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5 years after Beijing:

What efforts in favour of African Women?

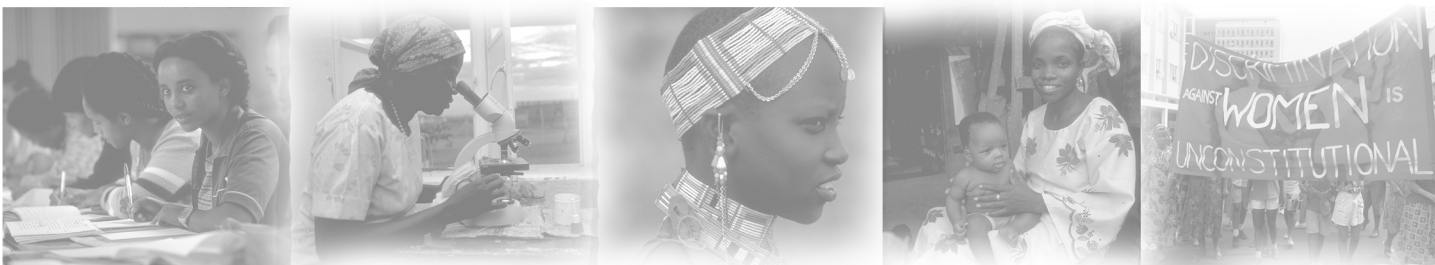


Assessing Women and Education

September 2001

5 years after Beijing:

What efforts in favour of African women?



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Introduction

This report aims to assess the progress made in the implementation of the Dakar Platform for Action and the Beijing Programme of Action with regard to women's education, five years after the conferences. It deals specifically with women's inadequate access to education, training and science and technology in Africa. The workshop discussions on this theme during the sixth African Regional Conference on Women, held from 22 to 26 November 1999 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, made valuable contributions to the subject. That conference assessed the progress achieved in the 12 critical areas of the Platforms, one of which is women's education.

In assessing the achievements, this report takes into consideration the educational objectives of the Platform and the Programme and how they are matched by those of African countries. It relies on statistical data; documents, particularly country reports; and interviews, including with officials of governments, regional and subregional inter-governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It emphasizes the process, rate and level of implementation of the national plans of action prepared in response to the Dakar and the Beijing recommendations.

1. Objectives and measures

The Dakar and Beijing programs maintain that the right to education is a fundamental human right which has vital implications for the individual and for economic and social development. Acknowledging that “education is a key factor in development and in the welfare of society”, the Dakar Conference recommended that the education of women and girls should be given priority in order to counter the discrimination and marginalization they suffered in the past. The Conference therefore enjoined governments and civil society:

- (a) To provide an education that meets the needs of women and girls and to eliminate discrimination in national programmes and policies on universal primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as in the promotion of adult literacy;
- (b) To ensure gender equality in formal and no formal school attendance, as well as in the quality and results of education by the year 2000; and
- (c) To take positive measures to encourage, especially young women, to take interest in science and technology as areas offering the best job opportunities and prospects for carrier development;

The recommendations of the Dakar Platform and the Beijing Programme are identical, except for a few differences in the way they are formulated.

In general, their proposals are:

- (a) To give women and girls access equal to men’s in education, in order to meet their needs;
- (b) To eliminate illiteracy among women; and
- (c) To improve their access to professional training, scientific and technical education and continuing education;
- (d) To establish non-discriminatory systems of education and training;

- (e) To allocate adequate resources for educational reforms and to monitor the implementation of these reforms;
- (f) To establish both normal and continuing education for girls and women.

2. The framework for the implementation of the platforms

The issues concerning the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing programmes cannot be separated from the global economic context and the political and social situation prevailing in African countries following the fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995. In the 1990s, three main factors affected the educational systems of African countries: armed conflicts, the economic crisis and increased poverty of people.

2.1 Armed conflicts, economic crisis and increasing poverty

During these years political developments in Africa were marked by countries' transition to multi-party democracy and the search for peace as a means of conflict resolution.

Nevertheless, this "democratization" of the continent was also marked by fratricidal wars which ravaged countries, ruined their economies and displacing thousands of people, mostly women and children. Seventeen out of the 53 countries in Africa have experienced or are experiencing conflicts.

In many countries, political pressure caused mainly by mismanagement, social injustice, the effects of structural adjustment and the existence of ethnocratic regimes, to mention the most obvious, have prevented governments from paying the required attention to such development issues as education.

The massive destruction of the infrastructure by these conflicts and an almost permanent atmosphere of insecurity have seriously compromised the vague efforts made to save the educational system from complete collapse.

But the picture of Africa is not only one of woes. In fact, one policy document released by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in 1996, after the Beijing Conference, described Africa's development as a typical glass in which "we see of Africa, half empty or half full. Africa is in a development crisis but it is also full of dynamism with enormous potentials". The document, gives for the continent as a whole, such crisis indicators as low economic growth versus high population growth rate, falling incomes and investments, declining food production, continuous social upheavals, environmental degradation, mediocre institutions, market deficiencies, reduction in official development assistance, and the external debt burden. It, however, notes that Africa's dynamism, immense diversity and potentials have yet to be exploited, and that many more of its countries are better managed and are yielding improved economic results through reforms. The continent's civil society is developing and women are increasingly being involved in development management.

3. Some statistics on girls' education in Africa

According to the UNESCO Statistical Yearbook for 1998, 111 million of the 179 million literate adults above 15 years of age were women, that is, 66.5 per cent. The same source gives the age and population pyramid for the 0 -24 years age group, as follows:

0 - 4 years	121,941,000
5 - 9 years	103,773,000
10 - 14 years	89,557,000
15 - 19 years	75,766,000
20 - 24 years	63,471,000

For this group, the gross ratio of school enrolment for girls in 1996 and 1995 was as follows:

Primary level :	45 per cent
Secondary level:	44 per cent
Tertiary level :	37 per cent

The figure declined steadily as the levels increased, as shown by the table below.

LEVEL	1995%	1996%
PRIMARY	71.2	71.2
SECONDARY	28	29.5
TERTIARY	4.4	4.7

Source: UNESCO, 1998

More significant is the fact that these seemingly remarkable data conceal the very low enrolment of girls in schools. Compared with the 1980 statistics, the enrolment of girls has progressed slowly.

LEVEL	1995%	1996%
PRIMARY	160	164
SECONDARY	258	273
TERTIARY	353	389

Source: UNESCO 1998

Women account for 44 per cent of the teaching staff at the primary school level and 36 per cent at the secondary school level. In 1996, the gross ratios of school enrolment in Africa for both sexes combined stood at 70 per cent at the primary level, 30 per cent at the secondary level and 5 per cent at the higher education level. The ratio of illiteracy among adults above 25 years of age is still high in the continent. Considerable efforts have been made in functional literacy. Such countries as Senegal, Mali, Nigeria and Rwanda are particularly active in this area. The enrolment ratio in pre-school education is 3 per cent for the whole continent, with a preponderance of private schools - 98 per cent.

In 1995, the distribution of enrolment by type of education was as shown below:

General education:	86 per cent
Formal education:	2.1per cent
Technical education:	11 per cent

Compared with 1996, the figures were as follows:

TYPE OF EDUCATION	1995%	1996%
General Education	86.9	87.3
Formal Education	2.1	2.1
Technical Education	11	10.6

During the same year, the distribution of teaching staff by type of education was: 81.7 per cent for establishments offering general education, 3 per cent for those offering specialized education and 15.3 per cent for technical-training establishments. The corresponding figures for 1996 were: 82.1 per cent, 2.9 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively.

4. Commitments made by African governments

Acknowledging the importance of women and girls' education in development, the Pan-African Conference in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched

an urgent appeal to African governments in 1993, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, to consider the education of girls an absolute priority. The recommendations of that conference were taken largely into consideration in the preparation of the Beijing Conference.

