

## **Institutionalizing Gender Networks in Southern Africa: Fact Sheet**



*Irene Lomayani with national gender machineries at regional workshop on African e-networking, Addis Ababa, 2006*



## Institutionalizing Gender Networks in Southern Africa: A Fact Sheet - 2000 to 2006

### I. Objective and Background

#### A. Gender Network Defined

For purposes of this presentation, a gender network is *an operational, intertwined and interwoven set of groups and/or individuals who subscribe to a transformative agenda of achieving gender equality and empowerment of women*. The framework for implementation of gender programmes in Southern Africa is the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development.

To that end, the Economic Commission for Africa Southern Africa Office (ECA-SA) gender programme encompasses all SADC countries irrespective of the ECA subregional divisions. This is also in response to the respective member States' wish to implement their gender programmes as a SADC bloc.

#### B. Objective of Institutionalizing Gender Networks

This exercise is for purposes of record keeping, continuity and building on ongoing initiatives. Thus, while staff turnover is a healthy organizational culture, institutionalizing established operational networks would ensure continuance of the good work in progress; and also provide a platform for building and incorporating additional networks.



*Regional workshop gender e-networking*

Information provided in this booklet is expected to serve as a reference guide on the scope and nature of the ECA-SA working relationship with operational networks during the period 2000 to 2006. It is therefore not an end in itself, but rather, an intermediary activity to link the past, present and the future operational networking in the implementation of the gender programme in the SADC region.

#### C. Coverage, Scope and Limitations

The coverage period for this Fact Sheet is *February 2000 to December 2006*. This coincides with the total time that the author worked as a Gender Focal Point for the ECA Southern Africa Office.

Operational Networks are defined and linked by a common vision, goal and objective. Thus they are not confined within geographical boundaries, hence the networks highlighted below cut across the African region and beyond. For instance, work done on engendering SADC policy on HIV and AIDS received great collaboration from the

Commonwealth Secretariat in London, Dalhousie University in Canada and the Africa Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD).

## **D. Tips on Effective Operational Networking**

Strategies for building and sustaining operational networking include:

1. Putting others first and respecting each other's opinion;
2. Thorough knowledge and understanding of the mandates, policies and action plans of partners;
3. In-depth knowledge, and understanding of ECA's programme frameworks, specific ally in the area of individual programme coverage;
4. Being proactive in deliberately sharing information through e-media, participation in e-debates, timely dissemination of in-house documents and information of mutual interest, participation in policy dialogues of mutual concerns;
5. Giving positive substantive feedback to partners' work;
6. Read, read, read and read.

## **II. ECA-SA Gender Programme: Focus and Methodology**

The focus of the ECA-SA gender programme has been to support member States and the regional economic communities (RECs) in mainstreaming gender into their policies, programmes and processes. Main activities for instance included:

- A. Designing national gender policies;
- B. Providing technical assistance to draw up capacity-building programmes to implement the gender policies;
- C. Technical assistance to NGOs in the field of:
  1. Women's land rights in Eastern and Southern Africa,
  2. Women and law in Eastern and Southern Africa;
  3. Facilitating policy dialogue for a process such as the Beijing + 10 review;
  4. Reinvigorating and sustaining the women's movement in the SADC region.

The basic implementation methodology took the following scenario:

- Unpacking a generic aspect in the work programme to address a specific identified priority development need;
- Conceptualizing the course of action;
- Constituting a critical mass of other stakeholders for jointly planning, implementing and monitoring progress;
- Setting and jointly implementing a follow-up agenda.

Accomplishing these tasks necessitated putting in place a strategically linked network with a thematic mix necessary to achieve a task being addressed. Institutionalizing the various networks involves having at hand a documented reference/profile on which to build and/or add on subsequent operational networks necessary to sustain the momentum in support of the implementation of gender programmes by RECs and member States.

### **III. Major Operational Networks 2000 to 2006**

The gender networks documented below are limited to some of those that the author operationally dealt with during the time in reference. The activity subject briefly cited below is merely to contextualize the actual actors attached as annexes.

#### **A. Gender and HIV and AIDS**

The disproportionate impact and effects of HIV/AIDS on women in Southern Africa calls for a gender-responsive approach to addressing the pandemic. The review of the SADC HIV/AIDS Framework (a blue print for addressing the pandemic in the SADC countries) revealed that it was not gender-sensitive. To that end, ECA-SA carried out a major exercise leading to the Framework being revised and adopted by SADC Heads of State and Government in Dar-es-Salaam in August 2003.



