United Nations ⬥ Nations Unies

Division for the Advancement of Women
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

In collaboration with the
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

REGIONAL WORKSHOP TO ESTABLISH THE AFRICAN E-NETWORK FOR NATIONAL MACHINERIES AND ITS SUPPORT MECHANISMS

FINAL REPORT

Addis Ababa
5-8 December 2006

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1. Background

1. A regional workshop to establish the African e-network for national machineries and its support mechanisms was organized, in collaboration with the African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 5-8 December 2006.

2. The workshop followed a series of sub-regional and regional capacity- and network-building activities undertaken in 2004 and 2005 to strengthen the capacity of national machineries through the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

3. To date, the project has enhanced the capacity of national machineries in Africa and the Middle East to use and benefit from ICT; increased awareness of, and involvement in, ICT policy processes at national level; facilitated the sharing of good practices in using ICT for the achievement of gender equality; further developed strategies for using ICT for advocacy, information sharing and as an overall resource for gender equality work; strengthened understanding of and commitment to networking among national machineries and sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices.

Objective of the regional workshop

4. The main purpose of the regional workshop was to establish the regional e-network for national machineries, which had been the subject of discussion at previous sub-regional workshops and a regional meeting. The e-network aims to serve as an important tool to enhance knowledge management and communication strategies, as well as strengthen networking between national machineries at the sub-regional and regional levels. It will enhance the capacity of national machineries to utilize ICT to better accomplish their roles as advocates and catalysts for the achievement of gender equality. In particular, it will provide enhanced potential for the sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practices between national machineries.

Participation

5. A total of 58 participants attended the regional meeting (see Annex 3), including:
- Representatives from Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
- Two representatives of women's networks in Africa;
- A consultant from the World Bank;
- A national consultant (web-designer);
- A representative of INSTRAW;
- Four gender focal points from ECA sub-regional offices;
- Ten staff members from the Economic Commission for Africa; and
- Two staff members from the Division for the Advancement of Women.

Documentation

6. The documentation of the meeting consisted of:
- Aide-memoire
- Programme of work
- Participant list
- Working group discussion guides
- Introduction to the e-network manual
- Presentation handouts

7. This report and all documentation relating to the workshop are available online at the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/TechnicalCooperation/tcprog_natmach_bg.htm#enetwork .

Methodology

8. The four-day meeting was convened in plenary as well as in working groups (see Annex 2). The plenary sessions were conducted in English with interpretation to French. Separate working groups were conducted in English and French.

Opening session

9. The meeting opened with introductory statements by the Economic Commission for Africa and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

10. Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Officer-in-Charge of the African Centre for Gender and Social Development of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), welcomed the participants to Addis Ababa and emphasized the timeliness of this opportunity to make new ICT an important and practical tool to facilitate networking among national machineries and share information and knowledge. She emphasized that while ICT have become crucial in facilitating partnerships, it is up to each individual to fill it with content and make it a useful tool.

11. Ms. Joanna Skinner, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), delivered an introductory statement on behalf of Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of DAW. In her statement, Ms. Hannan gave an overview of the project and noted the leading role of national machineries in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national level. She emphasized how ICT could be a powerful strategic tool for promoting the empowerment of women through enhancing communication and networking. She noted that the e-network should be seen as part of broader communication strategies within national machineries, which aim to increase access to and use of relevant information by national machineries, as well as strengthen their outreach to their constituencies at all levels by increasing dissemination of important information to the general public, line ministries, civil society, academia, donors and other important stakeholders in the efforts to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

2. Evaluation of past workshops, subsequent activities and current ICT capacities

12. In preparation for the workshop, questionnaires were sent to national machineries in August 2006 to enable the organizers to evaluate past workshops, subsequent activities and current ICT capacity. By the first week of December 2006, only 18 national machineries had sent their responses. Results of the questionnaire were presented to the participants to review the status of ICT in national machineries.

13. Responses showed that few national machineries had developed and implemented ICT strategies and action plans to improve communication and dissemination of information to relevant stakeholders. Many had developed draft action plans or were in the process of doing so. National machineries use ICT as a tool in their work; to research, collect and share information, to provide online services for advocacy, and to communicate with relevant stakeholders.

14. Several national machineries noted they have been involved in national ICT policy processes, including through highlighting gender dimensions of ICT in national action plans and promoting gender mainstreaming in ICT strategies. However, only a few national machineries had been involved in regional ICT policy processes and most national machineries have not participated in international policy processes on ICT.

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15. While most national machineries noted the need for external support (see Box 1), several national machineries had successfully established internal and external partnerships and received budgetary allocations and funding support, including for computer equipment and training. External partners included UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNFPA, African Development Bank as well as donor countries.

> **Box 1: National machineries noted the need for external support for :**
> - Training and building staff capacity, as well as technical support;
> - Provision of more ICT equipment and resources;
> - Financial support;
> - Facilitating national, regional and international networking;
> - Improving internet connectivity and regulating internet connection fees

16. Many national machineries reported that access to ICT supports their networking, but noted that limited or no internet connection within the national machineries was a major challenge. Some national machineries reported that they network with civil society organizations but many noted that this was not specifically in relation to ICT or the gender digital divide. Some countries reported occasional networking with other national machineries in their sub-region through exchange of electronic messages and documents, and some reported networking with other government agencies.

17. The responses revealed that all national machineries had some computer equipment which staff had access to, but most national machineries reported only occasional access to the internet. 11 out of 18 national machineries reported that they had a website. They were mostly used for disseminating information about the national machinery. Problems with keeping websites up-to-date were also mentioned.

3. Knowledge management, networking, communication strategies and the use of ICT

18. Knowledge management is the systematic process of identifying, capturing, and transferring information and knowledge people can use to create, compete, and improve. It leads to greater efficiency, consistency in good practices and knowledge access across the organization, as well as many other benefits. During the workshop, communication strategies and networking were emphasized as key components of knowledge management.

Networking

19. Participants were introduced to the value of networks and were presented with examples of different types of networks, approaches to assessing results, as well as major challenges and success factors. Networks are valuable mechanisms for sharing information and knowledge both at the organizational level and the individual level. It is crucial to ensure two-way communication in networks as one can benefit the most from a network when responding to someone else.

20. Networks create a number of benefits for their members and their stakeholders. Among the benefits of networks for organizations and individuals discussed (see Box 2), participants found reduced time and costs at the organizational level to be the most significant benefit. At the individual level, however, the benefit depended on the job responsibilities of national machinery staff, whether they were involved in research or policy.

