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**SUBREGIONAL CENTRE DEVELOPMENT  
FOR WEST AFRICA**

**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of SRDC/WA  
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Niamey, NIGER**

**PROGRESS MADE IN PROMOTING GENDER PERSPECTIVES  
IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA  
SUBREGION**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents an overview of gender situation in West African member States and disclosing the extent the gender perceptive is reflected in the key areas of development issues. The gender initiative discussion goes beyond women per se and highlights the youth as part of gender that calls for attention. The need for building the human resource capacity for a successful development asset is termed essential in this report.

The report also reviews gender initiatives with regards to Africa and Global Platforms for Action : The need for planning, establishing priority areas and needs and implementation. The ground covered so far in the planning and implementations are highlighted. How far the gender advocates and implementers are achieving the aims and objectives are noted. Many countries in the subregion have drawn their plans of actions and the governments adopted them but few are putting the finishing touches.

The interested parties in facilitating, sponsoring and implementing the Platforms include, National Government Machineries, Non-Governmental Organisations, UN Organisations, donor agencies and other bilateral development partners.

The involvement of gender perspective into key development issues has the same demand as tabled by the Platforms for Actions, and countries planned actions on priority and needs focus mainly on the Platforms priorities as declared in Dakar and Beijing.

The report shows that many countries in the subregion are focusing on reduction of poverty, population management, education, women's legal rights and economic empowerment, which includes access to productive assets such as land, credit and technologies.

Another gap the report addressed is the representation of gender in decision-making positions and politics. There are some good wills and achievements in the political arena, for example, there are six female Ministers in the Togo Government and the Gambia has a female Vice President. Some countries have women Ambassadors and Managing Directors of Institutions.

In some countries a variety of affirmative action measures have been advocated and some implemented including-quotas and reserving certain percentages of seats and presidents veto to improve women's participation in decision making bodies. For instance, the Gambian President appointed four female secretaries of State.

The new strategy of ECA which encourages and creates measures for gender mainstreaming in all the commissions programmes has addressed many issues. ECA through African women's centre has conducted a workshop on gender networking at which the objective and need for gender networking were addressed. The main concern for the workshop was to develop strategies for networking among actors from different sectors for economic empowerment of women in Africa.

In the meeting the following were proposed as key concerns at the sub-regional level for future collaboration and networking: food security, increasing and persistent poverty, conflict situation, access to land, water and basic services, access to credit, political participation, regional cooperation especially to remedy the lack of an enabling environment for economic empowerment and unequal power relations between women and men in the house holds, community and other sphere. Other thematic areas and strategies for forging links for future networking were mapped out.

ECA has gone ahead to conduct gender sensitization through gender training. The target is to train all the staff members of ECA, but so far the Gender Focal Points, Director of Programmes and Regional Experts have been trained.

The ACW has planned follow-up meetings on the implementation of Global Platforms for Action which will be held at 5 subregional development Centre areas. A highlight of the meeting (which had already been conducted in the West African subregion in Dakar on 25-27 November 1997) is given. Two kits for planning and monitoring the Platforms were presented at the meeting.

The kits will help for the Platforms implementation and to report whether the activities by the countries met the objectives stated. The SRDC/WA Focal Point will be involved in the follow-up exercise.

The UN agencies: UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNFPA, and other bi-lateral partners have developed programmes supporting women and youths in economic empowerment protecting and assisting girl child and mainstreaming gender issues in all programmes.

Constraints in implementing gender programmes are : lack of visibility of what various actors are doing due to lack of information sharing, limited effective networking, limited documentation and disaggregated data. Less co-ordination in implementation and unhealthy competitions. These have led to lack of priority setting in the subregional member States. A lot of gap and disparity are noticed in incorporating gender in development. The gender concept is confused with women in development "theme."

Adequate practices for strengthening gender initiatives suggested include: creating a better arrangement and allocating roles for networking, increasing interaction at the subregional level, enhancing mechanisms for joint planning, implementation and monitoring gender activities in the subregion. There is need for developing common programmes on specific areas. The kits developed by ACW for planning and monitoring Platforms for Actions could form a base for monitoring gender initiatives. Also, effort should be made to devise mechanism for information collection and dissemination and for gender network to include collaborative actions with economic groupings through cooperation with Inter-governmental Organisation.

A suitable environment for building continued gender balances requires forging a stronger communication link between men and women. A proper mechanism for joint planning, implementing, co-ordinating and monitoring gender activities in the subregion is required. To this end a brain-storming meeting should be organised in the subregion involving few gender experts, relevant government and non-governmental organisations UN System, gender advocates and other partners to come to a consensus on how best to pull efforts together.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

1. In the renewal of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) framework for action till the year 2001, the strategic programme employed, places great emphasis on gender issues. To this end and with a view to mainstreaming gender in the work of the Commission, gender is made a cross-cutting issue in all the substantive programme areas of ECA. Namely :

- (i) Facilitating economic and social policy analysis and implementation.
- (ii) Ensuring food security and sustainable development.
- (iii) Strengthening development management.
- (iv) Harnessing information for development, and
- (v) Promoting regional co-operation.

2. In the same context, ECA strengthening the MULPOC (now renamed sub-regional development centres (SRDCs) has created a gender desk in each of the five SRDCs. The gender focal point in each SRDC is to address gender issue at the sub-regional level, and by implication at the national level as well.

3. The West African Sub-Regional Centre based in Niamey covers the following countries : Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra-Leone and Togo.

4. The main areas of the sub-regional gender programme include :

- Effective promotion of gender mainstreaming in the collaboration and harmonization of the sub-regional economic communities, intergovernmental organization (IGOs) and non-governmental organization (NGOs) ;

- Address the implementation of Beijing platforms for action and the Kampala Action plan which rightly redefine gender issues, giving them a cross - sectoral dimension that go beyond "women" to encompass the under privileged groups of national human resources.

5. This means that gender programme should identify major priority development areas, the human resources involved, together with the respective major actors and provide effective technical collaboration at the relevant areas, with a view to promoting subregional co-operation and integration within and outside.

6. Essentially this calls for the proper understanding of gender concept, keeping abreast with major developmental actions and actors to determine how well the gender concept is accepted and utilized in the development planning, the implementation of planned activities, their impact and constraints.

7. The West African countries are faced with low economic growth, debt crisis and poverty. These are amplified by gender through the intersecting connections and inevitable trade - off, among economic production social attitudes that create imbalances between female and male.

8. The report is concerned with continued high levels of inequity, poor governance exclusion, low human utility and welfare in the subregion and their connection with economic performances and present poverty.

9. What this report aims to show is that gender is a major contributing instrument to social and economic development of any nation. The report will attempt to review the general situation of gender focus in some areas of development factors in the subregion.