*Regional meeting: committee on women and development – Johannesburg 2002*

The institutions and experts involved in this assignment are annexed under the above heading as Annex I.

#### **B. Women's Land Rights**

Land is one major productive asset whose ownership and control is an issue of human rights and social justice. With very few peculiarities, women's land rights issues in Eastern and Southern Africa are similar. With a view to emulating best practices and applying a collective approach to this important issue, Southern Africa adopted the notion and practice of the Platform for Women's Land Rights.

ECA-SA interfaced to initiate an integration approach for two subregions to address women's land rights in the framework of Eastern and Southern Africa by operationally linking the Centre for Land, Economy and the Rights of Women (CLEAR), based in Nairobi and the Platform for Women's Land Rights, based in Zimbabwe. This was done through the facilitation of the two NGOs' attendance at major meetings of mutual interest; linking them to other stakeholders such as Aid International; facilitating the establishment of national land profiles in Zambia and Zimbabwe through the sponsorship of CLEAR.

## 1. *Centre for Land, Economy and the Rights of Women (CLEAR)*



*Hilda Tadria caucusing with a gender activist*

The Centre for Land, Economy and Rights of Women (CLEAR) is a regional body composed of individuals/organizations already working on issues of land and natural resources. It facilitates partnership with national and subregional organizations focusing on women's rights, economy, land and natural resources, including women at the household level.

ECA-SA has been a strong collaborating partner of CLEAR by:

- Presenting a guiding paper on land, gender and HIV/AIDS at its strategic meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya on 22-28 November 2003;
- Facilitating the development of indicators and a methodology for establishing national gender profiles;
- Facilitating and guiding the preparation of Zambia and Zimbabwe Land Profiles through CLEAR sponsorship;
- Editing and consolidating three meeting reports of CLEAR which constituted a template for drawing up its medium-and long-term strategic plan for the periods 2004-2005 and 2004-2009;
- Defining and operationalizing strategic linkages between Eastern and Southern Africa on the issue of women's land rights with a view to adding great value to the scope of women's land rights through a regional integration approach;
- Developing a broad task brief for the consultative meeting;
- Initiating strategic linkages between CLEAR and the East Africa Community (EAC) with a view to CLEAR being given observer status in the EAC.

## 2. *Platform for Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa*

The above was conceived by building on the famous Zimbabwe Women and Land Lobby Group and sharing best practices with the Eastern African initiative. It is based in Harare, Zimbabwe and ECA-SA attended initial guiding round table meetings and facilitated information sharing through the establishment of a Website for this organization.

With a view to applying a regional integrated approach to the women's land rights agenda, ECA-SA facilitated operational linkages between the Center for Land, Economy and the Rights of Women (Eastern Africa) and the Platform for Women's Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa.

Contacts of these and other related stakeholders are attached as an annex.

### **C. Vibrancy of the Women's Movement in the SADC Region**

One of the critical challenges revealed by the Beijing + 10 review process was the relatively dwindled vibrancy of the women's movement. A joint initiative of the author and Leah Chatta-Chipepa of Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) initiated measures to fast-track a process for reinvigorating and sustaining the women's movement in the SADC region. It was initiated in May 2005 and culminated in a full-blown round-table meeting of gender activists in October 2006. The salient fast-track stages were:

1. May 2005: ECA-SA informal dialogue on the subject;
2. June 2005: First task team meeting of five gender experts to strategize on modalities for invigorating and sustaining the women's movement in the SADC region. This team became a think-tank to initiate the process; it drew up content and methodology including TORs for a team of consultants to interrogate the issue further.
3. August 2005: Second task team meeting to brief consultants on content and methodology
4. The task team held a third meeting to review the consultants' draft background paper for the round table and make any necessary comments and amendments.
5. October 2005: Round-table meeting held with the participation of all 14 SADC countries and over 100 gender activists from the selected based on their own credentials of commitment and demonstrated inputting into the well-being of the women's movement. The round-table meeting reflected on the issue, took stock of lessons learned and put forward strategies for re-energizing the women's movement in the SADC region (Annex II). The full list of participants is attached as Annex III.