Box 2. Benefits of Networks

	Short term	Long term
Organization	Better, faster problem solving Reduced time and costs Improved quality of decisions	Benchmarking with other institutions Increased retention of talent Catalyst for partnerships
Individual	Improve individual performance Direct access to expertise Confidence building Sense of belonging	Forum for expanding skills and expertise Network for keeping abreast of a field Enhanced professional reputation

21. There are various types of government networks, including enforcement networks (for example, for cooperation between governments on transnational crimes), harmonization networks (for example, the European Union) and information networks. Information networks are created and sustained by exchange of ideas, techniques and experiences. The specific design of a network structure depends on the objective of the network. Issues to consider in the network structure include what the network represents, whether the network would take a formal or informal approach and what incentives to be provided for participation. Flexibility is a critical element for the network to be able to adapt its structure.

22. Among the various network models presented (see Presentation by Erik Johnson on communication strategies, slides 13-17), participants found the network model without the secretariat as the most ideal one in the long-run when members get to know each other and develop relationships (see Box 3). In this model, members of the network are sufficiently motivated to interact with each other. All the individuals are linked with each other without any central facilitation. In the short-term however, participants agreed that the network with a central secretariat (see Box 4) would be the most appropriate model. In this model, network members interact with each other (not all possible lines shown) and the central secretariat facilitates linkages between members. Participants emphasized that commitment to carry out duties assigned was crucial for the sustainability of the e-network. It was suggested that ECA or the sub-regional focal points can initially take the responsibility to facilitate linkages between members of the regional e-network.

Box 3: Network model

Box 4: Network model
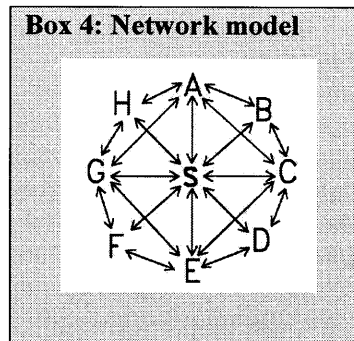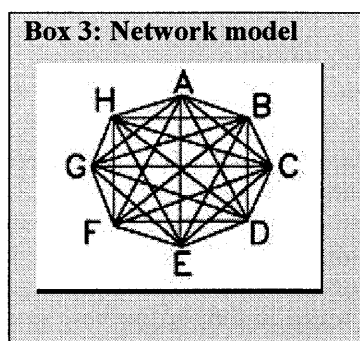
23. Participants were presented with the following examples of global, regional and national networks.
- Aid Workers Network (www.aidworkers.net), a global network, is a learning community of development and relief practitioners for mutual support and for sharing practical advice and resources with each other. The network uses discussion forums, email newsletters, advice pages and blogs. Email alerts and bulletins prompt members to go to the website. Facilitators encourage users to respond to questions.
- The ECANet (http://www.msif.md/user/ecanet.shtml), a regional European and Central Asian network, is for regional cooperation, learning and exchange of information between participating funds. It includes a rotating, self-financing, voluntary secretariat with activities such as regional conferences, regional training seminars and workshops, internship program to exchange specialists working in different funds, study tours, an e-bulletin and publication of papers.

- The South Africa Cities network (www.sacities.net), a national network, is a network of South African cities and partners that encourages the exchange of information, experience and best practices on urban development and city management. The network updates leaders on current and emerging changes and trends in urban policy across the world and in South Africa as well as fostering cooperation and exchange of best practice. Network instruments used by this network include newsletters, electronic conferences, manuals etc.

24. Among the network instruments discussed during the workshop (see Box 5), participants found seminars, workshops and training to be the most useful for the national machineries. Other suggested instruments included peer reviews, electronic newsletters, study tours, documentation of best practices and joint research.

25. On-going evaluation is essential for the success and sustainability of a network. Assessment of its success can be done by monitoring the number and diversity of participants, frequency of contributions and interactions, and quality and relevance of contributions. Surveys can be used for social network analysis to determine if members are connecting and in what ways, and to determine if a different model is needed for the network.

26. One of the major challenges of formal networks is that members can become passive recipients while the central secretariat disseminates all the information with no interaction from members. Other challenges include exclusion/lack of participation due to inhibition/reluctance; domination by very active members; seniority differences; language; and lack of time.

27. To overcome these challenges and to ensure an effective network, several strategies were introduced and discussed (see Box 6). Encouraging effective participation and having topics of common interest to e-network members were found to be essential to preempt the problem of passive recipients. Strategies to prevent exclusion and lack of participation included rotation of responsibilities, ensuring that no single participant dominates the e-network, requesting at least once a month participation, providing highlights of discussions to keep members informed. To handle job-turnover, it was necessary to ensure that institutional memory is retained within national machineries.

28. In response to concerns about the lack of electricity and internet, a suggestion was made to print materials on a regular basis as electronic networking does not necessarily mean everything should be electronic. Another concern raised was reaching out to blind people. Because of the slow speed of internet connection Africa, it was a challenge to download audio. It was suggested that the web material be converted into a CD-ROM and voice added over to that.

29. The need to address the issue of limited resources in some countries and the need for training were emphasized during the discussions as a major obstacle to effective participation in the e-network. As ECA and DAW were not in a position to provide additional resources, it was suggested that partnerships

be developed with other ministries, non-governmental organizations or academic institutions for resources. It was also suggested that ECA and DAW send national machineries a survey to determine their level of access to ICT in order to assist them develop customized strategies. The survey could rank national machineries according to a scale, in which a national machinery at level 1 would mean computer at desk with internet of good speed, and a national machinery at level 5 would mean no computer/internet in ministry.

Communication Strategies

30. The key elements of a communication strategy and the importance of identifying target audiences were discussed during the plenary as well as the working groups. Setting priorities and making strategic choices enables an organization to make effective use of the available resources and media to communicate about gender issues and increase the probability to achieve its communication objectives.

Box 7. Communication vs. information

Information

Sender

Receiver

Communication

Sender   Receiver
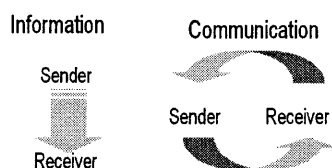
31. The distinction between communication and information was emphasized (see Box 7).Communication is a two-way relationship. If there is no dialogue, it is dissemination of information. While information is passive and unidirectional, communication is multidirectional involves dialogue, sharing and a participatory process.

32. The key issues to consider in developing a communication strategy include (i) setting communication goals and objectives, (ii) identifying and knowing who the target audience is, (iii) determining the content/form of the message, and (iv) selecting the most appropriate media (see Box 8).

Box 8: What matters in a communication strategy?
- WHAT FOR? Setting communication goals and objectives
- TO WHOM? Identifying and knowing the target audience
- WHAT? Determining the content/form of the message
- BY WHAT CHANNEL? Selecting the most appropriate media

33. In setting communication goals and objectives, it is essential that national machineries have specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time bound objectives to be able to evaluate progress and results. For national machineries, communication strategy would be most useful in planning and decision-making processes and would play a crucial role in knowledge management. It was also emphasized that communication strategies should take the gender digital divide into consideration.