## **II. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Gender concept**

10. Gender issues refer to the concept of sharing roles and responsibilities between females and males. These roles and responsibilities have some changes over time, and vary widely within and across cultures. Where the culture element is not well guarded in the structured roles and the allocation of resources, a gap could be created between female and male. A disparity could result in how the parties benefit in education, employment, healthcare, property ownership, income and other services. It could also distort the sharing in political and cultural forces that determine how females and males communicate in all areas of work and how each group is accepted in leadership and decision making.

11. The crucial need in addressing gender issues is to recognize those people and resources that are marginalized in the sharing of the development assets, and determine the best approach in bridging the gender gaps. This approach will propagate gender equality and equity. The challenge goes beyond tools or procedures but recognizes the political nature of both gender policies and institutions. It demands better changes at all levels of institutional management that can provide opportunity for all to participate in the national sustainable development activities.

12. Many gender advocates have established that women and youth are essential resources in gender and development that are constantly marginalized.

13. Women function in production and reproduction, economic activities and the care of human beings and therefore contribute in economic growth and human development. They are workers in both spheres and must be recognized and fortified as such.

14. The youth not only will inherit the responsibility of looking after themselves and environment but may be fully in charge to account and safe guard the future development which will only come from the training, integration and participatory roles they are accessed to now.

## 2.2. Areas of Concern in Gender Issues in West Africa.

### (i) Misconception

15. There is a misinterpretation of gender mainstreaming and women issues in developmental activities. This may be because many studies conducted in areas of development planning have shown that women are among the disadvantaged group in the sharing of developmental assets. Based on this the international communities have been providing plans to alleviate women's struggles in development. These include plans of actions and conventions for the full, equal and beneficial integration of women in all developmental activities. In particular : the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of women, which emphasized women's participation in national and international management of sustainable development. The other conventions, include the Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Conventions of ILO and UNESCO which adopted to end gender-based discrimination and ensure women access to land and other resources, education and safe and equal employment. Also relevant are the 1990 World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children who are mainly in the care of women. The last and not the least are the plans of Action, the Beijing Platforms and the Kampala Programme of Action. All these are addressing women because of unequal treatment they are receiving from the actors and the activities of development. The programmes on women and development therefore is an issue in gender mainstreaming but not a replacement.

### (ii) Children and youth as part of gender

16. Youth of both sexes comprise nearly 30 percent as the world's population. This group is part of gender. The involvement of to day's youth in sustainable development, decision making directly or indirectly and in the implementation of programmes is critical. There is therefore, the need of advancing the role of youth and actively involving them in the promotion of economic and social development.

17. Countries in West Africa are yet to realize that giving youth “arms and not aim” is detrimental to the nation. Governments at all levels are yet to establish mechanisms that permit youth’s access to better understanding of information from within and outside which can provide them with opportunity to participate in the development activities.

18. Most of the West African countries with all their efforts in meeting the gender needs are no way near bridging the gap between female, male and youth in gender related development factors.



### III GENDER FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT FACTORS IN THE WEST AFRICA SUBREGION

19. In response to many commitments made by global and National instruments in terms of bridging gender gaps, various actors are already creating several initiatives and different mechanism are being put in place to achieve specified targets and objectives. These include the actions of national government, machineries, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and other actors and implementors. For instance in Gambia, the UN system under the umbrella of UNDP has provided gender sensitization training to UN professionals, the Gambian civil servants and some IGO staff. UNDP with the Gambian government organised workshop on governance. The Ghanaian UNDP and the Ghanaian National women in Development (NCDW) have organised several workshops and demonstration on gender sensitization. Women have been trained in lobbying and seeking positions in politics. The media and theatre houses have been sensitized on gender best practices (for example respecting females in the type of photographs they publish or use as cover pages. Nigerian government, through Family Support Programme (FSP) has translated many codes and conventions in the different local languages women can read to be aware of what are going on around them. There are many women's movement and associations in place in the subregion like : farmers club, co-operative and saving club, market women's union etc. But most of these practises are not binding and lucrative enough to enforce gender equity that can bring equal sharing of assets for sustainable development.

20. What follow are discusses on some key factors in development, how far gender concept is interacted in them and the effect on the vulnerable groups.

#### 3.1 Population

21. Population growth has been presented as one of the contributory constraints to development more especially on how it affects the standard of living, environment health and food security.

22. High rate of population growth is a concern and very problematic in the West African Subregion. And demographically the number of women supersedes that of men particularly in the rural areas. With the problems the countries are having in providing women (who are greater in number) with adequate attention and resource, their higher population growth will continue to be a handicap to social and economic development.

23. Table 1 shows that more women are living in the rural areas than men in most of West African countries Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, et Togo with 104, 105, 102, 102, 101, 105, 102, 106, 103 women to 100 men respectively and with equal number of women to men in Ghana and Senegal at 100 each. This calls for proper attention to gender equity in population management.

24. Most women and youth living at the rural areas are deprived of good schools, hospitals, paying jobs, technologies. Such deprivation can make this group of the population very despondent which could be manifested in the form of anti-social behaviour. Demographers do not normally reveal the number of youth in households who are without job and are not in learning institutions. These young people are indulging in crimes and

TABLE 1

**URBAN AND RURAL POPULATIONS BY SEX, 1995 WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION**  
**COUNTRY POPULATION DISTRIBUTION WOMEN PER 100 MEN**

COUNTRIES	% URBAN	% RURAL	URBAN	RURAL
Benin	42	58	100	104
Burkina Faso	20	80	89	105
Cape Verde	32	68	-	-
Côte- d'Ivoire	44	56	91	102
Gambia	26	74	103	102
Ghana	36	74	103	100
Guinea	30	70	93	101
Guinea-Bissau	22	78	-	-
Liberia	57	49	91	95
Mali	27	73	100	105
Niger	23	77	100	102
Nigeria	39	61	95	106
Senegal	42	58	100	100
Sierra Leone	36	64	-	-
Togo	31	69	100	103

**SOURCE** : Compiled from United Nations Social Statistic Introduction. "The World's Women 1995. Trends and statistics 29 Jan 1997."

### Gender implication in Population

25. Gender mainstreaming is a tool in sustainable development because it advocates the involvement of men, women and youth in all the sectors of social and economic development and not in women's venture only. Demographic sector should address gender equality (women and men) since it is the source of taking account of individuals and their activity from birth to death. The sector failing to portray the real number of women to men or rather disaggregating gender in its data analysis, could lead to marginalization of a greater number of human resources in development.

26. In West African subregion women make up 51 percent of the total population and account for 70-80 percent of productive and labour force, particularly, in agriculture which is the main stay for the subregion. The deprivation of 51 percent of the subregion's population could build up considerable resistance to the efforts being made towards quality, life, good health care, poverty reduction, conservation and clean environment, food security and even the management of population itself. These elements that are paramount to human development, could assume negative effect to social and economic condition of the subregion, if not properly managed.