### **D. Women in Law in Eastern and Southern Africa**

The rights approach to development has intensified the efforts of women's law associations in addressing issues of gender concerns. Accordingly, subregional Women and Law chapters (See Annex IV) have been established to contribute to the process of achieving gender equality as a rights and social justice issue.





Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) is operating very well. Integrating of efforts with its sister chapter in Eastern Africa (WLEA) would enhance efficiency and exert the necessary pressure. However, due to lack of human and financial resources, WLEA has been redundant for some 10 years now following its Executive Director's assignment to the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The WLSA coordinator has approached ECA-SA to provide technical support to facilitate resuscitation of WLEA and merging it with WLSA. Possible sponsors have been established. As a basis to launch operations, a task brief would need to be prepared to provide a situational analysis and define related actions, including a budget.

At this stage, therefore, the mission has briefed the East Africa Community colleagues with a view to carrying them along in the process.

Feedback from EAC colleagues has been very positive; they are eager to see that the REC participates in the process, and will collaborate fully in shaping the agenda for both the women's land rights and the reinvigoration of Women and Law in Eastern and Southern Africa. While ECA is still in the process of elaborating and adopting its gender policy, some of the current entry points suggested include:

- (a) Gender and Community Development Sectoral Committee, the existing institutional mechanism for implementation of gender activities;
- (b) East Africa Business Council;
- (c) East Africa Law Society;
- (d) EAC Council of Ministers;

## **E. Regional Integration**

In the area of regional integration, ECA-SA's work on the gender programme focuses on the harmonization of policies and strategies as bases for adopting a common approach to addressing gender concerns. In this regard, emphasis was on providing technical support for the preparation of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, which sets targets and benchmarks for its 14 member States to jointly plan and monitor the implementation of issues of gender concern. This involved consensus-building for an integrated approach around internal gender-related issues. One such issue is engendering the SADC HIV and AIDS Framework. Information sharing and partnerships were important mechanisms used to leverage technical assistance in support of gender and development in the Southern Africa subregion.



## **F. Agenda Setting Forums**

A major comparative advantage for ECA is the ability to facilitate policy dialogue involving major stakeholders (government, private sector and civil-society organizations). In this respect, the following fora facilitating policy dialogue on gender-related issues have been organized by ECA-SA:

1. Ad hoc Expert Group Meeting on Policy Options on Gender Response to HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa, November 2000;
2. Workshop on gender response to HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa November 2000; workshop on the SADC mining and employment and labour sector, May 2003;
3. SADC NGO Review of Beijing +10, April 2004, to provide input into the Ministers' review; and
4. Subregional Beijing + 10 Experts and Ministers review meeting, April 2004.

## **IV. Missions**

Missions constituted an important aspect of the substantive technical support offered by ECA-SA to member States, intergovernmental organizations and gender networks on various issues related to their gender programme. Missions targeted at providing technical assistance on the request of member States undertaken during the period under review covered a broad area. For purposes of easy reference, continuity and follow-up, a list of missions undertaken during the period is attached as Annex V.

## **ANNEX I**

### **GENDER AND HIV/AIDS SADC GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS**

#### **ANGOLA**

Secretary General  
Rede Mulher/Angola  
Avenida Hogi ya Henda No. 21,  
C.P. 16532,  
Tel: +244 2 44 9513  
Fax: +244 2 44 9513  
E-mail: [redemulher@netangola.com](mailto:redemulher@netangola.com), [User12@netangola.com](mailto:User12@netangola.com)

#### **BOTSWANA**

Chairperson  
Women's NGO Coalition  
P. O. Box 1359  
Gaborone  
Botswana  
Fax: +267 322553 /309555  
Tel.: +267 3552681

#### **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

Albertine Tshituka (NGO)  
Eveil de la femme  
Head office : Cité Maman Mobutu, Villa n°64 Commune de Mont Ngafula  
Administration : Avenue du Commerce n°67/ Gombe,  
B.P. 5467 Kinshasa- Gombe  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
Fax: +2431220165

#### **LESOTHO**

Chairperson, (NGO)  
Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations  
P.O. Box 557  
Maseru 100  
LESOTHO  
Fax: +266 340000  
Tel.: +266 340601

#### **MALAWI**

Chairperson  
NGO Gender Coordinating Network  
Private Bag 231  
BLANTYRE  
Tel: +265 622 940, Fax: +265 622 940  
Email: [womens-voice@sdpn.org.mw](mailto:womens-voice@sdpn.org.mw)