34. In identifying the target audience, organization sometimes fall in the trap of vaguely defining the "general public" as their main target audience. Attempts to reach everyone can result in reaching no one. Therefore, it is important to identify specific target groups and develop communication strategies to reach them. Audiences can be categorized as: (i) primary audiences or those who are expected to be informed and influenced, and (ii) secondary audiences or those who can influence the decision made by the primary audience. Secondary audiences can provide a way to reach the primary audience that may not be available to national machineries directly. Once the target audience is identified, getting to know the exact profile of the audience (information needs, professional expectations, perception of the issue, cultural preferences, educational background, terminology etc.) is essential for planning an effective communication strategy. Several target groups can be identified by a national machinery, but it is crucial to prioritize them.

35. Possible target groups for national machineries include other national machineries, line ministries, local governments, women's groups, gender activists, researchers, development partners, regional bodies, private sector and media. Head of ministries and media, for example, can be considered as the primary

target group, while members of parliament, religious leaders, non-governmental organizations and heads of political parties can be considered as the secondary target group. It was emphasized that depending on the context primary groups can become secondary and vice versa.

36. The importance of matching objectives and target audience was emphasized. Different target groups can have unique concerns and can interpret and respond to the same message in different ways. Participants agreed that each target group required a different communication strategy. Special attention must be paid to format, tone, angle and style of the message to tailor it to the target audience. Various issues such as the cultural sensitivity, the choice of language, the level of literacy of audience and audio-visual components should also be taken into account.

37. The importance of sharing the information received from the e-network and repackaging it depending on the target audience was highlighted. Criteria for selecting the appropriate media to convey the message include the longevity of the message in a particular media, accessibility of the media to the audience, credibility of the media as a source, social and cultural acceptability of the media. A large variety of outlets can be used, including printed publications (leaflets, posters, newsletter, sketches), traditional broadcast media (television, radio, video), interpersonal exchanges, electronic media. Various outlets can be combined to convey a message. It was emphasized that strategic articulation between different communication e-tools is key to maximize the impact and increase the number of visitors (for example, INSTRAW's interactive online quiz).

38. While new ICT have been increasingly used by national machineries, traditional means still remain important. Participants noted that traditional communication strategies can be information-based (for example, traditional town cryer) and communication based (for example, market square meetings). Modern communication technologies include telephones, cell phones, internet, radio and TV. Modern technology can be used in policy dialogue as well as advocacy activities with policymakers and legislators. Focus group discussions can be used with rural women. A website can be established to link to other organizations.

Experiences on communication strategies, knowledge management and use of ICT

39. National machineries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zambia made presentations to share their experiences on communication strategies, knowledge management and use of ICT.

40. Burkina Faso reviewed the website of the national machinery following the sub-regional workshop in Senegal to disseminate information on the advancement of women and to enable stakeholders exchange views and share experiences. Their target audience included women, administration personnel, Ministry staff, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, development partners, media, students and researchers from ministries and institutions. The main challenge was the outdated and insufficient equipment used for updating the site. The national machinery planned to ask the General Information Technology Authority (DELGI) of Burkina Faso to train three of the national machinery staff as well as provide the national machinery with computer equipment.

41. The participant from Chad participated in two online discussions, one on gender-based violence and one on training and gender. Learning from experiences of other participants, he presented the findings and conclusions to the Ministry of Women's Affairs. These were then used to influence local and international non-governmental organizations to assist victims of gender-based violence. As a result of these efforts, counseling services were provided to women in eastern Chad. Challenges faced by Chad included the cost of computers, limited internet connection as well as the high cost of internet connection. Another major obstacle was language as most discussions were conducted in English. Chad also highlighted the patriarchal nature of the society and emphasized the need to involve men in addressing women's issues.

42. Ghana has used ICT to communicate with both internal and external clients, including women groups. It has improved its ICT capacity by having fax machines in all 10 sub-regional offices. The national machinery of Ghana successfully used sex-disaggregated data and photos to convince policy-makers about the presence of gender-based violence in Ghana. A radio slot has been secured on Thursdays, during which speakers discuss critical areas of concern, sensitize public on gender related issues and have interactive dialogues with callers. Challenges faced by Ghana included the limited financial resources and connectivity. In addition, as not all women in women's groups could read and write, phone calls were essential in reaching out to them. The way forward would be to lobby for financial resources and reliable connectivity, to organize stakeholders and to secure political will.

43. Morocco provided information on their communication strategy, which assisted them to determine their target audience, objectives, budget and time constraints, and ways and means in achieving their objectives. Morocco has used ICT to disseminate information on reforms, such as the reform of family code of 2005, to train and raise awareness. TV and radio were also used to discuss gender-based violence. CD-ROMs were prepared with regular reports on the implementation of CEDAW.

44. In Sierra Leone, the national machinery had been part of a core group for formulation of draft ICT policies. The Ministry has also established focal points in all line ministries and has gathered information and data on CEDAW articles. ICT has been mainly used for research purposes to collect qualitative and quantitative data through email and internet. Sierra Leone had difficulties in implementing the conclusions and recommendations of the previous workshops because of lack of modern ICT equipment, limited coverage of national radio in rural areas, lack of internet connectivity, lack of power supply, low level of literacy and lack of reliable and affordable communications. Sierra Leone plans to overcome these problems by lobbying policy-makers.

45. Tanzania presented its ICT strategies to improve communication and dissemination of information to stakeholders within the framework of a project known as "Institutional Strengthening of Community Development, Gender and Children". The Women Information Centre was created to serve as focal point for the production and dissemination of all information on individual projects as well as Ministry's activities for the advancement of women in Tanzania. An information collection system was put in place and networks were established with other documentation centers and libraries as well as with relevant stakeholders. A gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system was also established to monitor gender issues, poverty and to carry out gender analysis. Challenges included limited technical and financial resources, inadequate capacity in terms of skills and tools for gender mainstreaming, the difficulty in transferring knowledge to the rest of the staff. Strategies to overcome these challenges would be training and technical backstopping in ICT related activities, networking with different stakeholders, and preparing the Ministry's ICT strategic plan to promote effective use of ICT.

46. Tunisia has provided training on ICT, gender and e-governance. A portal for women was created that covered gender and ICT activities (www.femmes.tn). It provided a forum for dialogue and promoted women's use of ICT. The website provides information on the national machinery's mechanism and structure, plan of action and strategies as well as information on progress made in public life. Another website (www.csp.tn) was established to assist rural women access information society.

47. Zambia presented the website of the Gender in Development Division at Cabinet Office (http://www.gender.gov.zm). The website includes the national gender policy in seven local languages, gender resources, and information on gender focal points in line ministries, provinces as well as the private sector, media, government commissions and departments. The national machinery also has a national gender information database which includes gender reports from districts as well. Zambia expressed its intention to link the non-governmental organizations to the website.