27. There is need for providing policy on gender mainstreaming in population. This has been missing in the region. The attention of the population planners should be drawn to the change in the nature of development defined as "peoples' efforts to improve the quality of lives" This has shifted considerably with the implication for population policy development. It has introduced the broadening of the definition of development to focus more attention on social aspect as against the hither to narrow focus on economic aspect. There has been an increasing emphasis on the importance of investing in all people (gender equality). For instance the Blue Print on "Family Economic and Advancement Programme" (FEAP) in Nigeria calls for human resource development. This programme ensures that gender mainstreaming as a tool is mandatory in sharing the resources for development. This new development paradigm is predicted on the indispensable contribution of women as a human resource to social and economic conditions. The human resource development concept implied that gender disparity in social and economic conditions must be adjusted for a better investment. This may not be achieved unless the population figures are accurate and well disaggregated to portray the vulnerable groups in the populations to be managed .

### 3.2 Education

28. Education is a process by which human beings and societies endeavor to reach their fullest potential. It is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people ; (that is the whole gender spectrum), to participate in decision making and address their sustainable development concerns.

29. Knowledge of the rate of change in school-age population, for example, assists in planning for educational facilities and services at the local and national levels. The growth in the school age population is usually an indication of the increase in educational services. It also gives a fair indication of the attendance of both sexes at all three levels of education.

30. Adult literacy rate as an indicator reflects the accumulative accomplishment of education in spreading literacy beyond the normal formal school levels. Literacy is critical in promoting and communicating sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address their development issues. It also facilitates the achievement of the various levels ethical awareness, values and skills consistent with sustainable development , information sharing and public participation in decision making. This indicator is paramount in gender sensitization to population growth rate fertility rate, net migration, environment conservation, health sanitation and nutrition cares.

31. The trend in this indicator, is that of gender marginalization of a group (women and girl child). Table 2, even with the scanty data shows the disturbing illiteracy rate of girls and women in West Africa Subregion particularly in **Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger**. Each country's percentage of illiterate girls, between 15-24 years are about double that of boys of the same age. The same thing applies to women over 25 years. In Cape Verde women over 25 years have (62.5 percent) and men (34.9 percent) illiteracy rate Guinea-Bissau women at 15-24 years have illiteracy rate of (82.2 percent) compared to (40.3 percent) for men, Togo, women 15-24 years have the illiteracy rate of( 64.1 percent) compared to (26.8 percent) for men. Illiterate women in Togo are (37.2 percent) more than men.

TABLE 2

***ILLITERACY RATE BY SEX, 1985/94***

COUNTRY	% 15-24 ILLITERATE		% 25 + ILLITERATE	
	W	M	W	M
Benin	81M	54.3	94.3	82.8
Burkina Faso	93.2	77.5	98.3	88.9
Cape Verde	13.6	10.1	62.5	34.9
Côte d'Ivoire	62.2	40.1	85.3	63.4
Gambia	78.0m	63.0m	85.0m	64.0m
Ghana	-	-	49.0m	44m
Guinea	-	-	85.0m	62 OM
Guinea-Bissau	82	40.3	95.7	77.8
Liberia	-	-	-	-
Mali	81.0	62.0	91.0	76.0
Niger	90.0	75.0	97.0	87.0
Nigeria	-	-	42.8m	-
Senegal	69.0	54.0	90.0	-
Sierra - Leone	-	-	-	-
Togo	64.1	26.8	90.4	61.0

**SOURCE** : Compiled from UNSD Statistics. The world women 1995 trends and statistic  
 "M" stands for the data collected by SRDC mission.

32. Table 3 shows a great disparity between women and men enrolment in the combined First/Second level gross enrolment ratio. In all the countries women's enrolment ratio is far below that of men's . But the most disturbing issue is the constant dwindling ratio as women go further in education. In all the countries there is a significant low ratio enrolment per 100 male with a very down hill trodden in the third level in **Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo** with **15, 22, 11, 6, 15, 18, 35, 21, 15** respectively.

33. This is very disheartening because the number of women who make it at this third grade are the only ones, who can compete with men in professional, administrative and political posts."

### Implications

34. In West African countries where many instruments and policies have been employed to improve women education, there is still high illiteracy rate and lower basic education.

TABLE 3

***CROSS ENROLMENT RATIO AND SEX RATIO OF SECOND AND THIRD LEVEL ENROLMENT, 1990***

COUNTRY AREA	COMBINED FIRST/SECOND LEVEL GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO		FEMALES PER 100 MALES ENROLLED	
	W	M	Second level	Third level
Benin	28	58	41	15
Burkina Faso	16	27	48	30
Cape Verde	75	80	102	-
Côte d'Ivoire	38	58	44	23
Gambia	35	54	53	-
Ghana	50	66	64	22
Guinea	15	33	32	11
Guinea-Bissau	27	49	47	6
Liberia	-	-	39	30
Mali	11	20	48	15
Niger	13	24	42	18
Nigeria	42	56	75	35
Senegal	31	45	50	27
Sierra Leone	27	41	58	21
Togo	51	87	31	15

SOURCE : IBID

35. These are due to :

(a) The belief that education of women does not benefit the maternal family and their traditional roles.

(b) Girls in schools do not have enough time to help their parents in the household chores such as fetching water and firewood and looking after the younger ones.

(c) Poor economy debars parents to train girls who will eventually be leaving the parents family for the husbands family. The little money in the family is used for training boys who will eventually represent their families.

(d) Maintaining girls at school costs more than maintaining boys.

(e) Limited number of schools and distance, in some culture like Islamic culture where girls are not allow to be out of reach of parents until after their marriage. The distance to school is a factor in girls having education. This is a great hindrance to girls in Mali and Niger. In limited number of schools boys are always considered before girls particularly to secondary schools and Universities where accommodation is a problem. In Ghana where this is practised, the gender advocates are fighting against it.

(f) Bride price, culture, dignity and protection. These four elements make parents to prefer getting their daughters married earlier than boys. A good number of girls get married than boys between the age of 15-19 which is the age when able youths move from 2<sup>nd</sup> level education to the 3<sup>rd</sup> level. Table 4 with many uncompleted data in some countries shows many girls getting married before they turn 19 years in 8 countries out of 12 countries. In Mali and Niger many girls got married before they turned 17 years. Over 50 percent of the total number of girls got married between age 15-19 years in Benin, Gambia, Niger and Sierra Leone. The percentage of boys who got married at such tender age is as low as 0.8 percent in Cape Verde and 1.1 in Liberia. Niger has the highest percentage of girl child marriage, 72.1 percent of girls compared to 9.8 percent of boys.

36. Childhood marriage has an adverse effect on youths in general and to girls in particular. It inflicts consequences to all areas of social and economic development-education attainment life expectancy, child bearing, standard of living, political and professional attainment, work opportunities and income earning. Any human being that is deprived or is facing these consequences could not be a profitable resource to development but a liability to social and economic condition.

37. The status of gender in development discussed above indicates inequality in the distribution of some development assets which obviously prompt gender imbalances and disparity. In no doubt resulting in the feminization of poverty and social welfare.