Similar meetings were organized in various places and at various times in Africa, including the following: Nouakchott (1977); Addis Ababa (1978); Rabat (1979); Lusaka (1979); and Abuja (1989). Two excerpts from the reports of these meetings are included in the Lagos Plan of Action (1980); the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action on Population in Africa and Self-reliant Development (1984); the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (1990); the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (1991); the Dakar/NGOs Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development (1992); the Ouagadougou Declaration on the education of girls (1993); and the Kampala Plan of Action on Women and Peace (1993) adopted in 1994 by the OAU Council of Ministers and UNDP.

These fora acknowledged that the participation of women is a precondition for the economic and social development of Africa.

More specifically, the African Heads of State and Government, at the thirty-first ordinary session of the Organization of African Unity held from 26 to 28 June 1995, in Addis Ababa, endorsed the Dakar Platform on women with a Declaration requesting an immediate review of the critical areas contained in the document, especially:

- (a) Women's inadequate access to education, training as well as science and technology; and
- (b) Improvement of women's health, including family planning and people-oriented programmes.

Through this Declaration, member States reiterated their concern for African women's access to education, primary health care services and family planning. They requested their delegates in Beijing to pay particular attention to these issues and propose appropriate recommendations and action programmes which should be used as reference in all activities aimed at establishing gender equality.

The Conference of OAU Heads of State and Government, held in Yaounde, Cameroon, the following year, adopted a resolution proclaiming 1997-2006, the Education Decade in Africa. Consequently,

the Heads of State and Government committed themselves to implementing universal education and to working for the elimination of gender-based discrimination. In conformity with this resolution, the Conference of African Ministers of Education (COMEDAF 1) adopted a programme of action in Harare in 1999.

In addition to increasing women's access education and reducing disparities of all sorts, including gender-based inequalities, the programme of action also sought to remove disparities between rural and urban areas. Moreover, during the Conference organized jointly by OAU and Uganda in Kampala, in September 1996, African countries reviewed their strategies for girls' education and capacity building for women through functional literacy.

The seventh Conference of African Ministers of Education organized in April 1998 by UNESCO in cooperation with OAU and ECA in Durban, South Africa, placed the issue of gender disparity on its agenda. The Ministers noted that the gap was a major obstacle and committed themselves to doing everything possible to protect girls in schools and to provide them adequate education and teaching materials. The African Forum on girl's access to science and technology held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in January 1999, made a Declaration and drew up a Regional Plan of Action.

The plan of action underscored the need for the advancement of girls in scientific fields and in terms of science and technical education by providing the necessary support mechanisms. It also stressed the need to improve girls' access to quality basic education and to conduct a systematic review of textbooks with a view to removing concepts that may be degrading to women.

5. Commitments made by lead organizations

5.1 The United Nations system

According to the Beijing Conference, the United Nations has a key role to play in the implementation of the programme of action at the highest level. This it could do by integrating the gender approach in its policies and programmes.

To enable institutions of the United Nations system to effectively assist in ensuring quality education for women, to reinforce their action at the national level and to increase their capacity to attain the objectives of the Action Programme, the Conference proposed that some of the organization's bodies should be renewed, reformed and revitalized and the strategies and methods of its various mechanisms should be reviewed coordinated and strengthened. Among these mechanisms and structures are:

The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW); the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

On the contribution of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Conference recommended that: in accordance with its role under the Charter of the United Nations, ECOSOC should supervise the coordination and implementation of the Action Programme on a system-wide basis and should make relevant recommendations. The Council should be requested to examine the implementation of the Programme, duly taking into account the report of CSW.

Moreover, the Council was requested to “integrate the issues on women in its discussions on general policy issues taking into consideration the recommendations put forward by the Commission and to envisage by the year 2000 to devote at least a major part of its activities on issues related to the advancement of women and the implementation of an Action Programme with the active participation especially of specialised institutions, including the World Bank and the IMF”.

Finally, the Conference recommended that: “The Administrative Coordination Council should examine how best to maximize the coordination of activities within the Divisions under it, especially through the present procedures, at the inter-institutional level to ensure coordination at the system-wide level for the attainment of the objectives contained in the Action Programme and to contribute to the follow-up action”.

Within their respective mandates and current activities, the regional Commissions of the United Nations were urged to ensure the integration of women's issues and gender equality in their daily concerns and to plan to be provided with the required mechanisms and arrangements for the implementation and the monitoring of the Action Programme as well as the regional plans and programmes.

The national offices of the specialized institutions of the United Nations system were requested to formulate and disseminate an implementation plan for the Action Programme notably by outlining a schedule to be followed and the necessary resources. A similar mandate was given to the African Centre for Women (ACW) of ECA by the United Nations General Assembly, and the Centre is working along those lines.

On education specifically, international organizations, especially UNESCO and intergovernmental organizations pledged:

- (a) To assist in the assessment of progress made, using indicators developed by national, regional and international organizations; and to encourage governments to eliminate gender disparities, including those in boys and girls' access to all fields of education, training and the results obtained, particularly in primary education and literacy programmes.
- (b) To assist requesting developing countries in building their capacity for monitoring progress in their activities aimed to establish gender equality in education, training and research, particularly primary education and literacy programmes;
- (c) To organize an international campaign to promote women and girls' right to education;
- (d) To allocate a substantial part of their resources to primary education for women and girls.

5.2. Multilateral development institutions

The institutions in this category include the World Bank, regional development banks, bilateral donors and foundations. These pledged:

- (a) To increase resources allocated to education and the training of girls and women by prioritizing this sector in their development assistance programme;
- (b) To cooperate with beneficiary governments to ensure that the educational plans made for women in the structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes, including loans and stabilization programmes, are maintained or improved.

5.3. Support given by the international community

In fulfillment of their commitments, United Nations agencies and donors assisted in the implementation of several projects aimed at improving the education of women and their access to science and technology in Africa.

5.3.1 UNESCO

UNESCO held its General Conference in November 1995 shortly after the Beijing Conference and adopted a medium-term strategy for the period 1996-2001. The strategy identified target priority groups and the necessary activities (on the Least Developed Countries, Africa and Women) to be carried out during this period and decided to provide substantial human and material resources.

In February 1995, following the Africa Hearings, held in preparation for the World Social Summit in Copenhagen, UNESCO as lead agency for the United Nations Human Resources Development Plan and Capacity-Building for Africa, formulated a strategy giving Africa prominence in its priorities. This strategy was particularly aimed at encouraging the reform and restructuring of educational systems and improving their internal efficiency, as well as at promoting basic education for all by giving priority to women, young girls, rural dwellers and the urban poor.

Moreover, UNESCO established a caucus of three African personalities responsible for making recommendations to the Director-General as a means of effectively monitoring the Beijing Platform in Africa and of coordinating its implementation in cooperation with the UNESCO

secretariat and the International Committee set up to follow-up on the Africa Hearings. Combining the priorities mentioned above, UNESCO launched its 'women priority' project for the period 1996-1997. This project's main objectives are:

- (a) To develop the education of young girls and women in Africa through literacy campaigns in the countries of the Sahel; with a budget of \$US 490,000;
- (b) To encourage scientific, technical and professional training for young girls in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa; with a budget of \$US 250,000. This special project is carried out in partnership with various governmental institutions and such NGOs as the Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE);
- (c) To promote the 'women, tertiary education and development' project. This project which is based in various regions of the world gives priority to Africa and countries in transition. It has a budget of \$US 400,000;
- (d) To promote handicrafts training for women in Africa and Central America. The project which has a budget of \$US 100,000 aims to improve the technical capabilities and skills of women artisans. The Sahelian countries are the main targets in Africa.