4. Electronic networking

48. Following the discussions on networking and communication strategies, participants were introduced to the use and value of electronic networking as a communications strategy. Electronic networking is a key component of any knowledge management strategy and provides opportunities for improved communication, exchanging experiences and sharing knowledge. Electronic networking provides a virtual space where groups can communicate, collaborate, and share information, regardless of their geographic location and distance. It provides visibility to members regardless of the size of their organization. It was emphasized that for an electronic network to be sustainable and effective, it is crucial that the electronic network is supplemented with other tools such as annual face-to-face meetings.

49. Various tools that support the sharing of communication and information in networks were discussed in the plenary and working groups. Electronic networking tools include e-mail, computer networks, web portals, blogs (see Box 9), listservs, electronic conferencing, collaboration management tools (see Box 10) and discussion lists.

Box 9: Blogs	Box 10: Collaboration management
A blog is a website for which an individual or a group generates text, photographs, videa, audio files and/or links, typically but not always on a daily or otherwise regular basis.	Collaboration management tools facilitate and manage group activities. Example include electronic calendars, project management systems, workflow systems and knowledge management systems.

50. Mailing lists are a common form of electronic networking mostly used for collaboration on projects and as a way of distributing news and information. They can take the form of a "discussion list" in which a subscriber uses the mailing list to send messages to all the other subscribers, who may answer in a similar fashion. Discussion lists, also known as discussion boards or internet forums, are virtual discussion platforms to facilitate and manage online text messages. Participants were introduced to Dgroups "Development through Dialogue" (http://www.dgroups.org/), a site in which development groups are brought together as an online community to facilitate

Box 11: Some features of Dgroups
- participate in discussions
- view and share documents
- share important links, give descriptions
- post latest news
- request input from members of the group

dialogue among key stakeholders in international development, and an email list for having discussions. ECA has over 25 Dgroups with over 2000 subscribers (see Box 11).

Electronic networks in Africa

51. Participants were introduced to women's networks at the national, sub-regional and regional level. Representatives of APC-women-Africa, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) and Protegé QV highlighted how networks can be used effectively for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by (i) providing women with relevant information and opportunities to share experiences, acquire new skills and build knowledge, (ii) building capacity of network members to effectively influence the formulation and implementation of gender sensitive ICT policies and programmes, (iii) improving rural women's access to ICT and (iv) working with development partners, including civil society, governments, international organizations and private sector.

52. WOUGNET used newsletters to attract people to their website, by including updates in the newsletter. Newsletters were used to share information and knowledge as well as for advocacy. In rural areas, newsletters were posted on bulletin boards.

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53. National machineries used radio, TV, telephone, mobile phones, websites and emails for networking in awareness campaigns, information dissemination, communication and collection of information. Areas in which electronic networking would be most useful to national machineries included coordinating and monitoring activities, collection of sex-disaggregated data and information, advocacy, capacity-building and networking with other national machineries as well as advancement of women, legal rights and rights to security. South-south cooperation came up during the discussions as an area where e-networking could be used for countries to benefit from technical advancements of other countries.

54. Challenges faced by national machineries in electronic networking include initial costs related to equipment, maintenance, connectivity, hosting and training as well as irregular power supply, lack of expertise, language problems, difficulty in converting hard copies into soft copies. The need to build women's capacity to strengthen their use of ICT and overcome techno-phobia and the need to expand the activities of networks in rural areas were highlighted. The value of volunteers and interns for the work of national machineries was also highlighted as a strategy to address limited resources.

55. Sustainability was a major concern as some websites were funded by donors and high staff turnover in national machineries. Egypt, for example, had funding as part of the USAID project, but once the project ended in 2004, the national machinery had to generate income, through training at low cost and collecting fees from women and organizations using the web portal (www.cleostore.com) to provide information and to assist women entrepreneurs market their products and services. Establishing partnership with national and international stakeholders is key for sustainability. For example, WOUGNET was able to develop relationships during the WSIS process and to convince policymakers that they brought value to the process. Having one-on-one relationships with focal points in line ministries can help greatly in preparing funding proposals. National machineries should identify and approach donors with similar aims and objectives. Workshops, in this respect, are fertile ground to build contacts.

56. Only 13 of the Anglophone national machineries had a website, and only 8 of these owned their websites. Websites were mainly used for training, events, conferences, information sharing, receiving feedback on services and e-marketing. Updating the website was a challenge for many national machineries. Only Egypt, Nigeria and Sudan were able to regularly update their websites as they had dedicated webmasters. Challenges in developing/maintaining a website included difficulties in updating, lack of human resources, lack of active participation by national machinery staff and other stakeholders and lack of financial resources. The importance of having a donor for the initial set-up of the website was emphasized.

Overview of the structure and activities of the e-network

57. Participants were introduced to the structure and activities of the e-network, including the information portal, general discussion list for national machineries and regular thematic e-discussions for national machineries and other stakeholders. Participants also discussed a number of names for the e-network and decided upon "NGM-net Africa" (An e-network of national gender machineries in Africa).

58. The aims of the e-network were outlined, as follows:
- To enhance knowledge management and communication strategies of national machineries;
- To strengthen networking between national machineries at the sub-regional and regional levels;
- To enhance the capacity of national machineries to utilize ICT to implement their roles as advocates and catalysts for the achievement of gender equality;
- To directly link national machineries to information on and processes connected to important intergovernmental bodies in the United Nations, such as the regional Committee on Women and Development and the global Commission on the Status of women.

Information Portal

59. To introduce the information portal, participants were first familiarized with the concept, function and benefits of a portal and its difference from a website (see Box 12). A major function, and a major benefit, of a portal is its use as a gateway to existing but disparate information on a particular subject, organization or user group. A portal provides a central hub for sharing information and integrates existing but disparate systems, resources and repositories. The content of a portal can be customized by the portal administrators or users to provide the most relevant information.

Box 12: Websites vs. portals
Website: A collection of web pages. Portal: A one-stop access point of web-based applications of an organization or a select group of people.

60. INSTRAW introduced their successful portal initative on political participation in Latin America (www.un-instraw.org/participacionpolitica/), which provided participants with an understanding of how a portal could be used, what functions it could provide and what benefits it could bring to its users. Other examples of existing portals include UNIFEM's portals on gender and HIV/AIDS (www.genderandaids.org) and women, peace and security (www.womenwarpeace.org). INSTRAW also gave a brief introduction to its wiki initiative on gender training (www.un-instraw.org/wiki/training). Wikis are different from websites in two aspects: All users have the power to add and change the content of the wiki and wiki pages are linked like a network rather than a hierarchy. Wiki users must have regular access to the internet and although no special skills are required, at least a good knowledge of computers and the internet is needed for all users.