TABLE 4

**AGE AT MARRIAGE AND PERCENTAGE MARRIED 15-19 YEARS OLDS, 1985/94**  
**West African Subregion**

COUNTRY	SINGULATE MEAN AGE AT MARRIAGE		% CURRENTLY MARRIED AGE 15-19	
	W	M	W	M
Benin	18.3	24.9	51.4	5.2
Burkina Faso	17.4	27.0	44.0	2.5
Cape verde	-	-	4.4	0.8
Côte d'Ivoire	18.9	27.1	41.0	3.0
Gambia	-	-	52.7	2.6
Ghana	21;1	-	-	-
Guinea				
Guinea-Bissau	18.3	28.2	-	
Liberia	19.7	-	-	
Mali	16.4	-	42.9	1.1
Niger	16.3	23.7	72.1	9.8
Nigeria	18.7		-	-
Senegal	23.7	30.4	40.9	3.2
Sierra Leone	18.0	27.4	57.5	5.4
Togo	20.3			

### 3.3 Poverty and gender

38. In the West African Subregional countries poverty is on the increase and is a handicap to general development progress. Poverty has many dimensions including income-based poverty, human development poverty, asset-based poverty cultural dimensions vulnerability and isolation. All these dimensions of poverty are present in West African subregional countries and have bearing to gender inequity and the lack in contracting key productive assets by the majority of the population 51 percent female and 30 percent of youths) women and youth are most hit by poverty. Women in polygamous male-headed households (MHH) may be among the poorest ; as is evidenced in literacy data from Côte d'Ivoire by poverty status (table 5).35.4 percent of women in monogamous family are not poor compared to only 19.3 percent women in the polygamous family.

Table 5 : Côte d'Ivoire : Literacy (in %) by poverty level and household structure

Poverty status	Monogamous		Polygamous	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Very poor	14.4	8.3	19.8	5.0
Poor	34.9	18.4	30.1	13.6
Non Poor	53.0	35.4	39.2	19.3

Source : Côte d'Ivoire Gender Analysis of Primary sources information sheet  
AFTHR, 1993.

39. Over 60 percent of Gambians live below the overall poverty line of which 70 percent are women (ILO 1994 promoting gender equality). The poverty level is indicated by a total income average of rural family of Gambia. The country operates a patriarchal and matriarchal social system which may neglect female sharing in family asset. In this situation women are affected the most and feminization of poverty prevails.

#### Implications

40. Many governments in the sub-region recognize poverty generally as one of the most pressing challenges and threats to democracy and development. Poverty is placed as number one critical areas in both the African and global Platforms for Action. The instruments stressed the need for addressing the root causes of women's poverty. This is because feminized poverty may bring a heavy burden to bear on women and children and even individual household. Apparently this has been a difficult area to improve on and very few activities are in place so far in the sub-regional countries. The known activities are yet to solve the problems in the existing poor infrastructure, poor services, poor standard of living, malnutrition and environmental destruction. The trend so far in reducing poverty to women is that of providing them something to eat and not giving them what it takes to provide plenty for selves and stock enough to build resistance to driving factors to poverty.

### 3.4 Economic Assets

41. There is gender-based imbalances in access to and control over the economic and productive resources in West Africa. Women and youth (particularly girls are not considered highly when sharing productive assets. They are hemmed under husband or male guidance and brothers. This causes them the chance of getting access to the basic technologies and resources, including human capital, lack of access to transport, inadequate skill-

42. Gaining access right to land and other land-based resources is crucial factor in determining how people will ensure their basic livelihood but this is very rare in West Africa. Hardly any of the countries has considered addressing a long-term trends of land use and management, and to ascertain whether the patterns and policies that emerge are agreeable to sustaining the livelihoods of women and children. Women in Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia and Ghana suffer gender differences in land ownership. Anyway women who have enough money to buy land can purchase and have registered titles in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria.

43. Women in almost all the countries in west Africa still face gender specific barriers in accessing financial services, including the demand for husband or other males signature, collateral (usually land or other property and none awareness of credit facilities open to them. A documental example to this : In Africa women receive less than 10 % of 1 % of the total credit to agriculture (UNDP 1995, HDRP. 39).

44. Nonetheless women entrepreneurship practices are gaining ground in the subregion and many women from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo have joined the African Women's entrepreneurs association. This association is opening chapter to women's access to credit, technology, productions and market channels experience shows that when female entrepreneurs and producers gain access to responsive financial services at market rates, they save repay their loans and use the proceeds to invest in the healthy education and housing of their families. With access to productive resources, low-income women gain more and broader choice and increased capacity to reshape society (1998 SPA status Report on Poverty in SSA).

#### Implications

45. Depriving a group of people from ownership and control of productive assets may retard progress and income and reduces their further entry into productive market and regenerating capital. This is the position women find themselves. This situation weakens their bargaining position not only in the household but also in the community. It is the main source of women not being associated to decision making and leadership and still worse, despondency can often follow or work along side periods of economic recession, austerity and high unemployment. When such economic depression faces young people, there is a danger that despondency will manifest itself in the form of anti-social behaviours from drug abuse to crime of stealing distabilizing the government as well as mental illness in extreme cases. This has certainly been a familiar story facing young men and women in Ghana and Nigeria in particular. This has created the migration of able workers and brain drain in the countries.

### **3.5 Political and decision making**

#### Position

46. Generally the political climate and absorbing women in decision making are improving. The leaders are willing and committed to ensuring real advancement of women. There is an appreciable increase in the number of women in decision-making and power-management structures. Mali for example, has 6 women ministers, Gambia has a women vice-president and female secretaries of State in charge of health, social welfare and women's Affairs, Justice, Education, Tourism and Culture. Port folios for the ministries of Interior, Education, Justice, Industry, Scientific Research, Tourism and Culture,



## V INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

47. Most of the West African subregional member states have embarked on the implementations of some of the instruments like Abuja declaration, Beijing priority, Kampala Plan of actions and Nairobi strategies etc. The focus is built around four major areas :

- (a) Improvement of the legal framework for promotion and protection of women.
- (b) Economic empowerment of women.
- © Strengthening of the family, social and cultural role of women and improvement of their statues within society.
- (d) Institutional reinforcement of the women promotion framework.

48. In the implementation of the above most of the countries are employing the following steps :

(a) Improvement and adoption of content of training of young girls and boys to socio-economic needs for example the sponsorship of boys and girls to occupational apprentice to hotels, carpentry, shoemaking and also training in turning waste materials in to wealth in Nigeria. So many ornamental goods are produced from wastes e.g. ropes, plastic bags, shells etc. In Ghana an occupational training centre is opened for training boys and girls in mechanic, bread, cake making, laundry work etc.

(b) Introduction of sex education into school curriculum to enable the boys and girls know the effect of sex abuse, early pregnancies in their future life.

(c) Increasing the budget allocation to social sectors like health education and information dealing with women and youths.