**MOZAMBIQUE**

The Director  
Forum Mulher,  
Rua Pereira do Lago,  
No. 147-3 Andar,  
Direito,  
Maputo  
Mozambique  
Fax: +258 1 493437  
Tel.: +258 1 492745

**MAURITIUS**

The President  
Mauritius Alliance for Women  
St Jean Road & Murphy Avenue  
Quatre Bornes  
Mauritius  
Tel: +230-4243489  
Fax: +230-4252362/ -2101704/ - 4243489  
E-mail: [perdrix3@hotmail.com](mailto:perdrix3@hotmail.com) / [rctours@intnet.mu](mailto:rctours@intnet.mu) / [m.a.women@intnet.mu](mailto:m.a.women@intnet.mu)

**NAMIBIA**

Executive Director  
Namibian Non-Governmental Forum (NANGOF),  
P.O. Box 70433,  
Khomasdal,  
Windhoek,  
Namibia

**SEYCHELLES**

Seychelles Women's Commission  
C/o LUNGOS Building  
Place de la Republic  
P.O. Box 885  
Victoria, Mahe  
SEYCHELLES  
Tel: +248-384000  
Fax: +248-225379  
E-mail: [dcchra@Seychelles.net](mailto:dcchra@Seychelles.net)

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Gender Specialist,  
The Presidency,  
Office of the Status of Women,  
P.O. Box 2681,  
Pretoria 0008,  
Fax: +27 12 326 4176  
Tel. +27 12 337 2550/7  
Email: [susan@po.gov.za](mailto:susan@po.gov.za)

**SWAZILAND**

Chairperson/Secretary (NGO)

CANGO

P. O. Box 1573

Mbabane

Swaziland

E-Mail: [cango@africaonline.co.sz](mailto:cango@africaonline.co.sz)

**TANZANIA**

The Executive Director,

Tanzania Gender Networking Programme

P.O. Box 8921

Dar Es Salaam

Tanzania

Fax: +255 22 2443244

Tel.: +255 22 2443205/ 2443450

E-mail: [mary.rusimbi@tgnp.co.tz](mailto:mary.rusimbi@tgnp.co.tz); [tgnp@tgnp.co.tz](mailto:tgnp@tgnp.co.tz)

**ZAMBIA**

Executive Director

NGO Coordinating Committee Zambia

For Gender and Development

Plot No. 1311, Lubu Road, Longacres

P.O. Box 37879

Lusaka

Zambia

Tel.: +260 1 253203/250049

Fax: +260 1 251304

E-mail: [ngocc@zamnet.zm](mailto:ngocc@zamnet.zm)

**ZIMBABWE**

The Chairperson

Women's Coalition

C/O Zimbabwe Women Lawyers

No 17 Five Avenue

Harare

Zimbabwe

Tel: +263 4 730511

E Mail: [coalition@zol.co.zw](mailto:coalition@zol.co.zw)

## **Annex II: The Kopanong Declaration**

### **DECLARATION ON WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SADC COUNTRIES**

We, the African women of SADC countries representing the women's movement of the region and participating in the Round-table meeting on "Reinvigorating and Sustaining the Women's Movement in Southern Africa" in Johannesburg from 9-11 October 2006, met to consider and discuss the state of the women's movement in the contemporary SADC region.

**Concerned** that in the last ten years since Beijing, the vibrancy of the Southern African women's movement is dwindling and that the rapid mutations taking place at global, regional and local levels may lead to a reversal of the gains made and affect women's lives in a negative manner;

**Recognising** the urgent need to revitalise the movement in order to create spaces for all women, including the younger generation of women, and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the movement;

**Acknowledging** the commitments made at international, regional and national levels, such as CEDAW<sup>1</sup>, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and on the Rights of Women in Africa, the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Addendum on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the national constitutions and policies on gender;

**Further acknowledging** the progress made with regards to establishing a number of regional institutions, structures and mechanisms such as the Pan African Parliament, the SADC Parliamentary Forum, the African Union, women's caucuses and the SADC Gender Unit;

**Recognising** the contributions made by the women's movement in the region and internationally and the diverse efforts deployed to ensure the establishment of legal and policy frameworks on the rights of women;

**Encouraged** by the improved situation over the last fifteen years with regards to the representation of women in positions of decision-making within the public and private sphere;