61. The information portal of the e-network for national machineries in Africa (www.uneca.org/ngmafrica/) (see Box 13) was designed prior to the workshop and was presented by the web designer to participants in plenary session. An overview of the portal was provided, including a brief description of each section of the portal: information on national machineries, including resources, news and events; information on United Nations entities, regional organizations and gender networks in Africa; intergovernmental processes and treaty bodies; and interactive activities of the e-network (discussion list and thematic e-discussions).

62. Hands-on training[1] was also provided to participants, during which they explored the layout, content and functions of the portal. Participants also met in working groups to evaluate the various sections of the portal, brainstorm on possible changes or additions, and consider the most useful structure for the resource section.

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[1] Optional e-mail and internet tutorials were provided to participants.

Box 13: The home page of the information portal

NGMnet-Africa Information Portal

E-Network *of* National Gender Machineries in Africa

Information on National Machineries
- National machineries in Africa
- Resource page on the work of National machineries
- Events
- News

Other Information
- United Nations Entities
- Regional Organizations
- Gender Networks in Africa

Intergovernmental Processes and Treaty Bodies
- ECA and African Intergovernmental Processes
- DAW and Global Intergovernmental Processes
- Treaty Bodies

News and Information

What are National Machineries ?

At the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, China in 1995, it was agreed that in order to achieve full equality for women, governments should set up institutional structures to promote women's advancement and enjoyment of their human rights. These structures are referred to as "national machineries for the advancement of women."

This portal is designed to be a one-stop access point to all relevant information and links related to national machineries in Africa.

Key References

:: 7th African Regional Conference on Women
- Outcome and the Way Forward
- Résultats et Perspectives

Follow-up Strategy for Implementation of the Outcome and Way Forward [English, French]

:: The African Gender and Development Index [English ✏, French ✏]

:: Promoting Gender Equality [English ✏]

The e-network of national machineries for the advancement of women in Africa

The e-network will serve as an important tool to enhance networking between national machineries at the sub-regional and regional level. It will provide enhanced potential for sharing of experiences, lessons learned and good practice examples between national machineries in Africa. More . . .

Public Discussion Lists

Discussion list (Restricted Access)

63. Overall, participants viewed all sections of the portal as useful, particularly the events page, which would help in strategic planning to avoid duplication of events, such as those held on International Women's Day. The news page was also seen as a useful tool to keep national machineries informed of important developments, such as outcomes of workshops or formulation of new laws and policies. It was suggested that the content of news items submitted by national machineries must be carefully considered. In order to provoke user interest in reading the news items, national machineries should aim to extract a human interest story or good practice example within their news item.

64. Participants also discussed a number of options for the resource page, including organizing it by the Beijing Platform for Action, by CEDAW articles, by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and by country or sub-region. It was decided in plenary that the most efficient method would be to organize resources by the Beijing Platform for Action, with additional topics such as trafficking, migration and men and boys.

65. Portal content was an important issue during the discussions. Participants agreed that information on the portal be general information on gender equality issues, which national machineries not only wish to share among themselves but also with other stakeholders. In contrast, information and resources shared via the discussion list should be specific to national machineries, for example, requesting feedback on draft policy documents, seeking experts or partnerships, and sharing other relevant information. The importance of content management on the portal was stressed. It was noted that the portal should focus on quality and not quantity and it should not be viewed as a place to store data. The purpose of posting information on the portal should be to communicate knowledge and to make readers act on this knowledge. Therefore, national machineries should only publish what is relevant for its users.

66. Participants made a number of suggestions for additional functions and content for the portal (see Box 14). The potential for the portal to be updated directly by national machineries was discussed, although it was agreed that for the time being it was not a feasible option. In the future, it may be possible for each national machinery to have its own dedicated page on the portal that it would be responsible for updating.

Box 14: Suggestions for additions to the portal
- French interface
- Search function
- RSS Feed
- Counters for visitors and resource downloads
- FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)
- National spotlight - Highlighting the gender equality situation in particular countries as well as the work of the national machineries.
- "Minister, have your say…" – A forum for Ministers to get involved and share their views
- MDG database of gender indicators, to be updated by all national machineries
- Country pages updated by each national machinery

67. The constraints and challenges were also discussed. Language arose as the major challenge as it is unviable to have all content translated due to a lack of funds and resources. However, funding opportunities to translate the portal and its content could be explored. Sustainability of the portal was another critical area. It will be hosted on ECA's website and updated by the ECA web manager during the initial phase. However, sustainable options for the future of the portal must be considered. A need for capacity-building at the national level was identified for national machineries to be able to assume responsibility for updating and managing the portal.

68. The process of submitting information, content validation and posting on the portal was another major concern. As a result of the discussions, the expected process will be for national E-Network Teams to send resources, events and news items to a central email address (nmwafrica@uneca.org). Items should preferably be sent as an attachment, either in Word or PDF format, and the email should clearly state its content, e.g. "news item", "event" or "resource on gender and HIV/AIDS". ECA and DAW will be responsible for ensuring that the submissions are posted on the portal in a timely manner. National machineries need to ensure a smooth process of approval for information to be sent to the portal.

69. A number of success factors for the portal were highlighted, such as credibility of content and availability of information in different languages (see Box 15). The most crucial success factor is the need for strong participation and ownership of the portal by national machineries. It was noted that the first three months of the portal were particularly important, during which time the priority would be for national machineries, ECA and DAW to submit information and resources and build up the content of the portal.

Box 15: Success factors of the information portal
- Strong participation and ownership of the portal by national machineries
- Currency of information (continuous updating and removal of old information)
- Credibility of content and information
- Effective search tool to find information
- Addition of new features
- Availability of portal content in relevant languages
- Usefulness of the portal and feedback from users
- Connectivity of national machineries to the internet
- Capacity-building for national machineries to use the portal and make regular contributions
- Strategies to market the portal
- Continuous support and assistance from ECA and DAW during initial period

Discussion lists

70. To introduce the discussion list for national machineries, participants were first familiarized with the concept, features (see Box 16) and benefits (see Box 17) of a discussion list. A discussion list is a convenient electronic method for a group of people to share information and discuss issues, such as challenges and good practices, within an area of common interest.

> **Box ?: Features of discussion lists**
>
> - Anyone with an email account can join a discussion list.
> - A single group email address is used to send messages to every member of the list.
> - Discussion lists can either be moderated (each message is reviewed by the administrator before posting) or unmoderated (all messages are posted immediately).
> - Messages can be accessed either through email or through a website, or a combination of both.
> - Messages can be received either in real-time (when they are posted) or in a digest format (one email per day or per week).