(d) Encouragement and promotion of beneficial traditional practices. In Ghana the gender advocates are putting all the forces to stop sending girls to shrines to appease the spirits. The girls liberated from this practice are trainee in handicraft production, catering, to help them to live a gainful life etc.

(e) Strengthening of maternal and child health and family planning programmes Nigeria government has invested a lot of money in providing modern clinic centre for women and children.

(f) Improvement of the quality of services in Health Institutions. This is in place in Guinea. The UNFPA is implementing projects which will help in promoting the state of health and well being of the guinean population notably women and children.

(g) Training in programmes for business women and youths to perpetuate their achievement in entrepreneurship development and management assets.

(h) Increasing of women's access to credit to finance their productive activities and keep up with house hold and community burdens.

49. These mapped out activities are being practised at the subregional member states. The implementation are at different levels and the impact being made depends on the type of manpower sponsorship and institutional framework and policies in place. In this regard it is important to note that the initiatives addressing women human right and legal rights in frameworks with laws provided for gender equality and equity are clashning. The enforcement of laws has not got strong policies and strategies to support the activities. Critical challenges remain in enforcement of laws in context where policies are weak and the implementors circumvent them, political will to support women's' human and legal rights is lacking ; enforcement officials are not gender sensitive ; the majority of women are not aware of their rights and lack sufficient understanding of the complex legal provisions.

50. Any efforts made in improving the situation are provided by NGOS who have taken the initiatives to : design and implement legal literacy programmes to inform women of their rights, repackaged, translated and disseminated the provisions of CEDAW, the Platform for action and national laws to women, sensitised policy and law makers, advocacy for a bill on domestic violence and provided provision of shelters for women victim of violence.

51. While on this it is important to note that country like Niger has not ratified the CEDAW and is having problem to develop family code. Again many countries who have ratified and signed are not practising what they signed for because of religious and traditional obstructions. This calls for a forum at which some further deliberation on clarification of issues could be undertaken.

## **V POST BEIJING ACTIONS AND INITIATIVES**

52. The 4 th world conference on women in Beijing emerged with Platforms for Action. The Platforms for Action is a powerful agender for the empowerment of women. It calls for the integration of gender perspectives in all policies and programmes. It places heavy responsibilities on the United Nations System, the National Governments, Non-Governmental and International Organisations. These organisations are to work together to plan the priority areas and strategies to suit the needs of women within their environment, do the follow-up in the implementation and monitoring.

53. All these organisations have expressed their commitments to women and gender advancement as priority policy issue in their transactions.

### **5.1 Government and Civil societies in West Africa**

54. The national governments and civil societies with the help of UN System have taken positive steps in developing strategic objectives, activities and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Platforms for Action. The national UN System have given both technical and monetary assistance. (For actions undertaken at country level see annex 1).

## **5.2 The economic commission for Africa (ECA) through the African women's' Centre (ACW).**

55. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) through the African Women's Centre (ACW) is playing an important role in assisting member states in defining and implementing their commitment regarding the Platform. ACW is organising subregional follow-up meetings on the implementation of the African Platform for Action in the five subregional Development Centre areas of ECA 1997 through 1998.

56. The objectives of the meetings are :

- to examine national mechanism set up by member States to facilitate propagation and implementation of the Platforms for Action.
- to propose to member States the mechanisms for follow-up and evaluation of programmes already started, in order to assess their impact with regard to the defined objectives,
- to start preparation for the sixth African Regional conference for the mid-Decade review, to be held in 1999 in Côte d'Ivoire.

57. ACW has produced two kits towards this meeting. The first kit is to assess the relevance of national Plans of Action and the 2<sup>nd</sup> kit is to be used in monitoring the implementation of national Plan of Action.

58. The ACW in collaboration with SRDC West Africa, Niamey conducted the above stated meeting for the West African Subregional member states in Senegal Dakar, 25-27 November 1997. West African subregion was the first SRDC area to hold the meeting. The deliberation of the meeting presented the through situation of Post Beijing Planning and implementation in West African countries. (see annex 1).

### Highlight of outcome of the Meeting

59. Most of the West African countries had already planned and adopted their Plans of Action. A few were preparing and putting finishing touches to theirs.

### PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED

1. The Priority areas identified by most of the countries include :

- (a) education,
- (b) women's economic empowerment,
- (c) women's human rights,
- (d) poverty elimination,
- (e) women's participation on decision making bodies
- (f) health and

(g) protection of girl-child. But the critical issue for all the countries is the elimination of poverty. It was stated that all gender advocates and governments should fight hard to “eliminate” poverty not to “reduce” it ; for elimination of poverty to women and other vulnerable groups will open door to sustainable development.

2. The constraints against the implementation of Platforms of Action identified are :

a Institutional constraints

- Conflicts and absences of peace in some countries.
- Absence of structures and instability of the people in charge of formulation and monitoring of plans of Action.
- Law status of the structures in charge of the advancement of women and lack of a clear definition of their mandate.
- Weak political will and technical skills.

b Technical and Financial constraints

- Ineffective co-ordination and cooperation among the various actors in the planning and implementation of Plan of Action :
- Existence of several other sectoral plans of action and lack of coherence between the various plans of action and national Plan of Action for the advancement of women.
- Insufficient gender desegregated data.
- Low capacity in gender related planning.
- Lack of or poor vision with regard to social issues when formulating national Planning Action.
- Insufficient consultation and grass roots participation in the planning of national Plans of Action.
- Inadequate sources of information.
- Inadequate financial resources and inability to mobilize funds
- To implement scattered planned actions.

c Socio-cultural constraints

- Little communication and cooperation among the various actors.
- Resistance to change of mentality by men and women in political administrative and other structures.
- Little involvement of rural women during the stages of identification of objectives, drawing up, implementation, follow-up and assessment of Plan of Action.
- Inadequate dissemination of information on Plans of Action and their non-availability to rural women in the local language.

d Overall constraints

60. Structural adjustment policies in force lead to the achievement of balance accounts at the macro-economic level while ignoring women's needs and plight at the micro-economic or rather at the so called income generating activities. This approach does not give women a choice of improving their living than to remain at subsistent level all along. And data lack

### 3. Strategies to overcome these constraints

#### a) At the government level

##### 61. Action should be taken to :

- Counter the adverse effect of SAP on the poor, especially women and youths.
- Set up and/or strengthen the mechanism for co-ordination and dialogue with partners.
- Establish focal points on gender in sectoral departments and specify their terms of reference.
- Strengthen the institutional framework of structures responsible for the advancement of women.
- Set up and / or strengthen data banks to be used to establish national information and research centres.
- Train statisticians and other professionals in the gathering, processing and use of disaggregated data.
- Make statistical data available and accessible to the Ministries in charge of Women's Affairs.
- Facilitate access to source of information and basic documents on gender.
- Ensure dissemination of information and translation of plans of action in the various local languages and use of the traditional channels of communication.
- Educate and sensitize men and women on the gender-sensitive approach.
- Establish networks from informal dissemination.
- Identify and set up structures for regular follow-up and assessment of national Plans of Action.
- Establish appropriate communication and information dissemination technologies.
- Form strategic alliance among Governments, NGOs and the other actors of civil society.
- Set up strategic programmes to correct inadequate coordination and follow-up.