Finally UNESCO participated in the project on the teaching of mathematics and science (TMS) funded by Norway, the Rockefeller Foundation and other funding agencies. This project covers 12 countries. Such other agencies as UNICEF, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have made considerable financial and technical contributions to the education and training of girls and women.

5.3.2. The European Union

The European Union's contribution, through its bilateral cooperation programme, has been focused more on the construction of educational infrastructure than on course content and educational materials.

5.3.3. Other donors

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have provided considerable support for young girls' access to technical and scientific education as well as for capacity building for women in the area of management. The Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden and Holland) have supported non-formal core initiatives in education. Japan which is very active in decentralized cooperation has provided support and increased educational services with the construction of new infrastructure.

6. Follow-up mechanisms

6.1 National mechanisms

The Beijing Conference underscored the responsibility of governments in leading the implementation of the Programme which requires the highest political commitment. Governments are therefore to coordinate, supervise and assess the Programme's implementation.

With the technical and financial assistance of regional and international organizations, governments have improved the efficiency of national mechanisms for the advancement of women at the highest political (ministerial and interministerial) levels. The efficiency of other agencies with competencies in specific areas of women's education have been enabled to increase women's participation and to integrate the gender approach in policies and programmes.

The resident coordinators of the United Nations have been playing a key role in supporting the efforts of governments.

6.2 Subregional and regional mechanisms

The Dakar Conference on women gave a pivotal role to subregional institutions in the monitoring of the Platform's implementation. In this connection, the African Regional Coordinating Committee (ARCC), now Committee on Women and Development (CWD), was mandated to work in close cooperation with such intergovernmental organizations as the Preferential Trade area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as well as the joint OAU/ECA/ADB secretariat and such United Nations agencies as UNIFEM.

These bodies are to meet annually and present reports to the ECA Conference of Ministers and the Conference of OAU Heads of State and Government every two years. The Dakar Conference also recommended reviewing the implementation of donor programmes on women and development.

ACW organized an international conference, four subregional conferences and two preparatory meetings for the sixth African Regional Conference on Women. The international conference on "African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future" provided an opportunity for a dialogue to be established between women and policy makers on ways of speeding up the advancement of women in conformity with the provisions of the Platform. To this end, the Conference recommended that steps should be taken:

- (a) To formulate policies to provide specific training for women and young girls on new information and communication technologies as well as to build their capacities;
- (b) To regularly organize national meetings to create synergies between representatives of the various social sectors, including health, education, social development, and women's advancement; and
- (c) To reinvest the dividends of economic growth in activities such as poverty alleviation, development of educational systems with special emphasis on the education of girls, literacy programmes and women's health;

6.2.1. Subregional meetings

The four subregional meetings organized by ACW were held in November 1997 in Dakar for West Africa, June 1998 in Bangui for Central Africa, October 1999 in Rabat for North Africa, and February 1999 in Seychelles for Eastern and Southern Africa.

The meetings focused on progress made in the implementation of the Dakar Platform and the Beijing Programme through national plans of action, stressing the need for monitoring indicators and for national reports to assess the implementation.

Other meetings, seminars and conferences have been organized in Africa by OAU, ECA and other United Nations institutions and intergovernmental organizations to monitor the Dakar and Beijing programmes and those of other world conferences which also recommended the education of women. The Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Copenhagen Social Development Summit are examples.

The recommendations of these conferences led to the establishment of specific programmes by ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO, UNDP, SADC and ECOWAS.

The conferences also acknowledged the need to launch new initiatives for women, to ensure that the gender approach is used in defining and implementing policies and programmes, and to sensitize public opinion in each country to the need to establish a non-discriminatory society by the year 2000.

7. Resource allocation for the implementation of the platforms

The research undertaken could not fully assess the resources allocated to the implementation of the Platform and Programme for two main reasons. The first is that reports merely stated that the national budget allocations to education have been increased but did not specify the actual amounts expended. The second is that bilateral and multilateral international development cooperation institutions do not have specific educational programmes for women and girls or do not wish to communicate the sums provided for these programmes.

8. Progress achieved

The Beijing Conference was a great forum for sensitization on the urgent need for Africa to take into account women's contribution in sustainable development. It was the first time that international, regional and subregional institutions and governments committed themselves fully to formulating clear and precise plans of action in this regard. An analysis of the country reports submitted showed that progress has been made in education, though in varying degrees. The progress made in access to primary education appears considerable in quantitative terms. The levels attained vary, depending on the conditions that had prevailed earlier on and the efforts made thereafter. On the whole, school attendance has increased. It should, however, be pointed out that large-scale reform programmes had been initiated before the Beijing Conference. The priority given to enrolment in the primary schools (which employ 80 per cent of teachers) can be attributed to the decisions of the Jomtien Declaration.

Although the Beijing Conference cannot be considered as the first effort in favour of women and girl's education, it was the source of a new vision and constituted a new reference framework in this regard. The Conference led to the progress stated in the following paragraphs.

8.1 Formulation of national programmes of action

Out of the 51 countries that took part in the world conference on women 47 countries, about 88.6 per cent, said that they had formulated and adopted national plans of action to implement the commitments made in Beijing on education. Of these countries, 39 have identified education as a priority.

8.2 Identification of education as priority

Forty-one African countries have included the education of women and girls in their national priorities for the next four to ten years. The plan varies from country to country and concerns the development of pre-school education, the education of girls throughout the school system, the education of young girls, the functional literacy of adult women and the development of science and technology for increased productivity.

Generally, the critical areas of the Beijing Programme include a chapter on training, considered vital for attaining the objectives in each of the critical areas. This has led to various forms of women's training, including: training of women in decision-making positions to enable them not only to retain their posts, but also to rise to other positions of responsibility; training of women in the management of lucrative activities; and training for women's organizations in communication, advocacy and negotiation techniques.

Governments' democratization of the educational system has, in particular, led to reforms strengthening the link between the learning content and the final objectives of tolerance, mutual understanding and solidarity and the development of the human sciences. The government reforms are also aimed at developing inter-school contacts at the national and continental levels.

Developing and implementing the education for all policy will help to remove the obstacles which prevent women from participating fully in public life. This policy will be more effective when implemented in conjunction with other activities specified for women as it cannot stand alone. National action plans are very useful for reassessing strengths and weaknesses, for identifying new targets and partners in civil society and for redirecting efforts towards making women self-sufficient.

Most countries have affirmed their cooperation with and involvement of NGOs and other actors in the definition of national priorities and formulation of action plans. By participating in government policy debates, NGOs are able to work with and assess national plans while reminding governments that they are primarily responsible for the implementation of the Beijing Programme. Moreover, government-NGO cooperation in the formulation of national action plans sustains political commitment at the highest level.

The data available are insufficient to assess the efforts made by countries to improve women and girls' access to science and technology. However, the main thrust of the plan is to increase women's involvement in science and technology research and in issues concerning them. Generally, with the exception of Rwanda, Guinea, Egypt, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria, which have specific projects, country reports have not shown girls as being active in science establishments and new technologies.

Box 1

Strategies for improving women and girls' education and training

Various strategies and programmes are implemented in Africa to improve women and girls' training and education. They include the following major ones:

- (a) Adoption of new education and training policies and ideas on girls' education and granting them top priority;
- (b) Establishment of universal free primary education in some countries; it has also been made somehow compulsory in some;
- (c) Systematic recruitment of teachers for rural and urban areas;
- (d) Implementation of flexible programmes in rural areas to encourage the education of girls and keep them in school;
- (e) Establishment of rural schools closer to communities;
- (f) Provision of incentives and facilities, such as scholarships, free transport, uniforms, meals, reduced school fees and special scholarships for girls;
- (g) Revision of school programmes and teaching materials to remove gender-based discriminations and to sensitize pupils to positive gender relations;
- (h) Decentralization for schools, with the participation of local councils, as a means of improving efficiency and ensuring that greater account is taken of the interests and needs of communities;
- (i) Establishment of more dynamic partnerships among governments, NGOs, local communities including parents and donors. This approach has made it easier to include women's issues in education;
- (j) Strengthening the school system as a community establishment;
- (k) Giving dispensation to adolescent mothers and pregnant girls to enable them to continue their education.