71. It was noted that national machineries can also create their own discussion lists, for example an internal discussion list formed of staff from the national machinery and its regional offices, or an external discussion list with members from, for example, local NGOs, women's groups, or line ministry gender focal points. To create a discussion list, national machineries can either install and use software, including commercial software, for example Lyris ListManager (www.lyris.com/products/listmanager/) as well as free open source software. They can also use existing programs available on the internet, of which the most popular free mailing lists are Yahoo! Groups - http://groups.yahoo.com/ (English) and http://fr.groups.yahoo.com/ (French) and Google Groups - http://groups.google.com/ (English) and http://groups.google.fr (French).

72. The discussion list of the e-network is hosted on Dgroups (www.dgroups.org), a program used by the Economic Commission for Africa and other development organizations. It is open only to staff of national machineries in Africa. All participants at the workshop are automatically subscribed to the discussion list. For other national machinery staff to be subscribed, they must submit a list of staff names and email addresses to ECA and DAW. Some representatives of national machineries who were not present at the workshop have also joined the discussion list and it is hoped that more national machineries will also join in the future. All members belong to a single discussion list, which will operate in both English and French.

> **Box 17: The benefits of discussion lists**
>
> - Brings together people from disparate locations.
> - Offers the opportunity for members to post information, make suggestions or pose questions to a large number of people at the same time.
> - Discussion lists can operate through email only, thereby facilitating participation by those without regular internet connection.

73. During the hands-on training session, participants were introduced to the different methods of accessing the discussion list. The web-based method of accessing the discussion list can be accessed via the homepage of the information portal. This will link members to the Dgroups interface, available in English and French. From this site, members can read and respond to messages, post new messages and view the list of members. Training was also provided in accessing the discussion list via members' own email accounts. In this way, messages are sent and received as emails and no access to the internet is required (See Annex ? for guidelines on using the discussion list).

74. Technical difficulties with passwords and with the Local Area Network created some problems during the training, particularly in relation to accessing the discussion lists via the portal. An optional training session was therefore added to the final day of the workshop, where a small number of participants received further instructions in using the portal and the discussion list.

75. Participants discussed the various ways in which the discussion list could be used to share and seek out information. Overall, it was agreed that the content of the discussion list should be specific to national machineries and should be on issues of common interest. Suggested topics include sharing project information, sharing successful advocacy tools and strategies, requesting examples of good practices,

seeking feedback on draft project proposals and looking for partnerships or experts (see Box 18). It was noted that the discussion lists will enable members to become aware of what is taking place in other national machineries and will also help to raise awareness of particular issues, such as female genital cutting, and build a strong regional response (See Annex ? of Annex ? for an example of a discussion list query).

Box 18: Content of the discussion list

1) **Share information.** Send updates and information on the activities of your organization, for example, good practices in programming; outcomes of recent research; new developments etc. Other information that can be shared includes upcoming events that may be of interest to other members; good resources that you have found on a particular subject.
2) **Ask questions.** Send a query to the discussion list if, for example, you are looking for examples of good practices on particular programming activities; you would like feedback on a draft project proposal; you are seeking experts in a particular field; or you are looking for information on a particular subject, including available resources as well as opinions of other members (See Annex ? for an example of a query from another network).
3) **Respond to questions.** Assist other members of the discussion lists by answering their questions if you are able to provide relevant information. Remember, the best way to learn is to teach!

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76. The importance of rules and etiquette for posting messages on the discussion list was emphasized. For example, sending only substantive messages to the group email and identifying yourself at the bottom of each message.

77. Some challenges of participating in the discussion list were raised by participants. In addition to infrastructure problems, language remains a key obstacle to unifying the e-network. The e-network will attempt to overcome this by providing regular summaries of the discussion list, available in English and French. The lack of skills among national machinery staff was also a concern. To address this, participants were encouraged to share their training from the workshop with other staff. In addition, brief guidelines on using the discussion list were formulated and distributed via the discussion list and a detailed guide on using Dgroups will also be made available. An FAQ on Dgroups is available at http://wiki.dgroups.org/index.php/General_and_Usage_FAQ

78. It was also noted that government bureaucracy is a constraint in terms of how information is received and disseminated. To address this, it was suggested that national machineries could share information that has already been cleared. Confidentiality is also a concern as although the discussion list is a closed list, open only to staff of national machineries, email can be easily forwarded. This is however an issue common to all discussion lists and need not be a barrier to the benefits of effective participation.

Thematic e-discussions

79. To introduce the thematic e-discussions, participants were first familiarized with the concept and features of e-discussions (see Box 19). An e-discussion is an electronic discussion to promote and stimulate debate on a particular topic. It is a tool for a group of people, in any geographic location, to exchange ideas and resources and is particularly useful for advancing understanding of key issues, methodologies and good practices, and identifying common obstacles and challenges. The benefits of e-discussions were also highlighted, including their ability to bring together a larger and more diverse group of people than most other learning events as well as their extended duration, which permits a level of sustained interaction and reflection on the chosen subject that is often not possible with face-to-face meetings.

Box 19: Features of thematic e-discussions

- E-discussions promote and stimulate debate on a particular topic, e.g., violence against women.
- E-discussions are guided by a moderator, who provides a week-by-week outline with specific sub-topics and questions for discussion.
- Each week, participants in the e-discussion receive the questions for that week and can respond with their ideas and thoughts.
- At the end of an e-discussion a summary is produced that highlights some of the major findings and conclusions of the discussion.
- The most common format of an e-discussion is a discussion list. They therefore operate in the same way as a discussion list, with messages being sent and received as an email, rather than viewing them over the internet. They can sometimes also be accessed through a web-based discussion forum.

80. The needs assessment questionnaire conducted prior to the workshop revealed that most national machineries have not participated in an e-discussion before. Therefore, the representative from Chad was asked to share his experiences in participating in two e-discussions on gender based violence and on gender training. He noted that he used the e-discussion to share his field experiences of gender based violence in Chad. He also highlighted some of the key challenges, such as limited time to participate, lack of equipment and internet connection and language barriers. Despite such problems, a number of benefits emerged, such as enhanced knowledge of the topics. In particular, he noted that he presented the findings and conclusions of the e-discussion to the national machinery, which in turn used those recommendations to try to influence local and international NGOs who assist women affected by gender based violence. Consequently, counseling services for women were made available in eastern Chad, where many Sudanese refugees were located.

81. The thematic e-discussions of the e-network will be open to all stakeholders, including staff of national machineries, line ministries, NGOs, donors, academia etc., in order to promote collaboration and cooperation. The e-discussions will operate in both English and French. Three e-discussions will take place annually, for a period of six weeks each in order to allow for intermittent internet connectivity. During the first year, ECA and DAW will moderate the first two e-discussions. It was suggested that an NGO or an academic institution be invited to moderate the final e-discussion but it was felt that by this stage at least one national machinery will have the capacity to take over moderation for the third e-discussion.