#### b) The level of the African Centre for Women

##### 62. Action should be taken to :

- Facilitate NGO networking
- Set up information - and experience sharing mechanism.
- Collect and disseminate data to and from governments and partners.
- Urge participants to prepare and disaggregate statistics by gender.
- Mobilise resources for training statisticians and decision-makers in the gender sensitive approach.
- Use African expertise.
- Coordinate the activities of donors in order to optimise the use of resources in the implementation of the Platforms for Action.
- Play an advocacy role to involve Governments and international Institutions in the implementation of national plans of Action.
- Work with subregional organisations in the implementation of the Plans of Action,
- Organise leadership training for women.
- Strengthen women's ability to play their role in the piece process.

- Organise regular meetings to coordinate and promote cooperation in the implementation follow-up and evaluation of national Plans of action.
- Establish an appropriate communication strategies.
- Play an advocacy role to sensitize governments to integrate gender issues in their policies.

c) At the subregional level

63. Action should be taken to : Strengthen the role and resources of the Gender Focal points in ECA subregional development centres. In order to implement the plans of Action the subregional organisations should :

- work to change culture and traditional attitudes.
- Co-operate and consult with the other structures in the follow-up and monitoring of subregional activities;
- Establish appropriate communication and information technologies in the local languages.

Other initiatives of ECA on Gender and Platforms for Actions.

Gender training

64. ECA is systematically training all the staff of ECA and SRDCs in gender perspective. So far all the gender focal points the Directors of programmes and the regional experts have obtained gender training.

65. The main concern and aims of the gender training are to :

- Clarify the concept of gender.
- Clarify the distinction between women in development approach and gender approach as a policy instrument.
- Develop practical awareness of gender analysis as professional development tool.
- Demonstrate the rationale for a gender approach to African development.
- Strengthen understanding of gender as a crosscutting issue in the core programme areas of ECA.
- Build and understanding of the link between mainstreaming gender in substantive areas and mainstreaming gender in organisations.
- Make and present recommendations about gender focal points function, responsibilities and resources and identify priorities for future.
- The training is becoming very effective and well taken by the trainees. The impact and mapping out of the total functions and responsibilities of Gender Focal Points are in progress.
- 

Meeting on Gender networking

66. ECA in June 1997 conducted expert group meeting on gender networking at which many experts on gender issues were invited.

### The high lights of the meeting

**68.** Some important proposals were made during the meeting for future subregional collaboration and networking, on the areas of :

- food security,
- increase and persistence in poverty,
- conflict situations,
- access to land waters and basic services,
- access to credit,
- political participation,
- regional co-operation especially to remedy the lack of an enabling environment for economic empowerment and unequal power relations between women and men in the household, community and other spheres.

**69.** The workshop emphasised and recommended that the following areas should be utilized as base for future networking :

1) The economic empowerment to :

Bring the engendering the macro economic policies of governments and financial institutions;

- Increasing women's' access to credit through policy intervention, investment in the private sector, women's' credit institutions, forming credit cooperatives and loan schemes.
- Establish conducive legal environments and advocacy for the expansion, increasing and systematizing trade relationship among women entrepreneurs at all levels and highlighting role models from women politicians, business women scientists, farmers and actresses etc.

2) Women in Decision making.

This could involve : capacity building, address leadership and basic skill training, civic education, organizational capacity building and investment in self-esteem programme ;

- education for girl-child ;
- advocating for affirmative action programmes, gender training for relevant actors' judges decision-makers in leadership institutions.
- Making concrete use of democratization process for advocacy on gender ; and making concrete use of women already in decision making position in various areas.

3). Women's Human Rights :

This includes : Preparation of background reports when government reports are being presented to international human rights oversight committees to make sure that women's policy and advocacy papers feature in the agenda of the meeting;

- strengthening existing networks and establishing new ones as appropriate ;
- engendering the reconstruction plan in conflict areas ;
- developing and introducing human rights education in the national curricular. The curricular should embody activities for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal declaration of human rights, 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Vienna declaration on Human rights.

70. It was observed that it is necessary to conduct studies on the status of women nationally and subregionally for ECA.

71. Other proposals advised the ACW and other gender focal points to replicate the successful programmes; increase research and training needs, documentation and dissemination of various aspects of the African women's movement, such as peace initiatives, human rights success training, gender training for civil servants pressurise national and regional and international banking structures to engender their institutions; and establish and strengthen advocacy and pressure groups to sensitise the wide public about gender equality as an issue of democracy development.

#### The gender focus at the level of SRDC

72. Based on making gender a cross-cutting issue, a gender focal point has been deployed in each SRDC to be responsible for gender issues in the subregion in collaboration with the African Centre for Women.

73. Activities of the focal point include :

- propose plan and implement appropriate policies, strategies and activities on gender related issues relevant to the priorities of the subregion;
- monitor at national and sub-regional levels activities undertaken to implement the regional and global platforms of Action and develop an effective monitoring and coordinative role ;
- take stock of established and planned national and subregional machineries for the implementation of the Platforms and provide a visible outreach for ECA among the partners ;
- initiate, develop and implement gender training priorities for the subregion ;
- mainstream gender in ECA's Subregional programme;
- initiate, implement and facilitate gender networking and link the subregional with other regions for cross fertilization of best practices and enhance regional cooperation and integration ;
- develop a client -focused subregional gender programme and forge partnership for its implementation ;
- undertake dialogue and action to strengthen the capacity and utilize the potential of sub-regional gender NGOs and IGOs
- provide necessary gender advisory services to member States.

74. These activities are on-going and should be continued. The focal point has made the initial move by producing the gender mission of SRDC and circulated it to all the West African member States, the relevant government, IGOs and NGO organs and also to the national UN agencies.

75. An initial visit was made to four member states in 1997 namely Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria. During the mission contacts were established with the relevant government, NGOs, IGO organs the UN agencies and other actors and implementers of gender issues. Meeting was conducted with some women entrepreneurs judiciary and media. The position of ECA in coordination technical assistance and cooperation in gender issues was disclosed.



76. The group met showed interest and have started to cooperate and demand assistance. The question is with limited funds how could SRDC respond to some of the requests coming in.

77. Another important out-come of the missions is the collection of data and information on the situation of women and gender in social and economic conditions. With the information gathered, the gender situation is reflected in the report of social and economic conditions of West Africa subregion. Also the profile of actors in women and gender issues has been drawn.