**Aware** that the women's movement is confronted by a number of continuing and emerging challenges, which include conceptual and ideological differences, structural and institutional barriers, as well as mounting resistance to women's rights by certain segments of our societies;

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<sup>1</sup> The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

**Mindful** of the fact that there are different kinds of feminisms and that our realities are diverse and plural;

**Recognising** that there is a common will to address persistent and pervasive gender inequalities;

**Determined** to develop a road map towards reinvigorating the women's movement and work towards demanding and claiming the rights of women for further engendering development, to eradicate poverty, mitigate conflicts, stop violence against women, address HIV/AIDS holistically and consolidate democratic governance;

**We therefore undertake to:**

- demand and claim the rights of women at all levels;
- hold our governments accountable for the commitments they have made towards promoting and protecting the rights of women;
- develop a critical mass of women who are empowered to demand good governance and accountability from State and non-State actors;
- transform patriarchal structures and oppressive cultures within both public institutions and in our personal lives;
- consolidate efforts towards dramatically reducing HIV and AIDS and their impact on our societies and our continent;
- provide space and allow voice to newcomers in the movement and young women;
- build broad-based alliances between women at all levels of the social spectrum;
- strengthen and give vibrancy to a new women's movement agenda through consultative processes;
- support women who are in positions of power in politics and decision-making to ensure that they can advance the feminist agenda;
- develop effective communication channels with the media so that gender consciousness and a feminist ideology become embedded within our societies
- work towards bridging the digital divide through the equitable use of information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- challenge market ideologies and neo-liberalism with a view to promoting a more human centred and gendered development;
- strengthen, through institutions and the establishment of feminist leadership nodes, the nexus between feminist research and policy making in our region;
- collaborate with women's movements across the globe whilst ensuring the promotion of southern and local feminisms that contribute to the transnational feminist agenda;
- challenge and critique voices (organizations and individuals) that perpetually stereotype African women and/or claim to speak on critical issues that affect African women on behalf of African women;

- promote and support the socio-economic development of women;
- Mobilise sustainable resources in innovative and independent ways to reduce reliance on traditional donors.

**Claiming** that the reversal of patriarchy is necessary and that this ‘reversal’ is not tantamount to the marginalisation of men but rather an attempt to put an end to the persisting oppression, subordination and subjugation of women;

**We the women of SADC countries** will not allow the scarcity of resources and “dependence” on donor funds to lead to the fragmentation of the movement and a loss of our dignity;

**Building** upon the existing gains and opportunities for the advancement of women, we will continue our struggle to unshackle our continent from both poverty and patriarchy;

**We call upon** the support and facilitation of State and non-State actors to reinvigorate and sustain the women’s movement in SADC countries;

**We commit** to unite, strategise, mobilize and together move forward the struggle for women’s rights in SADC and beyond.