9. Obstacles to the implementation of the platform and programme

Impediments to the implementation of the Platform and Programme recommendations vary from country to country. They are as follows:

- (a) The gap between policies implemented and the needs of communities;
- (b) Socio-cultural constraints in the form of giving priority to the education of boys to the detriment of girls;
- (c) Lack of human and financial resources, infrastructure and equipment;
- (d) Lack of qualified science teachers in some countries;
- (e) Difficulty of recruiting teachers for rural areas;
- (f) The high rate of girls' dropping out of school for such reasons as pregnancy, early marriage and domestic workload;
- (g) Poverty and its limitation of women and girls' involvement in education and literacy programmes;

Generally, the obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations concerning science and technology are:

- (a) Lack of human and financial resources, infrastructure and equipment;
- (b) Nonexistence of teaching methods with gender sensitization and specifics – a situation which does not encourage girls to opt for scientific careers;
- (c) The length of the learning period for girls and the absence of employment guarantee after training;
- (d) The perception in many communities that science is an area reserved for boys.

Box 2

Examples of strategies to encourage girls to enrol in scientific establishments

Several African countries have acknowledged that women's access to and participation in science and technology remain marginal. These countries are focusing more on policies and programmes for teaching science and technology in schools. In some of these countries, girls' enrolment in science establishments has increased as a result of:

- (a) The establishment of school guidance and counselling services and the encouragement of girls to enrol in science establishments;
- (b) The establishment of a system of accommodation for girls pursuing science studies in universities;
- (c) The establishment of women's science associations and strengthening cooperation among these associations;
- (d) The training of women in the sciences.

10. Case studies

In evaluating implementation of the Programme, the experiences of such countries as Algeria, Liberia, Senegal, Rwanda, Uganda (given below) were used to illustrate countries' efforts and determination as well as to encourage other countries.

Algeria

The case study on Algerian was important in view of the efforts made by this country in favour of women in its human resources development initiatives and in view of the context in which these women live. In fact, for almost 10 years now, Algeria has been under civil unrest and pressure from armed groups operating throughout the country. This situation hampers the education of girls and women which had been positively improved from its previous status (below the continent's average).

Education

In April 1976 a decree was promulgated in Algeria making education free and compulsory. The enrolment of girls stood at 90.61 per cent for a school-age population of 92.85 per cent. Although, there are numerous school dropouts in the rural areas among girls aged 10-13

years, girls do as well as boys in the primary school leaving examinations. The ratio of girls enrolled in primary schools is almost equal to that of boys, while in secondary schools, the percentage of girls is higher than that of boys.

Literacy

Educational associations, particularly of parents, were encouraged to send young girls who have passed the school-age to school and to help women to enrol in literacy centres. These activities are complementary to the literacy programmes of the National Literacy Office set up in 1964.

Some Statistics

- (a) Education is allocated 25 per cent of the country's budget, which makes the sector the country's first priority;
- (b) Girls account for 46.5 per cent (2,200,000) of pupils in the rural areas and 53.7 per cent of students in high schools;
- (c) Women account for 45 per cent of the staff in the middle schools;
- (d) Girls were awarded 47 per cent of the scholarships available at various levels of education, that is 76,179 out of 162,078 scholarships;
- (e) There are about 561,311 primary schools which provide food for pupils;
- (f) In 1997, 58,826 pupils received enhanced distant primary and secondary education;
- (g) There are 1,875 centres and 48 literacy establishments spread around the country, in which 49,000 women aged 15-60 years were enrolled.

Sensitization, family planning and agricultural extension activities are basically carried out through literacy programmes. However, the overall level of illiteracy among women is still a cause for concern as about 33.4 per cent (4 million) of women aged 16 years and above are illiterate.

The majority of these women are elderly and did not go to school during the colonial period.

The proportion of girls in higher education is 42.2 per cent (86.6 per cent in the long stream, as against 13.4 per cent in the short stream).

Finally, the class-repeating or school-dropping-out ratios was four points lower for girls than for boys throughout the school cycle.

Box 3

Retaining girls in school and improving their success rates

Algeria has succeeded in keeping girls in school and in improving their success rate in examinations through a multi-disciplinary approach.

Various national actors such as the Ministry of Education; the Ministry for National Solidarity and Family Affairs; the Ministry of Internal Affairs and local communities and social and humanitarian associations have devised improved measures for keeping girls at school and for increasing their success rate in examinations. Prominent among these measures are:

(a) The opening of school canteens and of boarding schools to help economically poor families in keeping their daughters in school, thus overcoming the stumbling block of distance to school which parents cite to justify preventing their children from attending school;

(b) Awarding scholarships for the purchase of school supplies for formal schooling;

(c) The establishment of health care units comprising teams from various units to intervene in case of any illnesses and other problems that could jeopardize a child's development in school;

(d) Provision of school buses;

(e) Provision of free textbooks for poor families, to encourage girls in the family to go to school.

This approach has increased the success rate of girls in examinations, to the extent that:

(a) The number of girls who passed to primary 6 was 272,804 out of 565,079 pupils, that is 48.2 per cent;

(b) The number of girls who passed the primary school certificate examination was 115,519 out of 217,287 pupils, that is 53.1 per cent;

(c) The number of girls who passed the entrance examination to secondary schools was 138,293 out of 259,254 pupils, that is 53.7 per cent;

(d) The number of girls who passed the secondary school certificate (*baccalauréat*) examination was 45,124 out of 78,000 students, that is 57 per cent; and

(e) Girls accounted for 51.5 per cent of students enrolled in the applied sciences.

In 1997, young girls accounted for 51 per cent of enrolment in vocational training establishments and 28 per cent of the total number of trainees in teacher-training establishments. The increase in the percentage of girls (51 per cent in 1997 as compared to 49 per cent in 1995) was the result of specific actions taken in this regard. The percentages in areas not usually considered women's activities were as follows

Furthermore, an increasing number of girls are pursuing postgraduate studies. Female graduates with higher education diplomas and degrees account for 38.5 per cent of the total. The ratio of female graduates with employment is 17.1 per cent as against 16.3 per cent male graduates, but 65.1 percent of job-seekers are women.