### Constraints met

#### 1) Limited communications

78. Despite numerous gender initiatives and strategies being carried out at all levels by governments non-governmental organisations, UN agencies and other developmental partners there is lack of visibility of what various actors are doing. This is due to limited interaction and communication gap at the subregional level. Every institution and other actors are doing their own things and duplicating efforts unnecessarily. There are no-information sharing, effective networking among implementors, and facilitators and donors. There exist limited documentation and dissemination of what is taking place within the countries due to language problem and unhealthy competitions. This has led to the understanding that less is being done in terms of follow up and implementation of the Platforms for Action.

#### 2) Planning Management

79. Many countries participate in projects without asking the question of what why and how, hence the priority and need to the beneficiaries are missed or neglected. This results in inadequate coordination in planning and implementation and brings about unaccountable and unsustainable results into projects. Many projects on the same issue go on in the same country with little or no impact. For example at national levels, Government, NGOs, UN agencies and other development partners are taking initiatives to implement gender activities separately using the same target group thereby bringing confusion to the people they are trying to help. This too has also led to ineffective use of resources due to duplications and scanty implementation. Effective coordination framework at national and subregional levels should be put in place to address these constraints.

#### 3) Misconception of Gender and gender disaggregation

80. This has been discussed earlier on. The planners and decision-makers do not know the difference between women and development and gender mainstreaming. They lack gender information and documentation to work with for example, gender in agriculture and food security, market channels, tariff barriers, fiscal policies, transport and communications industry, energy and water, mining. Practical gender analysis and disaggregation in all these are lacking. Whenever a question is raised on these developmental issues, the question is quickly referred to women sector or desk instead of treating it as total developmental issue which requires assessment of female and male status in the situation.

## **VI SUGGESTED MODALITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING SUBREGIONAL GENDER INITIATIVES**

### **6.1 Map out Roles and cooperations**

**81.** Based on the fact that there already exist different categories of gender advocates and implementors both at national and subregional levels and admission on the need not to duplicate efforts, it is essential that nature of cooperation and sharing needed to facilitate complementary and effective linkages at the subregional level are defined. The line of action in giving roles and cooperation will be the responsibilities of all stakeholders, with governments and non-governmental organizations taking the leading role.

#### **6.1.1 Enforcing Networking Approach**

**82.** The main reasons for creating networking in the subregion or fortifying the existing one in the subregion is to strengthen linkages, share information and best practices to enhance action on critical areas of concern to women. In enforcing networking approach special efforts will be made to forge closer linkages and collaboration with government agencies and non-governmental organisations at national and sub-regional levels. The specific action strategies will include :

- (a) making an inventory of all implementers at national and sub-regional levels with areas of focus and programmes being implemented.
- (b) assessing and identifying gaps that needed to be addressed at the subregional level.
- (c) Creating and strengthening linkages within and between institutions and networks.
- (d) Forming strategic alliances and intensifying promotion of gender initiative in the region.

#### **6.1.2 Increased interactions at the subregional level**

**83.** Increased interaction at the subregional level will depend on how ideas, strategies and actions will influence policies to effectively change the status of women and youth in the region. Thus this calls for quality interaction between the implementers and policy makers. Specific action strategies will be.

- a) Identifying specific strategies and actions on policy issues which will benefit countries of the region and impact on the status of women.
- b) Organising regular forums bringing the actors and policy makers together to assess progress made in implementing several activities.
- c) Bringing the stakeholders together to have a consensus on the line of actions.

### **6.2 Enhancing mechanisms for joint-planning implementation, coordination and monitoring of gender activities in the subregion.**

**84.** In order to coordinate and monitor gender activities there is need to plan joint activities to be implemented and monitored at the sub-regional level. The action strategies to meet this objective are : The formation of a sub-regional gender advisory expert committee development programmes for the subregion in specific areas and developing kits for

### **6.2.1 Formation of sub-regional gender advisory committee**

**85.** A gender advisory committee composed of experts from the subregion involved in women's advancement initiative should be formed to give leadership and vision, contribute towards the conceptualisation, articulation and mainstreaming of gender issues, advise on priorities and targets and build consensus on the issues of advocacy for the subregion on areas concerning women and youth.

### **6.2.2 Developing programmes in specific areas**

**86.** In order to develop joint programmes at the subregional level it is important to identify issues that need to be addressed and programmes that will bring significant impact on the status of women and youth in the subregion. The specific strategic action in this area :

- (a) identifying gender issues to be addressed at the subregional level (need for study).
- (b) Forming expert groups around the identified issues to work out joint plans and programmes for action at the subregional level.

### **6.2.3 Identifying indicators for monitoring gender initiatives in the subregion**

**87.** To facilitate the subregional monitoring and evaluation process, key quantitative and qualitative indicators should be identified and developed along with programmes to measure progress and results of the gender initiative. On this regard the monitoring and evaluation kits produced by ACW could be adopted to suit the required area.

## **6.3 Devising modalities for information dissemination**

**88.** An efficient communication and information strategy is essential for effective collection and dissemination of information at the sub-regional level and should serve as a vehicle for increasing awareness of the gender initiative. For this sub-region the need for translator should be stressed because of the language problem. Specific action strategies to be undertaken are :

- (a) Employing a translator
- (b) Production and distribution of newsletters focussing on sub regional gender initiatives.
- (c) Document and publish on annual basis a sector specific thematic area identified as critical in the subregion for example "counselling the youth on gainful employment" economic empowerment of women" to make visible the progress being made and initiative taking place.
- (d) Work more effectively with the media to promote gender initiatives and campaign on key issues.
- (e) Create a sub-regional data base service centre assessable to all stakeholders.

#### **6.4 Enhancing subregional cooperation and integrating co-operation with inter-governmental organisations**

**89.** It is important that the gender network and programme should form a supportive link with the economic groupings in the subregions such as ECOWAS, UEMOA and WAWA (which is the women branch of ECOWAS) in order to serve the political and economic interest of gender.

### **VII CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**90.** Against the discussions and analysis provided all along this report, the West African subregion has a great challenge facing them in gender development. The need and consequences are identified; some initiatives and strategies are mapped out. The subregion must explore possibilities to put in place, modalities for strengthening capacities of gender initiative and subregional co-operation. Immediately the subregion must concretely respond to the need to acquire and enhance mechanism for coordination and monitoring gender activities, the need for strengthened information dissemination and the need to mainstream gender issues into the protocols of subregional economic grouping for operationalization.

**91.** A suitable environment for building continued gender balances require forging a stronger communication link between men and women. A proper mechanism for joint planning, implementing, co-ordinating and monitoring gender activities in the subregion is required. To this end a brain storming meeting should be organised in the subregion involving few gender experts, government, non-governmental and international organisations, gender advocates, UN system and other partners to come to a consensus on how best to pull efforts together in order to plan and implement projects that are benefiting and sustaining.

**92.** The report is an effort to highlight the status of gender in developmental processes and factors. The report cannot claim that it has touched all the required issues to solve the gender problems in the subregion. But it is hoped that the points disclosed so far are crucial enough at strengthening the capacity of gender movements and advocacy to provide accountability from governments and other policy makers for people centred and gender aware policies at all levels that affect the vulnerable groups.