82. A number of themes were suggested for the e-discussions, including men's participation in gender equality, gender and NEPAD and gender and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). It was decided that the theme of the first e-discussion will be "Women, political participation and decision-making". The other two themes will be decided via the general discussion list. It was also decided that a closed e-discussion will take place at the end of 2007 as a forum for national machineries to conduct a self-evaluation of the e-network and their participation.

83. In order to ensure vibrant and informed e-discussions, it is necessary for national machineries to actively encourage all national machinery staff to participate in the e-discussions. It is also important for national machineries to encourage participation among stakeholders. Furthermore, strategies must be put in place to disseminate the findings and conclusions of the e-discussions. The importance of rules and etiquette for posting messages was emphasized in the same way as for the discussion list.

84. Challenges to participation in the thematic e-discussions are similar to those for the discussion list, such as skills, equipment and language. In order to address the restrictions on dissemination of information by national machineries, the themes of the e-discussions will be announced in advance and national machineries should therefore make efforts to have relevant information cleared for dissemination ahead of time.

Roles and responsibilities

85. Participants discussed in plenary and in working groups the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the e-network, including national machineries, ECA headquarters, ECA sub-regional gender focal points, DAW, women's networks in Africa and other relevant stakeholders. Management and oversight of the e-network will operate at three levels: national, sub-regional and regional. It was noted that the initial phase of the project would be led by ECA and DAW but that the effectiveness of the e-network is primarily dependent on the active participation by national machinery staff.

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Box 20: Management and oversight of the e-network

National:	**Sub-regional:**	**Regional:**
E-network Teams from national machineries (2 gender specialists and 1 ICT specialist working with the national machinery)	10 sub-regional coordinators from national machineries (2 per sub-region) + ECA sub-regional gender focal points	Management Group will consist of 10 sub-regional coordinators, 5 ECA sub-regional focal points + ECA HQ & DAW

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<u>National level</u>

86. It was recommended that an **E-network Team** should be established in each national machinery to ensure that the e-network is well known and integrated into the work of the national machinery and that continuity is not compromised due to staff turnover. This team should be comprised of two gender specialists and one ICT specialist working with the national machinery (whether employed directly by the national machinery or loaned from another Ministry). Participants suggested that the team should comprise of those who participated in the previous workshops of this project. Participants discussed the requirements for the e-network team members and it was agreed that they should be gender-sensitive, with a basic knowledge of computers and email, and should have access to email and the internet (See Box 21 and Annex ? of Annex ? for more information on the E-network Team).

Box 21: Roles of the e-network team

The e-network team should:
> Collect information and news
> Prepare material for dissemination on the information portal and discussion list
> Encourage other staff to join the discussion list
> Publicize the information portal
> Communicate upcoming and past activities of the e-network to other staff and stakeholders
> Disseminate e-discussion summaries and other information to staff and other stakeholders
> Take charge of planning and budgeting for the e-network at the national level
> Train replacements for the team as necessary
> Build list of expertise of national machinery staff, as well as other experts in the country, and share this as needed with the e-network
> When staff leave the national machinery notify ECA to remove them from the discussion list.
> Submit quarterly reports to the relevant sub-regional coordinators and the Management Group.

87. Members of the E-network Team will take lead responsibility for the e-network at the national level and are expected to encourage broad participation in the e-network by other national machinery staff, including by sharing training from the workshop. To do this, participants noted that they should prepare back-to-office reports from the workshop. DAW also noted it will prepare a presentation for participants to give to the national machinery after the workshop.

88. The issue of accountability was raised by participants. They noted that it would be important for the responsibilities of the e-network team members to be incorporated into their job descriptions. Participants

also recommended that the e-network team should submit quarterly reports to the Management Group (see following section). In addition to accountability, motivational mechanisms are also needed. In this regard, it was suggested that the letter transmitting the final report should inform heads of national machineries of the importance of ensuring that the e-network team members have regular access to at least one computer with internet connection.

Box 22: National-level strategies
For best results, it was recommended that clear strategies and processes should be put in place to:
➢ Set up the e-network team;
➢ Inform staff about the e-network and its activities
➢ Encourage staff participation
➢ Share knowledge with the e-network
➢ Use, share and store summaries of the e-network activities (e.g. e-discussions)
➢ Use the e-network to respond to specific needs of the national machinery
➢ Integrate the e-network into the strategy plan of the national machinery

89. **Other national machinery staff** can play a full role in the e-network by using the information portal, signing up for and actively participating in the discussion list and thematic e-discussions, and sending the E-network Team news, events, case studies and resources for the information portal. It was noted that in order for all national machinery staff to participate, they should be made aware of the aims of the e-network, its challenges and benefits and the rules and guidelines for participating in the discussion list and thematic e-discussions. It is also important for participants to share their skills learned at the workshop, for example by giving a hands-on demonstration of the information portal and the discussion list.

90. **Leadership** within national machineries was identified by participants as a crucial success factor for the e-network. In particular, participants noted the need for the Minister or another senior decision-maker to formally establish the E-network Team and ensure that the responsibilities of the E-network Team are included in their job description.

Sub-regional level

91. Two **coordinators** from national machineries in each ECA sub-region were nominated to guide the e-network at the sub-regional level. Ten coordinators in total, including French, English and Portuguese speakers, were nominated by participants (See Box 23).

Box 23: The sub-regional coordinators for 2007	
North Africa	Egypt and Mauritania
Central Africa	Republic of Congo and São Tomé and Principe
Western Africa	Nigeria and Senegal
Eastern Africa	Burundi and Tanzania
Southern Africa	Botswana and Zimbabwe

92. Participants discussed the various roles and responsibilities of the coordinators and decided that they should work on a 1-year rotation basis. The coordinators are responsible for liaising with the E-network Teams in their sub-region and encouraging their participation by sending out regular reminders. The coordinators will also participate in the meetings of the Management Group (see following section) to represent the needs of their sub-region. Criteria for the selection of coordinators include their commitment to and enthusiasm for the e-network; skills in gender equality and ICT, as well as regular access to a computer, email and the internet. It was suggested that coordinators be bilingual, where possible, but participants stressed the infeasibility of such a criterion.

93. Participants noted that time constraints will prove a challenge to the effective role of the sub-regional coordinators and it is necessary to develop motivation mechanisms, such as providing equipment and

internet access and awarding annual awards for excellent contributions. Participants also noted the need for ECA and DAW to provide support to the sub-regional coordinators and to make an official request to the heads of national machineries to put the coordinator position in place and include it in the relevant job description. (See Annex ? of Annex ? for more information on the roles and responsibilities of sub-regional coordinators).

94. The gender focal points from the five **ECA sub-regional offices** will also play a key role at the sub-regional level by supporting the sub-regional coordinators and participating in the Management Group (see following section).