### Annex III

#### List of Participants at the Round-table Meeting on Women's Movement in SADC Countries

I. NAME	ORGANISATION	EMAIL OR FAX NO.	PHONE
Africa Bwambale Loice	Gender Monitor	<a href="mailto:blbwambule@yahoo.co.uk">blbwambule@yahoo.co.uk</a>	27-738-106-436
Adelaide Katanha	Evangelical Congregation Church		244923473596
Anacleto Pereira	OSISA	<a href="mailto:anacletap@angola.osisa.org">anacletap@angola.osisa.org</a>	923728442
Barbara Lopi	SARDC	<a href="mailto:blopi@sardc.net">blopi@sardc.net</a>	2634791141
Bella Matambanadzo	OSISA	<a href="mailto:bellam@osisa.org">bellam@osisa.org</a>	
Benilde Nhalivho	Action Aid	<a href="mailto:benildo.nhalivho@actionaid">benildo.nhalivho@actionaid</a>	2588439812288
Betty Makoni	Girl Child Network/Women's Coalition	<a href="mailto:gcn@zol.co.zw">gcn@zol.co.zw</a>	26391288251
Betty Sombe	OSISA	<a href="mailto:bsombe@icannect.zm">bsombe@icannect.zm</a>	26097790829
Bronwynne Pereira	Foundation for Human Rights	<a href="mailto:bpereira@fhr.org.za">bpereira@fhr.org.za</a>	27124401691
Chipo Kanjo	OSISA/UNIMA	<a href="mailto:ckanjo@chanco.unima.mw">ckanjo@chanco.unima.mw</a>	2659955963
Christine Stegling	BONELA	<a href="mailto:bone la@botsnet.bw">bone la@botsnet.bw</a>	2673932516
Clara Chikaonda	NABW	<a href="mailto:nabw-bt@sdnp.org.mw">nabw-bt@sdnp.org.mw</a>	265187712
Collen Lowe Morna	Gender Links	<a href="mailto:clmorna@mweb.co.za">clmorna@mweb.co.za</a>	27826516995
Debra Schultz	OSI-NY Women's Program	<a href="mailto:dschultz@sorosny.org">dschultz@sorosny.org</a>	2125480327
Dimandja Ellyse	WOPPA	<a href="mailto:eldim20@hotmail.com">eldim20@hotmail.com</a>	243815184868
Doo Aphane	Consultant	<a href="mailto:dooaphane@realnet.co.sz">dooaphane@realnet.co.sz</a>	2686071830
Dorothy Adebajo	ZWRCN	<a href="mailto:dorothy@zwrcn.org.zw">dorothy@zwrcn.org.zw</a>	2634792450
Dr Kasuka Mutukwa	SADC Parliamentary Forum	<a href="mailto:rmutukwa@sadcpf.org">rmutukwa@sadcpf.org</a>	264612870004
Edda Collier	Consultant	<a href="mailto:edda@panentra.com">edda@panentra.com</a>	258823119970
Edinah Masiyiwa	Women's Action Group	<a href="mailto:edinamasiyiwa@hotmail.com">edinamasiyiwa@hotmail.com</a>	26304339292
Elsie M Alexander	WILDAF – Botswana	<a href="mailto:alexande@mopipi.ub.bw">alexande@mopipi.ub.bw</a>	2673959161
Engwase Mwale	NGOCC	<a href="mailto:ngocc@zamtel.zm">ngocc@zamtel.zm</a>	92601229224
Gillian Orini		<a href="mailto:g-oroni@dfid.gov.uk">g-oroni@dfid.gov.uk</a>	3974784
Girle M Hlanze	FODSWA Women	<a href="mailto:bmasukusavethechildren.org.sz">bmasukusavethechildren.org.sz</a>	6268244
Gladys Nhekairo Mutukwa	Consultant/WILDAF	<a href="mailto:msodzi@consultant.com">msodzi@consultant.com</a>	26461254277
Gugulethu Khumalo	CANGO	<a href="mailto:cango@africaonline.co.sz">cango@africaonline.co.sz</a>	2686077837
Gugulethu Mgabhi	Swaziland Youth Council	<a href="mailto:gugulethu55@yahoo.co.uk">gugulethu55@yahoo.co.uk</a>	2686089660
Gwen Munthali	Women's Voice - Malawi	<a href="mailto:womens-voice@sonp.org.mw">womens-voice@sonp.org.mw</a>	8329042
Gweneth Berge	NCA	<a href="mailto:gwen@nca.org.za">gwen@nca.org.za</a>	27829018123
Hlobisile Dlamini	SWAGGA	<a href="mailto:swagga@realnet.co.sz">swagga@realnet.co.sz</a>	92685057514
Irene B. Lomayani	UN – ECA	<a href="mailto:berthalomayani@yahoo.co.uk">berthalomayani@yahoo.co.uk</a>	26096759610
Jennifer Mufune	MISA	<a href="mailto:jennifer@misa.org">jennifer@misa.org</a>	26461232975
Jonathan Cohen	OSI-NY	<a href="mailto:jcohen@sorosny.org">jcohen@sorosny.org</a>	2125480624
Joyce G Anderson	Emang Basadi	<a href="mailto:emang@global.bw">emang@global.bw</a>	2673909335

