the fourth World Conference on Women retained 2 critical areas of concern related to women's participation in the economic sector, namely **"women and poverty"**, and **"women and the economy"**. Here also, explicit objectives towards improving the economic condition of women and the appropriate actions to be taken are outlined systematically.

231. In reviewing the state of the African women's participation in the economic sector, this report underscored the critical importance of implementing the recommendations offered by the regional and the global framework documents. They are valid, and timely and require immediate action if the

sustainable transformation that is envisioned is to become a reality in liberating women's energies and potential to become full participants and beneficiaries in the economic sector. The following is therefore just a brief reiteration of some of the major points covered in the framework documents for emphasis:

- (a) African governments, NGOs and all development actors should hasten to draw up concrete plans for the implementation of the APA and the GPA in order to hasten the process of the advancement of women in all sectors;
- (b) Governments and multilateral institutions should include women in critical numbers to participate in the formulation of policies and programmes on structural adjustments, loans and grants and make conscious effort to incorporate gender concerns in these goals;
- (c) Governments, researchers and NGOs should ensure that there is full visibility of women's unremunerated work with regard to its scope, and distribution in order to facilitate better sharing of responsibilities;
- (d) Governments, researchers and NGOs should undertake an analysis of the impact of globalization on women's economic participation;
- (e) All development actors should intensify their research to provide data on various situations women find themselves in yet have not been documented adequately to facilitate appropriate policy and programmes interventions e.g. property ownership;
- (f) Governments should incorporate comprehensively the gender perspective in economic policies to ensure equality between men and women in:
 - (i) Access to employment, control over productive resources and appropriate working conditions;
 - (ii) Access to markets, information and technology and business support services;
 - (iii) Being beneficiaries to capacity building services and commercial networks;
 - (iv) Being beneficiaries of measures to eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination;
 - (v) As beneficiaries of harmonization of work and family responsibilities.
- (g) Governments should promote women's economic independence by addressing the structural causes of feminization of poverty;

(h) Governments should reformulate macro-economic policies to address the tendency to focus exclusively on the formal sector thereby impeding initiatives of women without considering their different impact on men and women;

(i) Governments and the private sector should promote a people-centred sustainable growth and development through the provision of basic education, life-long education, literacy and training, and primary health care for girls and women; and

(j) Governments should ensure the full participation of women in all sectors of society on the basis of equality including decision-making and access to power.

232. For details on specific actions that should be taken, reference should be made to the "African Platform for Action: the African common position for the advancement of women" and the "Global Platform for Action"

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Annex I: Percentage Distribution of Labour Force by Sex 1994

Country	Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Algeria	10	16	21	34	69	51
Angola	87	58	2	17	11	25
Benin	64	54	4	12	31	34
Botswana	78	41	3	31	19	27
Burkina Faso	85	85	4	6	11	9
Burundi	98	87	1	4	1	9
Cameroon	64	51	4	16	32	33
Cape Verde	14	50	31	30	54	21
Central African Republic	63	60	5	12	31	28
Chad	89	75	2	7	19	18
Comoros	84	76	3	10	13	15
Congo	83	45	2	19	15	36
Cote d'Ivoire	62	50	8	13	30	38
Djibouti	80	71	8	11	12	18
Egypt	8	42	20	25	71	33
Equatorial Guinea	82	38	3	22	15	39
Eritrea	80	71	8	11	12	18
Ethiopia	80	71	8	11	12	18
Gabon	84	63	3	18	13	19
The Gambia	91	74	3	12	6	14
Ghana	50	55	17	20	33	24
Guinea	84	70	6	14	9	16
Guinea-Bissau	91	72	2	6	7	22
Kenya	82	73	4	11	14	15
Lesotho	86	79	3	7	11	13
Labour	82	65	2	13	16	22
Libya	32	16	15	30	54	53
Madagascar	92	68	2	11	6	21
Malawi	92	63	3	17	5	19
Mali	75	83	4	2	21	15
Mauritania	82	46	4	16	14	38
Mauritius	24	21	16	26	60	53
Morocco	27	35	46	30	28	34
Mozambique	97	68	1	16	2	15
Namibia	47	32	3	32	50	36
Niger	92	84	0	4	8	12
Nigeria	67	64	7	16	26	20
Reunion	2	16	4	26	94	58
Rwanda	98	86	1	6	2	8
Senegal	87	72	3	10	10	18
Sierra Leone	78	56	4	22	17	23
Somalia	87	61	2	15	11	24
South Africa	13	11	17	48	70	40
Sudan	84	60	5	10	11	29
Swaziland	78	60	4	16	18	24
Togo	64	72	8	13	28	15
Tunisia	47	25	44	46	10	28
Uganda	85	80	3	8	12	12
Tanzania	89	73	2	10	9	17
Zaire	92	49	2	22	6	29
Zambia	82	65	3	14	15	21
Zimbabwe	80	62	4	17	16	21