Sector	Percentage (%)
Clothing	34.10
Traditional handicraft	7.73
Building, public and hydraulic works	2.74
Agriculture	0.12
Audio-visual techniques	0.06

Tunisia

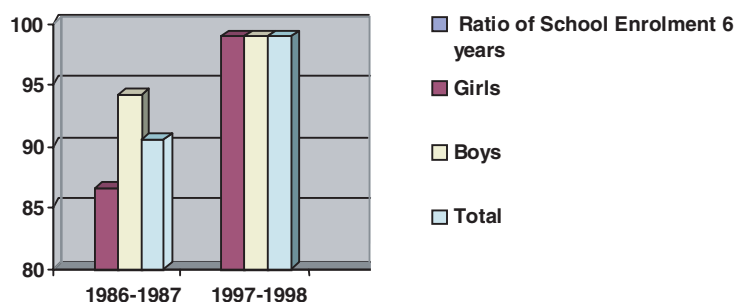
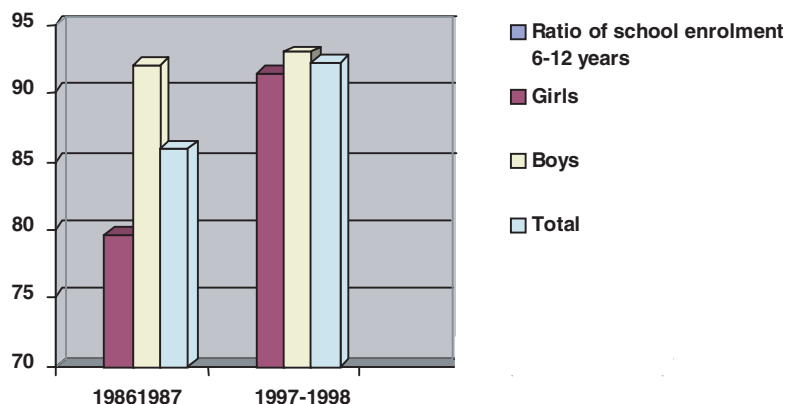
Tunisia is one of the rare Muslim countries to have adopted a forward-looking policy for women by promulgating, at independence in 1956, a modern personnel status code which gave many rights to women as wives and mothers and led to a regular review of the country's laws with a view to achieving effective equality between men and women. Tunisia has also taken great steps to secure women's advancement in various fields. Furthermore, it has always devoted a quarter of its budget to education. The indicators of the educational system shows some of the progress achieved.

Legal measures taken to secure equal access to education

Article 1, paragraph 2 of the law on education enacted on 29 July 1991 stipulates that students should be prepared for a life that disallows any form of discrimination or segregation based on sex, social origin, race or religion. Article 7 makes education compulsory for all children of both sexes aged 6-16 years whereby any one who does not register her/

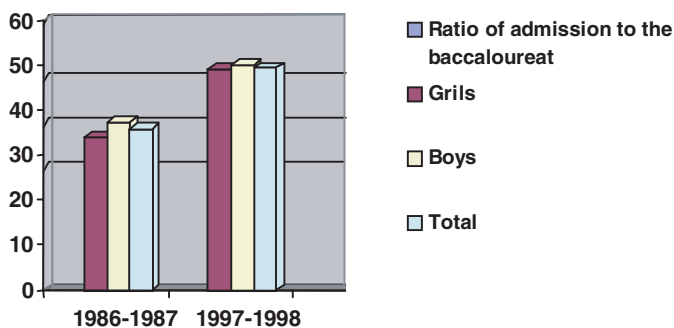
his child in school or who withdraws her/his child from school before the age of 16 is subject to a fine. This measure aims to stop premature abandonment of school by young girls in the rural areas.

Graphs 1 and 2: Pre-university school enrolment in Tunisia

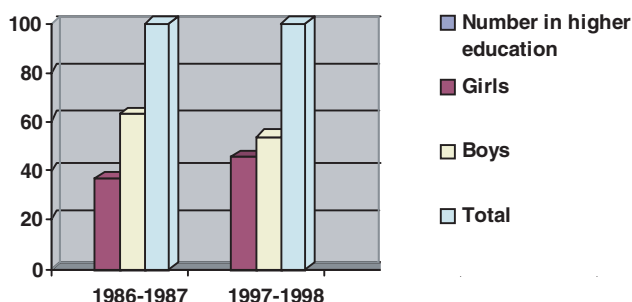


At the primary school level, the gap that existed a few years ago between girls and boys has been closed.

Graph 3: Success at secondary school certificate examination



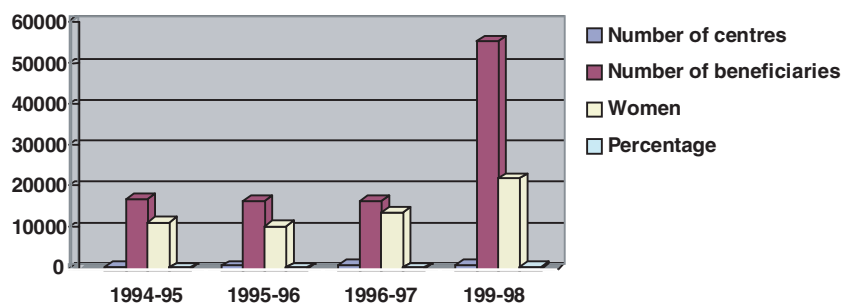
Graph 4: Student enrolment in higher education



Source: Ministry of Higher Education 1996/1997 Academic Year

Girls pursue their higher education up to university level without any discrimination. They are even provided with accommodation. Female illiteracy is declining as a result of the implementation of a national programme started in 1993/1994 for girls and women aged 15-44 years.

Graph 5: Progress in female literacy



Source: Ministry of Social Affairs

Graduates with professional training in the industrial and service sectors

The law governing professional training and employment provides for professional guidance to assist all young and adult members of both sexes to wisely choose a profession that suits their motivation, ability and interest, as well as the requisite subjects.

Much effort has been made in this regard. In fact, an increasing number of girls are now being trained in diverse areas and are having access to skills training subjects where they are given equal opportunities with boys. They are becoming increasingly attracted to training in new technologies.

To encourage and orient young girls towards science and technology, Tunisia has taken various measures, including:

- (a) The establishment of a body of guidance counsellors In 1995;
- (b) The setting up of a unit in the Ministry of Education to follow up on the orientation;
- (c) The establishment of an economic and management section to reduce the huge number of girls moving to Arts subjects;
- (d) Awareness-creation campaigns carried out by the research, survey and documentation Centre on women (CREDIF) and women's associations.

Data on this show that during the period 1994/95-1998/1999:

- (a) The proportion of girls in the Arts decreased from 43.8 per cent to 37.3 per cent;
- (b) Girls involvement in the applied sciences increased from 22 per cent to 24.8 per cent;
- (c) In technical subjects, their involvement increased from 4.3 per cent to 4.5 per cent;
- (d) The proportion of girls enrolled in economics and management was slightly higher than that of boys - 17.6 per cent as against 17.3 per cent.

The overall percentage of girls attending public schools rose from 19.4 per cent in 1994 to 31.5 per cent in 1997

In 1992, a renewed effort made by training centres for young girls in rural areas made it possible to improve the skills of girls, especially those trained in business and entrepreneurship. For continuing education programmes, 18.8 per cent of the beneficiaries are women.

With regard to career organization, CREDIF provides three types of training:

- (a) Training sessions for women executives in the private and public sectors on information and management for better professional advancement. During these sessions, participants design a framework for analysis/diagnosis to enable them to carry out activities based on overall strategies that would give them a decisive and lasting advantage;

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Box 4

Tunisia has increased girls enrolment in science establishments

- (b) Monthly meetings known as “the cercles du CREDIF” to bring together participants of the training sessions for women executives to discuss a chosen theme with an expert;
- (c) Training sessions on occupational psychology and human resources management for mixed audiences, similar to the training for women executives.

Senegal

Classified as a low-income country, Senegal has seriously engaged in structural adjustment programmes the results of which have been severe budgetary cuts and State disengagement from the social sectors.

Senegal has been building its educational infrastructure since independence, but in spite of the efforts made in this area, its human development indicators reveal several inadequacies (Action Plan for women, 1997-2001). In 1995, more than two-thirds of the population were illiterate, and about 78 per cent of these are women.

The gross school enrolment ratio for girls was 46 per cent in 1996. In 1994, 20 of the 30 districts in the country reportedly had a low ratio of girls enrolment. Being an urgent issue, education is one of the five priorities of Senegal's national plan for women. The country has a Decade Programme for education and training, of which the primary education aspect has been finalized. This programme which covers the period 1998-2007 aims at rectifying the gender and geographical gaps, and finally at attaining education for all (girls and boys) in accordance with the stipulations of the World Summit on children.