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# ANNEX

A. FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

Country	National Plan	Responsibility for formulation and implementation	Actors involved in formulation and implementation	National priorities	Constraints in formulation and implementation
Benin	In process	Ministry of Health and Department of Women Affairs.	Multi-disciplinary structure ; various ministries, civil society, NGOs and development partners.	Education and training ; Economic empowerment of women ; health ; women's human and legal rights ; women, tradition and culture ; the environment.	Lack of human organisational, financial and material resources
Burkina Faso	Yes	Ministry of the promotion of women.	Government, civil society, NGOs and development partners.	Eradication of poverty, income generation activities, entrepreneurship of women, access to land, education and training, political empowerment, women 's rights ; women, tradition and culture.	Inadequate financial resources . Difficulties in coordination so many different actors and actions.
Côte d'Ivoire	In process	Ministry of Family and the Promotion of Women's Affairs .	National Assembly, different ministries NGOS and civil society.	Health, Econmy and eradication of poverty, Education, Human rights of women, participation in the peace process ; the girl-child.	Inadequate institutional capacity lack of statistics.
Gambia	Yes	Focal points in line ministries with supervision by the Women's Bureau.	Multisectoral group working with a consultant ; NGOs	Agriculture, education, health, poverty alleviation, environment, youth and tourism.	<b>Formulation</b> : resources and a dearth of information on gender. <b>Implementation</b> : resources

Country	National Plan	Responsibility for formulation and implementation	Actors involved in formulation and implementation	National priorities	Constraints in formulation and implementation
Ghana	In draft	National Machinery on women - the National Council on Women & Development in collaboration with sector ministries, NGO's and civil society organisations.		12 critical areas of the Platforms for Action.	<p><b>Formulation :</b> National Plan indraft. Funds required for consultant to finalise document. Consultation process has demanded a great deal of time coordination of activities is constrained.</p> <p><b>Implementation :</b> Financial attitudinal, changing negative cultural and traditional practices that have impact on women.</p>
Guinea	Yes	Sectoral ministries of Health, Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Education, Communication etc, representatives of NGOs, civil society and trade unions coordinated by the Ministry of Social, Women and Children Affairs.	Multidisciplinary group of sectoral ministries, NGOs, donors and political organisations ; the Ministry of Social Women and Children Affairs in partnership with NGOs.	Women's human rights ; economic empowerment of women ; promotion of the role of the women and improvement of her status ; access to health and education ; strengthening of the institutional structures for the advancement of women ; environment and women in decision-making.	Coordination and monitoring Resource mobilisation. Lack of communication. Dispersion of efforts in dealing with donors. Insufficient human resources.
Guinée-Bissau	yes	The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women.	National Assembly, government, NGOs, women's groups and associations, the private sector and civil society.	The economy, health, education, women's legal rights and strengthening the mechanisms for women's advancement; economy and poverty eradication.	



Country	National Plan	Responsibility for formulation and implementation	Actors involved in formulation and implementation	National priorities	Gender issues formulation and implementation
Liberia	No	Not clear on formulation and implementation : women and youth NGOs, civil society associations, sectoral ministries and agencies. Ministry of Social Welfare and Women and Children's Affairs at Ministry of Planning.	Multi-disciplinary advisory and technical committees and other partners, eg international agencies, women's NGOs and parliamentarians.	National Recovery and reconstruction programme : Rehabilitation Reintegration reconciliation and reconstruction.	None (formulation of NAP delayed due to liberian civil war 1989-1996.
Mali	yes	The Commission for the Advancement of women in collaboration with ministerial departments , women's associations and NGOs. (The commission no longer exists, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and Family is now responsible).	A committee composed of the actors mentioned under previous column.	Education, Health, human rights of women, Economic empowerment of women, the environment, participation of women in decision-making.	<b>Implementation</b> : Delays in mobilising financial resources. Lack of coordination of activities of different actors. Lack of detailed work plans.
Niger	yes	Ministry of women's Affairs and Child Protection.	All development actors, administration and social partners ; international organisations.	Health, Education, Water, Poverty Eradication ; women's rights, violence against women.	Ministerial changes lack of finances inadequate human resources weak coordination of activities.

Country	National Plan	Responsibility for formulation and implementation	Actors involved in formulation and implementation	National priorities	Constraints in formulation and implementation
Nigeria	Yes	National Preparatory committee, line ministries, WID institutions, focal machinery for women ; Ministerial Review Committee ; Ministry of women's NGOs and opinion leaders.	Federal Ministry of women with Apex WID institutions state ministries of women, line ministries and research institutions women's associations and activists.	Poverty alleviation, family development, income generating activities for women education, health , agri	<p><b>Formulation</b> : inadequate funds, low technical capacity and facilities, insufficient data and statistica disaggregated by gender, logistics relating to convening frequent intersectoral meetings, insufficient communication tools and mechanisms and misconceptions of the implications of the action plan and preparatory process.</p> <p><b>Implementation</b> : same as above .</p>
Sao Tome & Principe	Yes	Department of Women 's Affairs.	Multidisciplinary Committee.		Weak national capacity to organise lack of financial and material resources.
Senegal	Yes	Ministry of Women, Children and Family Affairs, supported by a other development partners.	Women's groups, technical ministries NGOs, UN Agencies, civil society, local communities, town councils, Members of parliament , youth.	Poverty eradication, education, health, human rights, strengthening the institutional mechanism for financing and promoting women's advancement, economic empowerment decision-making and the girl-child.	<p>Formulation : attempts to consult were hampered by poor availability of the different actors ; underestimation or lack of proper costing and provisions for local experts ; lack of gender disaggregated data.</p> <p><b>Implementing</b> : resource mobilisation difficulties in operationalising coordination mechanism.</p>

Country	National Plan	Responsibility for formulation and implementation	Actors involved in formulation and implementation	National priorities	Constraints in formulation and implementation
Sierra Leone	Yes	The ministry of gender and children's Affairs.	Civil society organisations, government ministries, and the entire public. Mass media used for mobilising public opinion.	Peace, poverty, health, education participation in decision-making	An understanding of the term gender and getting people to understand the mandate of the Ministry as it was a new institutions set up after the 1996 election .
Togo	Yes	Ministry of women's Affairs and social protection through the Department of women Affairs, other ministries, national assembly, civil society, NGOs and international organisations.	Multi-disciplinary group as in group responsible for formulation.	Education : Health women's human rights ; women in the Media, Economic empowerment and poverty eradication Environment	<p><b>Formulation</b> : Lack of formal mechanism for collaboration among different actors in the area of advancement of women ; difficulty in mobilising material and financial resources ; lack of consensus on the issues of women's advancement ; insufficient and lack of up-to-date gender disaggregated data.</p> <p><b>Implementation</b> : difficulties in access to information in certain sectors ; ineffective or lack of collaboration with certain ministries.</p>