Source: The World's Women 1995, PP. 147 - 148

Annex: II

ADULT ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATE (PERCENTAGE)

Country	1970		1980		1990	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Northern Africa	8	82	12	79	21	75
Sub-Saharan Africa	57	90	54	89	53	83

SOURCES: For 1970 and 1980, prepared by the Statistical Division of the United Nations Secretariat from estimated economic activity rates in Economically Active Population - Estimates, 1950 - 1980, Projections, 1985 - 2025, six volumes (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1986); for 1990, prepared by the Statistical Division from ILO: Year Book of Labour Statistics, various years up to 1993 (Geneva) and national census and survey reports.

Annex: III

FEMALE LITERACY RATE

Name of countries	Rate 1992	Female as % of male 1992	Rural as % of urban 1990
Libya	57.4	67	-
Botswana	56.7	72	-
Tunisia	50.2	67	-
Algeria	44.1	63	-
South Africa	80.3	99	-
Egypt	36.1	58	34
Gabon	48.2	69	-
Morocco	27.7	52	-
Zimbabwe	77.9	87	-
Congo	62.1	78	-
Cape Verde	57.5	74	-
Swaziland	72.6	96	-
Cameroon	47.5	66	44
Ghana	49.0	67	-
Kenya	65.2	78	-
Lesotho	58.8	74	-
Sao Tome/Principie	-	-	-
Madagascar	-	-	-
Zambia	67.4	81	-
Comoros	48.4	77	-
Togo	32.9	52	-
Nigeria	42.1	66	-
Equatorial Guinea	63.7	73	-
Zaire	63.5	75	-
Sudan	30.6	56	-

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1995

Annex: III (Cont.)

Name of countries	Rate 1992	Female as % of male 1992	Rural as % of urban 1990
Cote d'Ivoire	26.1	56	-
Tanzania	52.4	68	-
Central African Republic	45.6	72	-
Mauritania	24.9	52	-
Senegal	20.7	51	-
Djibouti	29.5	51	11
Benin	21.9	49	-
Rwanda	47.1	70	-
Malawi	38.8	55	-
Uganda	46.4	65	72
Labour	19.8	39	-
The Gambia	22.1	45	-
Chad	31.3	53	-
Guinea Bissau	38.9	60	-
Burundi	20.1	43	-
Mozambique	20.4	38	-
Guinea	19.3	41	-
Burkina Faso	8.0	29	12
Ethiopia	22.6	53	-
Mali	19.6	56	28
Sierra Leone	15.9	38	-
Niger	5.8	30	-
Total Sub-Sahara	44.6	66	-
Total Arab States	40.7	62	-

Annex:IV

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Name of countries	Female life expectancy at birth 1992	Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births 1980-1992	Women using contraception % 1986 - 1993	Total fertility rate 1992
Ghana	57.8	1000	13	6.0
Kenya	57.7	170	33	6.3
Lesotho	63.0	-	23	5.2
Madagascar	58.0	570	17	6.1
Zambia	49.7	150	15	6.0
Cameroon	56.5	-	-	7.1
Togo	56.8	420	12	6.6
Nigeria	52.0	800	6	6.5
Equatorial Guinea	49.6	-	-	5.9
Zaire	53.7	800	8	6.7
Sudan	54.4	550	9	5.7
Cote d'Ivoire	52.4	-	-	7.4
Tanzania	53.6	340	10	5.9
Central African Republic	51.9	600	-	5.7
Mauritania	53.1	-	3	5.4
Senegal	50.3	600	7	6.1
Djibouti	50.0	-	-	5.8
Benin	49.3	160	-	7.1
Rwanda	48.9	210	21	6.6
Malawi	46.2	400	13	7.2
Uganda	46.2	550	5	7.3
Laos	57.0	-	6	6.8
The Gambia	46.6	-	12	5.6
Chad	49.1	960	-	5.9
Guinea Bissau	45.1	700	-	5.8
Angola	48.1	-	-	7.2
Burundi	51.9	-	9	6.8
Somalia	48.6	1,100	-	7.0
Mozambique	-	300	-	7.0
Guinea	45.0	800	-	7.0
Burkina Faso	49.0	810	8	6.5
Ethiopia	49.1	560	4	7.0
Mali	47.6	2,000	5	7.1
Sierra Leone	40.6	450	-	6.5
Niger	48.1	700	4	7.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	52.4	606	15	6.3
Arab States	63.3	294	34	4.8