As a result of the strategies and measures established, progress has been made in this area, but more effort is still required in order to achieve education for all school-age girls and to eradicate women's illiteracy.

In the formal education system: considerable efforts have been made to remove gender inequalities and to increase the ratio of girls' enrolment at all levels of education. The number of pre-school establishments has increased considerably, with the ratio of girls school attendance very significant, as shown in the table below:

Pre-school	1995 –1996	1997 – 1998	1998 – 1999
Establishments	212 with 70 state establishments	270 with 77 state establishments	-
Girls (2 %)	49.66	50.66	51

In order to meet the increasing demand in the sector, community day nursery schools have been established in rural and urban areas, helping to increase school enrolment, particularly of little girls. In 1997, 152 day nursery schools, initiated by the Ministry responsible for family affairs through PAGF and funded by the African Development Bank and the Nordic Development Fund made it possible to enrol 4,208 children, of which 2,112 were girls and 2,096 boys.

As for primary schools: the number of establishments rose from 3,051 in 1995/6 to 3,884 in 1998, and 379 of these establishments were private. In 1998/1999 this figure was 4,256, of which 389 were private

establishments. It is important to note that efforts were made to decentralize the school network in this regard. Out of the 17,550 classes in the country, 8,818 were in the rural areas as against 8,712 in the urban areas. In 1998/1999 the number of classes rose to 19,404, of which 57 per cent were in the urban areas.

The gross enrolment ratio: has been increasing since 1995, reaching 65.5 per cent in 1988/1999, as compared to 54 per cent in 1993. This increase was, however, marked by a gross enrolment ratio for girls that gained 2.6 points a year from 1996/1997-1997/1998 while that for boys only gained 1.4 points. The school attendance ratio for girls increased as follows since 1996:

Enrolment rate	1996	1998	1999
Girls (as a %)	49.83	55.558.1	

At the middle level secondary and technical schools: the percentage of girls enrolled did not change significantly. While the number of establishments increased, the number of girls did not; it even declined at the technical school level in 1997/1998.

Girls	1995 – 1996 %	1996 1997 %	1997 1998 %
Middle level education	38.36	-	38.60
Secondary education	35.12	35.40	-
Technical education	-	37.54	36.9

The number of students enrolled in the middle schools was 172,469, of which 39.7 per cent were girls. In 1997/1998, the number of students increased by 10.7 per cent. In 1998/1999 the ratio of enrolment in middle schools was 21.82 per cent, as against 20.6 per cent in 1997/1998. The enrolment ratio for boys became 27.2 per cent while that for girls was only 16.82 per cent. There were 29 middle-level science and technology establishments in 1997/1998 with 7,332 students, of which 2,657 were girls. The slow progress made in these schools can be attributed to lack of support measures, absence of information and sensitization campaigns and inadequate social mobilization on the part of the policy makers concerned.

For non-formal education: the actions taken by the technical Ministries and the Ministry responsible for family affairs through special projects resulted in a considerable decline in the illiteracy level, from 78.2 per cent in 1995 to 64.3 per cent in 1998. The integrated approach developed for women's training and supervision and the valuable contribution made by NGOs were decisive in achieving these results.

Liberia

Liberia only recently emerged from a devastating civil war symptomatic of the situation in many African countries during the 1990s. The scenes of thousands of hungry, ill and traumatized people (the majority of whom women and children) fleeing conflict areas in one African country to another African country were unfortunately commonplace during the past decade. This situation which has been widely reported in the media shows that there can be no development on the continent without peace and social justice. The absence of education for democracy and peace is very noticeable and partly explains the reasons for war and justifies the need to strengthen peace-building through education and democracy. A review of education in Liberia reveals the following:

In 1988/1989, Liberia had 1,636 schools in operation with 9,555 teachers and 276,320 pupils enrolled. In 1994, only 398 schools were in operation with 75,000 students and 2,900 teachers. The schools were damaged with the roofs, doors, windows pillaged and all the electrical and sanitary installations as well invaluable archives and infrastructure destroyed. The war is estimated to have damaged 40 per cent of what used to be the country's educational value before the war.

UNHCR, which made efforts to ensure minimum educational continuity in the Liberian refugee camps was unable to maintain an adequate standard of education due to limited resources. UNHCR provided only \$US 0.17 a day for a refugee in Africa, as against \$US 1.17 a day in Kosovo). Understandably, Liberia has given first priority to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructure, reintegration and national reconciliation.

Uganda

After its civil war and the resultant economic decline, Uganda acknowledged the need to develop education as a powerful means of transforming the society. Democratization of education was seen as necessary for the moral, intellectual, ideological, cultural and social development of the people and for achieving the national objectives of unity, democracy, economic development and security for all the citizens.

With regard to the implementation of the Dakar Platform and Beijing Programme, the National Curriculum Development Centre is currently revising the primary school curriculum include the gender approach. The level of professional studies in which many women are involved (the hotel industry, secretarial work, midwifery, nursing and catering) has been raised to improve the status of women's careers. Furthermore, teaching materials have been revised at all levels to remove the discriminatory stereotypes.

The Ministry of Education and Sports has incorporated gender issues, especially in mathematics, science and technology in the In-Service Secondary Teacher Education Project (INSTEP). Such NGOs as FAWE and WETSU (Women Engineers, Technicians and Researchers of Uganda) are providing professional guidance and educational counselling for girls. The Promotion of Girls Education (PGE) project is being implemented in 15 districts of the country to encourage girls to remain in school, to improve the school environment and to sensitize communities to the importance of girls' education. The Government of Uganda is planning to provide free primary education for all children in Uganda by the year 2003. Already, it has awarded scholarships to four children per family and to all orphans, giving special attention to girls.

From 1995 to 1998, the number of children in school rose from 2.4 million to 5.3 million with girls accounting for 47 per cent of the total.

Alternative basic education programmes such as the Complementary Opportunity Education (COPE) and the Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK) have been established in an effort to provide flexible education programmes for people who dropped out of school or who did not have the opportunity of attending formal schools. ABEK enables people to have the basic education they missed as a result of their nomadic life, especially in the north-eastern part of the

country, in the Karamoja region. The majority of the children being trained through ABEK, in the two districts, are girls. They account for 67 per cent of the 6,500 pupils involved.

At the tertiary level, the Government has developed a system of adding points to candidates in order to increase the number of students entering State universities. This system actually increased the attendance ratio in these establishments to 35 per cent in 1995. The strategic education investment plan (1997-2003) focuses on the establishment of community polytechnics in the country's subregions to provide vocational training for children leaving primary school.

Currently, there are post-primary and post-secondary vocational institutions all around the country. They admit girls and boys unable to proceed to the tertiary level of education. With regard to adult literacy, the Functional Adult Literacy Programme for Communities had expanded from the 8 districts covered in 1995 to 26 districts by 1998. The number of adults enrolled in this programme is 93,274, of which 80 per cent are women.

Rwanda

In countries in post-war situations, new educational needs inevitably arise. In fact, for those emerging from wars of liberation, their entire educational system must be rethought and redesigned. While for those emerging from civil wars their physical school infrastructure needs to be rebuilt where it has been pillaged or damaged by lack of maintenance.

In Rwanda, classes opened and the entire education system became operational again in 1996. Thus, 1,880 primary schools opened with 1,017,468 pupils, 49 percent of whom were girls.

The school enrolment breakdown is as follows:

Level of Education	Boys	Girls
Primary	635,765	634,968
Secondary	30,072	30,923
Tertiary	14,980	14,863
End of Primary School 1998 (in %)	54	46
End of Secondary 1998 (in %)	52.17	47.83

According to above table, the gap between the ratio of school enrolment of boys and girls in primary and secondary schools in Rwanda is insignificant. Moreover, Rwanda has formulated a new educational policy, mobilized resources, reformed its programmes and established new training institutions, particularly at the higher and technical levels. Rwanda has also ratified the International Agreement on economic, social and cultural rights.