Regional level

95. The ten sub-regional coordinators from national machineries will form a regional **Management Group,** which will monitor and guide the overall operation of the network. It will comprise the 10 sub-regional coordinators, representatives from ECA and DAW, and gender focal points from the five ECA sub-regional offices.

96. **ECA and DAW** will both be key contributors to e-network activities by participating in the discussions list and e-discussions and providing information to the portal. They will also play a key role in advocacy and lobbying around the e-network, including raising awareness among other United Nations agencies at headquarters and at country level. In addition, ECA will provide technical support for the information portal and discussion list and DAW will provide substantive support to the e-network, including the preparation of a supporting manual for national machinery staff, in hard-copy and electronic versions, which will include all documents from the workshop and the final report, user-friendly guidelines on the discussion list and e-discussions and other supporting documents on gender and ICT.

97. The Management Group will hold quarterly electronic discussions on overall management issues through a discussion list with restricted access. Summaries of the quarterly discussions will be posted on the general discussion list for national machineries so that all staff in national machineries can access this information. Participants noted the need for a clear Terms of Reference for the Management Group. Included in this should be the requirement that the Management Group create and establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the e-network, including the development of indicators. The Management Group also needs to determine how the meetings can operate in both English and French (See Annex ? of Annex ? for more information on the Management Group).

Other stakeholders

98. Other stakeholders at the local, regional and international levels can also play an active role in the e-network. They may be consumers of information that is available on the information portal or they may be participants in the regular thematic e-discussions. The e-network therefore is an excellent forum for national machineries to expand their networks with such stakeholders, including line ministry staff, regional organizations, NGOs, private sector companies, faith-based organizations, donors and academics.

5. Challenges for participating in the e-network

99. The effective participation of national machineries will require the political will of Ministers and senior management. A number of actions were suggested to build this, including a letter from ECA informing ministers of the e-network, identifying their responsibilities and making recommendations, such as including e-network responsibilities in relevant job descriptions, as well as noting the need for the e-network team members to have access to computers and internet. An informal meeting of African

ministers during the Commission on the Status of Women was also suggested. The Committee on Women and Development could also play a role in securing leadership commitment, either through a letter from the Chair of CWD to fellow ministers or through a face-to-face meeting. Participants also suggested that the Declaration on ICT and gender, adopted at the September 2005 regional meeting, should be sent as part of the package sent to Ministers with the final report. INSTRAW also noted that that a Memorandum of Understanding between Ministers in South America worked very well in garnering support for their political participation project.

100.   Lack of equipment, skills and access to the internet is a major challenge for many national machineries. It was suggested that there will be a fundraising section on the portal, which could provide national machineries with information on fund raising and writing grant proposals as well as links to grant-making organizations. It was noted that private sector companies could be an excellent resource, although it is more viable for national machineries to request assistance in the form of equipment, internet connection and/or training in ICT skills, at low or no cost, rather than financial support. National machineries are encouraged to submit good practice examples of successful fundraising initiatives or collaborations with the private sector that could be highlighted on the portal.

101.   Language barriers present a problem, not only for Francophone and Anglophone speakers, but also for Arabic and Portuguese speakers. The report notes a number of steps that have been taken or are planned to minimize the problem, such as regular summaries of the discussion list, but it requires further serious consideration.

102.   Continuity is a concern for many participants in the e-network. To address this problem leadership commitment is required, as is the need to integrate the e-network into the strategy plan of each national machinery. The structure of the e-network is based on a system of teams, such as the three people in the e-network teams and the two sub-regional coordinators per sub-region, rather than individuals, in an effort to prevent staff turnover from having an effect on the operations and activities of the e-network. There is also a need for management of the e-network to be gradually passed over from ECA/DAW to the national machineries themselves. To succeed in this it will be necessary to build the capacity of national machineries to moderate e-discussions, manage the discussion list and update and host the information portal.

103.   The role of national machineries in finding solutions to these challenges was stressed. It was also noted that common obstacles and challenges, as well as successful strategies to overcome them, could be a focal point for discussion during the end-of-year self-evaluation.

6. Moving forward

Include:

- Need for ownership and active participation by national machineries
- National machineries should select their e-network teams and inform ECA and DAW.
- National machineries should send their staff list, including staff emails, to ECA and DAW for sign-up to the general discussion list.
- National machineries should send contributions for the portal, including resources, news and events, to nmwafrica@uneca.org

- Share training and resources with other staff members – including this final report and supporting documents
- Lobby for additional or improved ICT equipment and internet connectivity
- Develop national level strategies for incorporating the e-network into strategy plan of the national machinery
- Preparations for first e-discussions – begin to identify possible stakeholders
- Management Group – will meet and begin to develop monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the e-network, including indicators

7. Annexes

	English	French
Aide Mémoire	Ready	Ready
Programme of work	Ready	Ready
Participant list	Ready	
List of participants from previous workshops	Ready	Ready
Introduction to the e-network	In progress	
Guidelines on participating in the discussion list	Ready	Ready
Guidelines on participating in thematic e-discussions		
Integrating the e-network into the work of national machineries	Ready	Ready

8. Additional documents/Workshop handouts (in pack and on CD-ROM)

	English	French
Certificate (for participants pack)		
Declaration and Strategic Framework	Ready	Ready
ECA opening statement	Requested	
DAW opening statement	Ready	Ready
ECA closing statement	Requested	
DAW closing statement	Ready	Ready
Presentation by Erik Johnson on communication strategies	Ready	With translator
Presentation by INSTRAW	Ready	With translator
Project objectives and outcomes & Workshop objectives (or just in report??)	Ready	Ready
Status and use of ICT by national machineries (results of questionnaire) – **updated** (or just in report??)		
Working group discussion guides #1, 2, 3 and 5	Ready	Ready
Gender Mainstreaming booklet (EN, FR, SP, and AR)	Ready	Ready
Women2000: ICT and gender equality (EN, FR, SP)	Ready	

9. CD-ROM contents

Final report

All documents above

Reports from previous workshops/regional meeting

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (EN, FR, SP, AR)

Beijing +5 Political Declaration (EN, FR, SP, AR)

Beijing +5 Actions (EN,FR,SP,AR)

Free software:

➢ Adobe acrobat reader
➢ Yahoo messenger
➢ Quicktime (?) (http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/win.html)
➢ MS Word viewer (no editing, saving allowed):
http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=95e24c87-8732-48d5-8689-ab826e7b8fdf&DisplayLang=en
➢ MS PowerPoint viewer (no editing, saving allowed):
http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=428d5727-43ab-4f24-90b7-a94784af71a4&displaylang=en
➢ Open Office suite (free software that can be used to view, edit or save MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint documents - no MS Office software required)
http://www.openoffice.org/product/index.html