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1995

Annex: V

WOMEN IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

Country	Female children economically active rate (% age 10 - 14)		Women's average age at marriage as of men's				Fertility rate (per 1000 women age 15 - 19)		Female refugees (thousands)	Female refugees as % of male refugees
			Years		As % of men's					
	1970	1990	1970	1990	1970	1990	1970	1990	1993	1993
Mauritius	2.3	1.4	22.5	22.8	83	82	58.0	44.9	-	-
Seychelles	-	-	22.6	23.8	88	90	105.2	63.0	-	-
Libya	2.7	1.4	18.7	-	76	-	271.9	-	-	-
Botswana	15.3	4.3	24.8	25.0	85	-	77.0	125.0	-	-
Tunisia	-	-	20.9	25.0	77	-	46.3	17.0	-	-
Algeria	1.3	0.9	19.3	23.7	79	86	-	144.0	-	-
South Africa	1.5	0.0	-	-	-	-	86.7	124.0	-	-
Egypt	4.9	3.5	20.0	22.0	76	-	-	76.0	-	-
Namibia	18.3	3.7	-	-	-	-	-	109.0	-	-
Morocco	8.7	10.3	19.4	-	78	-	-	49.0	-	-
Zimbabwe	33.4	21.3	-	20.7	-	-	29.6	109.0	-	-
Congo	22.1	9.5	19.6	-	74	-	107.0	-	-	-
Cape Verde	6.2	5.0	-	-	-	-	-	77.9	2.0	87
Swaziland	33.6	20.8	-	29.0	-	92	-	-	-	-
Cameroon	28.8	16.1	-	19.7	-	-	-	164.0	24.1	121
Ghana	8.1	3.6	19.4	21.1	72	-	-	124.0	71.4	92
Kenya	36.6	27.1	-	21.1	-	-	-	152.0	140.4	114

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1995

Annex: V (Cont.)

Country	Female children economically active rate (% age 10 - 14)		Women's average age at marriage as of men's 113				Fertility rate (per 1000 women age 15 - 19)		Female refugees (thousands)	Female refugees as % of male refugees
			Years		As % of men's					
	1970	1990	1970	1990	1970	1990	1970	1990	1993	1993
Lesotho	15.0	9.9	20.3	-	-	78	-	-	-	-
Madagascar	34.4	24.0	-	-	-	-	131.7	-	-	-
Zambia	20.9	13.9	18.2	20.0	75	-	-	156.0	14.3	99
Comoros	37.5	28.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Togo	35.5	25.9	18.5	20.3	70	-	-	127.0	-	-
Nigeria	19.5	12.8	-	-	-	-	-	144.0	-	-
Equatorial Guinea	31.8	14.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zaire	30.3	14.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	124.2	98
Sudan	10.1	6.3	18.7	24.1	72	-	-	69.0	179.4	104
Cote d'Ivoire	33.8	15.9	-	-	-	-	-	193.0	128.7	105
Tanzania	44.6	33.3	17.9	20.6	74	-	-	144.0	-	-
CAR	44.5	33.3	17.9	20.6	74	-	-	170.0	16.5	92
Mauritania	14.7	7.7	-	23.1	-	78	-	78.0	-	-
Senegal	43.6	31.7	-	23.1	-	78	-	-	30.2	110
Djibouti	38.1	28.0	-	19.3	-	71	-	-	18.0	112
Benin	28.1	18.4	-	-	-	-	-	21.0	61.9	114
Rwanda	47.5	40.0	20.1	-	89	-	-	-	-	-

Annex: V (Cont.)

Country	Female children economically active rate (% age 10 - 14)		Women's average age at marriage as of men's				Fertility rate (per 1000 women age 15 - 19)		Female refugees (thousands)	Female refugees as % of male refugees
			114							
			Years		As % of men's					
	1970	1990	1970	1990	1970	1990	1970	1990	1993	1993
Malawi	43.5	29.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uganda	39.1	31.2	17.7	19.0	74	-	179.0	187.0	-	-
Labour	19.9	13.3	18.7	19.7	70	-	217.0	-	1.1	92
The Gambia	36.6	27.2	-	-	-	-	156.0	-	-	-
Chad	11.5	8.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea Bissau	35.4	25.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Angola	31.3	18.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.7	112
Burundi	47.5	40.0	21.5	21.9	91	-	-	52.0	0.9	100
Somalia	32.4	20.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mozambique	50.9	36.4	22.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea	36.3	25.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	287.3	99
Burkina Faso	47.1	39.1	-	-	-	-	152.0	5.1	-	-
Ethiopia	35.4	25.5	-	-	-	-	-	102.4	18.3	71
Mali	15.0	12.3	-	16.4	-	-	-	201.0	-	-
Sierra Leone	19.0	8.6	-	18.0	-	66	212.0	-	-	-
Niger	49.9	40.5	-	16.3	-	69	142.0	-	-	-
Sub-Sahara Africa	28.3	19.6	-	-	-	-	-	139.2	930T	-
Arab States	6.4	5.3	19.8	22.8	77	-	-	73.9	210T	-

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