However, Rwanda's country report shows a major gap between the ratios of boys and girls enrolled at the tertiary level of education, particularly in some technical pathways and fields traditionally reserved for men.

The school abandonment receded, but remains alarming, as it is still about 20 per cent, and mostly concerns girls, owing to the socio-economic difficulties of families. However, efforts are being made to provide financial and material assistance to students who survived the genocide.

In order to eradicate illiteracy, 50 community development and vocational training centres (CCDFP) have been rehabilitated, 150 literacy teachers trained and 3.5 per cent of the national education budget allocated to literacy programmes.

Breakdown of enrolment in technical institutions by sex.

Type of Establishment	Boys	%	Girls	%	Total
Technical Education	1,232	85.3	212	14.6	1,444
Agro-veterinary	767	62.3	463	37.6	1230
Commerce, Accounts and Secretariatship	417	40.3	620	59.7	1037
Nursing	324	22.7	797	77.3	1031
Total	2,740		2092		4742

Source: 1999 Country Report

As can be seen from the above table, the development of technical education in Rwanda is encouraging given the circumstances under which women live in that country. As regards higher education, 33.3 per cent of the students of the University of Rwanda are women. This percentage has increased with the new opportunities brought by the recent establishment of new higher institutes such as the Kigali Health Institute which, in the 1998/1999 session, had 58 girls or 42 per cent of the 138 students enrolled there.

Girls account for 10.3 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively, of the students in the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and the Kigali Institute of Education. The ratio of girls at the Institute of Public Finance fell from 27.6 per cent during the 1995/1996 academic year to 24.3 per cent the following year, only to rise again to 32.7 per cent, and is currently 45.7 per cent. Some private universities have been established in Rwanda especially in Kigali, thus preventing women from having to travel to Butare, 135 km from Kigali to pursue university studies. Evening classes are being organized to enable women to continue their studies outside their daily activities. Out of the 1,730 persons attending evening classes, 792 are women.

Incentives for Higher Education

Young girls and women desirous and capable of pursuing postgraduate research and doctoral studies are no longer compelled to work for a given number of years as graduate assistants. This compensates for the pressing need to get married before being considered old maids and often refused implicitly or explicitly by husbands. Young mothers going to continue postgraduate studies abroad are allowed to take along one under-aged child.

The National Scholarship Commission has a permanent member of FAWE as one of its members to ensure compliance with the equity principles in the award of scholarships. For example, out of the 424 Rwandan students currently holding scholarships in India for training in engineering, 91 are girls, that is 21.4 per cent. Parity has not yet been attained for lack of female candidates. Finally, Rwanda has opened schools for gifted girls and has instituted the “Agatha Uwilingiyimana Prize” to promote girls’ education.

11. Situation analysis

The present review has proven that, in spite of the setbacks and delays in the implementation in some countries, progress has been made in the education of girls and women in Africa since the Dakar and Beijing Conferences. The current situation calls for some observations, which follow.

Preliminary Remarks

On the commitments made by governments: it had not been possible to formulate national plans of action immediately after the Beijing Conference since that required thorough evaluation of the situation, using adequate data collection and processing methods for comparisons.

The delay in sending country reports (only eight reports were received as of 20 July 1999) left no time for an exhaustive assessment of the current situation or for analysis of continental trends in the work. The absence of recent data has compelled us to limit our interpretation of the trends to the geometrical estimates of UNESCO on gross and net ratios of school enrolment and women's illiteracy.

Countries seemed to have prepared their initial list of strategies and objectives with neither an order of priority, an implementation timetable nor an assessment of the implementation costs. Although the majority of African countries had identified the education of girls and women as one of their priorities in view of its impact on other development indicators, few major positive and sustainable programmes have been implemented to reverse the ratio of illiteracy on the continent. Many programmes are half-baked and based on the project approach of short duration and small budget principle. The result is neither a substantial reduction in the gap between the ratios of illiteracy and school enrolment between men and women, nor an improvement of the quality of education vis-à-vis the needs and specific conditions of women and girls.

Moreover, at the institutional level, few are the African countries (like Tunisia and South Africa) that have taken legal steps to make education compulsory. The literacy programmes established by many African countries need to ensure that the content and range of education and training activities also include the know-how, attitudes and behaviours needed by women to live and work in their context and to improve the quality of their lives. Indeed, the effectiveness of the educational actions taken in the non-formal sector cannot be assessed only by the instrumental knowledge gained, that is, the ability to read, write and calculate, but also, and perhaps more importantly, by the change in behaviours and attitudes and the impact on health, employment, productivity and quality of life in general. In addition to the unschooled, illiterate and drop-out adults, the target categories should be children and young people needing to be provided basic non-formal education.

African countries have not given sufficient importance to the education of infants. Currently, in Africa, more than one-fifth of infants of pre-school age are not in nursery schools, although 75 per cent of the child's intellectual ability is already in place at the age of four which is the most favourable time to inculcate in children the fundamental notions of equity between boys and girls. Early schooling helps to bring about equal opportunities as it helps to overcome the initial handicaps of poverty and gender.

Low cost community services could be established for the development of the child. Infant education could also be integrated into the community education programmes designed for parents, given that pre-school education establishments are expensive and are available only to the privileged.

International comparisons of economic performances have underscored the role of human resources and therefore of the importance of countries investing in education for economic productivity. The link between the rate of technical progress made and the quality of human input has become evident, just as is the need to train technicians in the use of new technologies and endow them with the capacity for innovation. As new skills are required, the educational system must address this need not only by ensuring that the necessary years of schooling and professional training are provided, but also that high-level researchers, inventors and technicians are trained.

Furthermore, efforts to meet the educational, training, science and technology needs of women should not be limited to investing in basic education as is currently the case. A broader approach is required so as to move beyond the facilities currently in operation, the institutional structures, the educational programmes and the classical systems of training; this by utilizing the best of the current practices.

It is important to note that since the Ministry of Education and the Ministry responsible for women's affairs are generally different, projects for women and girls' education are by themselves national programmes, and should incorporate the specific needs of girls.

The non-coordination of the efforts of institutions working in the educational sector leads to attrition which is harmful to the effectiveness and relevance of actions taken. The nonexistence of coordinated data on the critical areas of the world programme or the inadequacies in the

data collection systems testify to this fact. The many different reasons for this can be found in the internal and external circumstances of each country.

Most African countries lack the infrastructure for new information and communication technologies. They require the assistance of the international community to bridge the gap.

Finally, one point which deserves to be made is that, for various reasons, African countries were unwilling or unable to provide enough resources for the implementation of their national plans of action.

On the commitment of international organizations, the main issues were: the non-coordination of strategies, the non-matching of actions with the needs, and the importance of African countries taking charge of their operational strategies.

International NGOs have often invested huge sums in education, but as they are not always very knowledgeable about African problems, the possible effectiveness and relevance of their contributions is called into question.

11.1. Assessment of the national follow-up mechanisms

African countries have honoured some of their commitments and have initiated some coordination work locally. Governments seem to have involved all the stakeholders in the design, formulation and programming of activities for the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Programs of Action. However, the structures that were specifically created for this purpose and those which had existed before then should be made very operational. The late submission of assessment reports tends to substantiate this recommendation.

11.2. Assessment of regional follow-up mechanisms

The follow-up mechanisms in Africa have not been as operational as they should be. We have not been informed, for example, of any follow-up committee meeting chaired in principle by the Secretary General of OAU and including ECOWAS, SADC, the Maghreb Union, UDEAC, ADB or ECA. However, the African Platform states clearly that the

committee should meet annually and present a report to the ECA Conference of Ministers and to the OAU Conference of Heads of State and Government every two years.

On the critical area of education, it should be noted that OAU has organized a certain number of meetings, some of which are mentioned in this report. Moreover, as a follow-up to the 1997-2006 Education Decade in Africa, OAU has often made reference to the Ouagadougou Declaration on the education of girls.

ECA has monitored implementation of the recommendations of the Dakar and Beijing Programmes, at the continental level, by organizing relevant subregional meetings, a regional conference, seminars and technical meetings.

12. Conclusions

This mid-decade review of the implementation of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Programs of Action demonstrates that some progress has been made in the education of girls, especially in basic education which features prominently in the recommendations of the Jomtien and Ouagadougou conferences. The poor economic and scientific development of Africa is partly attributable to the educational systems in Africa. However, the Beijing Conference revived the debate on this issue by drawing the international community's attention to the absurdity of not using the potentials and capacities of women who constitute more than half of the continent's population.

Generally, while North Africa and Southern Africa have made significant progress in women's education, West Africa, Central Africa and East Africa have made little progress. The literacy programmes are usually short-term and their scope too narrow for sustainability.

Weaknesses in the regional follow-up mechanisms

The obvious lack of coordinated action by the various subregions made it impossible to share ideas on original and useful initiatives that could lead to the replication of those initiatives that have succeeded, for the benefit of all.

The absence of adequate mechanisms for systematic data collection made it impossible to include field activities in the reports and explains the difficulty of doing a comprehensive assessment of the Programme's implementation.

There are still considerable gaps in the educational systems of African countries. These gaps exist in the methods, tools, course content and social needs as well as in the economic and cultural policies of countries. The Africanization of schools using traditional methods of education that have proven successful should bridge the gap between young girls and women on the one hand, and between these and men on the other. Such an approach will enable women to be launched more effectively into the labour world, improve their position in society, increase their participation in politics, and empower them to retake the place which has long been denied them.

13. Recommendations

The discussions following the submission of the summary country reports and documents from various sources reflected the participants interest in education as a tool for the emancipation and progress of women in general and of young girls in particular.

Considerable interest was shown in the subject of women and girl's participation in scientific and technical fields. This implies that a thorough study is required to identify how best to encourage governments to allocate more resources to this sector.

ACW should therefore organize jointly with UNESCO a seminar focusing mainly on the analysis of the subject and the identification of practical modalities for speeding up women and girls access to science and technology in all countries.

On non-formal education, new initiatives are required to involve communities in a life-long education of women and girls, and to reduce their domestic workload by disseminating new technologies.

Greater importance should be given to pre-school education in view of the positive impact of early schooling on the future of the child in particular and the society in general. Finally, since education is an investment, African peoples and governments stand to gain from prioritizing it and providing the resources for its development for the overall progress of the continent.

The issue now is how best to educate, train and involve African women in their countries' development programmes and projects as well as in the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at building model societies and the maximum development of all citizens.

In Africa, the formal education systems are designed for the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other forms of skills. Efforts should therefore be made to adopt a comprehensive approach that would guide the educational reform, the design of new programmes or the definition of new educational policies. A life-long education process premised on learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be, is recommended.

To attain these objectives, it is important to set up mechanisms for consultation and coordination to ensure the active participation of all levels of society and the various stakeholders in the development of the training content. Consequently, the conference recommended the following measures:

1. To allocate additional resources to education and to institutionalize free universal education.
2. To reduce the domestic workload of women and girls to allow them to pursue their studies.
3. To adapt the tools and teaching methods to the socio-cultural context of countries mainly by using the local languages.
4. To strengthen coordination and partnership among the stakeholders in education namely, the Government, the communities, the NGOs, religious bodies and donors.
5. To encourage communities to mobilize funds for schools.
6. To sensitize communities to the importance of the girls' education.
7. To promote literacy programmes for adult women.
8. To diversify training programmes, focusing on income-generating activities.
9. To establish and strengthen continuing education for women.
10. To involve elderly persons in the education of young children.
11. To provide quality training for the teaching staff as well as nursery school teachers.

12. To strengthen and enlarge pre-school education and provide adequate resources for it.
13. To encourage south-south cooperation especially among African countries in order to develop and replicate successful experiences and put an end to errors in programmes.
14. To make education the “the business of everyone.”

In order to increase girls and women’s interest in science and technology and to make them opt for these fields, the following actions are proposed:

1. To review education programmes and teaching materials at all levels to eliminate stereotypes which prevent women from choosing technical professions and to adapt these professions for employment purposes.
2. To encourage the employers in the industrial sector and other sectors to give priority to female graduates.
2. To follow up the progress of women in science and technology and assist them in career development.
3. To establish guidance and counselling to assist girls to choose a profession early.
4. To make women who successful in science and technology role models.
5. To sensitize girls, teachers and particularly parents to the advantages of the technical professions.
6. To develop indicators for assessing the level of integration and responsibility of women in science and technology.

In view of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights of the Child which recognize the importance of the education of young girls, and considering that the OAU Special Summit on Education which specifically addressed the issue of women’s education, the following measures were proposed:

1. Countries should formulate gender-based objectives and produce gender-disaggregated data. This will make it possible to draw up specific policies and programmes for the empowerment of women and allow appropriate measures to be taken by the year 2005

2. The training of employable young girls should be put in the wider context of the gap between the educational needs of people and the quality of education provided.
3. The continuing training of women should be an essential factor in the efforts to enhance their participation in the economic and political life.
4. South-South Cooperation should be encouraged. Science and technology networks should be established as a form of cooperation among countries.
5. The participation of women in decision-making in the Ministries of Education should be strengthened.

Annex: Questionnaire for workshop discussion

1. Question. The implementation of the recommendations of the platforms.
 - 1.1 Which is the body responsible for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of the Beijing Programme and Dakar Platform in your country?
 - 1.2 Please state the composition of the appropriate body or commission, if any.
 - 1.3 Please indicate the resources of this body.
 - 1.4 Have there been awareness campaigns on the contents of the Platform and Programme in your country?
 - 1.5 What is the role of the media in this campaign?
 - 1.6 To which body is the committee responsible for the monitoring and coordination of the implementation of the Platform and Programme answerable?
 - 1.7 How often does the body report?
 - 1.8 What are the mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Platforms with regard to education, research, science and technology?
 - 1.9 What type of relationship do you have with the officials responsible for the operations of these mechanisms?
 - 1.10 Is there a national Commission for Education in your country? If so, what is the composition?
 - 1.11 Does your country plan to review its education curriculum to integrate the recommendations in the Beijing Programme and Dakar Platform for Action?
2. Questions about education in your country
 - 2.1 Which authorities are responsible for education in your country?
 - 2.2 What are their areas of authority?

- 2.3 How are issues specifically related to women and girls addressed in the present education system?
- 2.4 What is the relationship between the national mechanism for the advancement of women and the national school statistical services?
- 2.5 How do these two institutions work together?
- 3. Financing of the National Plan of Action
 - 3.1 Is the cost of implementation of your national plan of action included in your national budget?
 - 3.2 If not, what strategies were identified and implemented for the mobilization of resources?
 - 3.3 What are the results?
 - 3.4 Did your country participate in one or several regional or sub-regional implementation programmes on the recommendations of the Dakar and Beijing Programmes on education?
 - 3.5 What are the institutions funding these programmes?
 - 3.6 What are the results at the moment?
- 4. What is the status of cooperation with various stakeholders?
 - 4.1 Have the bodies responsible for the monitoring of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms signed any agreement with NGOs for the implementation of the chapter on education in the National Plan of Action?
 - 4.2 What are the national, subregional and regional bodies responsible for consultation on the recommendations on education of which your country is a member?