Joyce Macmillan	WLSA / Zambia	<a href="mailto:wlsazambia@zamnet.zm">wlsazambia@zamnet.zm</a>	2601237842
Julio Zamby Manuel		<a href="mailto:juliozambye@yahoo.com.br">juliozambye@yahoo.com.br</a>	244923484994
Keiso Marite	Task Team/WLSA Lesotho	<a href="mailto:wlsales@ilesotho.com">wlsales@ilesotho.com</a>	26622313123
Kemi Williams	DFID SA	<a href="mailto:k-williams@dfid.gov.uk">k-williams@dfid.gov.uk</a>	27(0)124312100
Leena Kasheeta	YWCA	<a href="mailto:ainoleen@yahoo.com">ainoleen@yahoo.com</a>	811490098
Lekopanye Mooketsi	Journalist - Botswana	<a href="mailto:lekopanye200@yahoo">lekopanye200@yahoo</a>	71512066
Libakiso Tsoho	WLSA	<a href="mailto:wlsales@ilesotho.com">wlsales@ilesotho.com</a>	926622313123
Lingalireni Mihowa	OXFAM	<a href="mailto:lmihowa@oxfam.org.uk">lmihowa@oxfam.org.uk</a>	2658828628
Lisa Vetten	TLAC	<a href="mailto:lisa@tlac.org.za">lisa@tlac.org.za</a>	27014034267
Loga Vizawmyrah	Media Watch - GEMSA	<a href="mailto:gonaz@mhek.mu">gonaz@mhek.mu</a>	2304542327
Lomcebo Dlamini	WLSA	<a href="mailto:wlsaszd@africaonline.co.sz">wlsaszd@africaonline.co.sz</a>	2684041723
Lorato Moalusi-Sakufiwa	Women's Shelter Project / Botswana	<a href="mailto:l-sakufiwa@yahoo.com">l-sakufiwa@yahoo.com</a>	92673900516
Luta Shaba	The Women's Trust	<a href="mailto:luta@mweb.co.zw">luta@mweb.co.zw</a>	26311608421
Mantoetse L Peete	SENATE	<a href="mailto:wlsales@ilesotho.com">wlsales@ilesotho.com</a>	926663015323
Marren Akatsa - B	EASSI	<a href="mailto:marren.akatsa@eassi.org">marren.akatsa@eassi.org</a>	25641285163
Mary Bosiu	Consultant	<a href="mailto:bconsult@ilesotho.com">bconsult@ilesotho.com</a>	26658851441
Mary Hames	Gender Equity Unit, UWC	<a href="mailto:mhames@uwc.ac.za">mhames@uwc.ac.za</a>	27219592813
Mary Sandasi	WASN	<a href="mailto:director@mweb.co.zw">director@mweb.co.zw</a>	2634791401/2/4
Mary Wandia	Action Aid - Africa	<a href="mailto:mary.wandia@actionaid.org">mary.wandia@actionaid.org</a>	254733860036
Matrine Bbuku Chuluu	WLSA	<a href="mailto:wlsazam@zamnet.zm">wlsazam@zamnet.zm</a>	2601290512
Matseliso Mapetla	NUL	<a href="mailto:m.mapetla@nul.ls">m.mapetla@nul.ls</a>	926622340247
Mildred Gloria Sharra	Action Aid International - Malawi	<a href="mailto:mildred.sharra@actionaid.org">mildred.sharra@actionaid.org</a>	2568717366
Mohini Bali	Ministry of Women's Rights	<a href="mailto:shashi1810@yahoo.com">shashi1810@yahoo.com</a>	2302063823
Mpho Mahopolo	Women Against Rape	<a href="mailto:mphomahopolo@yahoo.com">mphomahopolo@yahoo.com</a>	926771395813
Muchimba Sikumba-Dils	Gender Consultant	<a href="mailto:msikumba@gmail.com">msikumba@gmail.com</a>	258843183330
Musa N Hlophe	OSISA Board	<a href="mailto:sccco@swazi.net">sccco@swazi.net</a>	2685187688
Mzimkhulu Sithetho	Watchdog	<a href="mailto:mzimkhulu60@yahoo.com">mzimkhulu60@yahoo.com</a>	26663125773
Ngalula Kabeya Josephine	FORFEM DRC	<a href="mailto:joseengalula2001@yahoo.fr">joseengalula2001@yahoo.fr</a>	243998526254
Nkhensani Mavasa	TAC	<a href="mailto:nkhensani@tac.org.za">nkhensani@tac.org.za</a>	728658651
Olenga Kalonda Therese	REFAMI DRC	<a href="mailto:tolenga@yahoo.fr">tolenga@yahoo.fr</a>	243999921666
Onneetse Makhumalo	WLSA/Botswana	<a href="mailto:wlsa@info.bw">wlsa@info.bw</a>	2673923346
Otilie Abrahams	NAWA	<a href="mailto:nagirlch@iway.na">nagirlch@iway.na</a>	61262021
Pamela Mhlanga	Consultant (Wildaf)	<a href="mailto:pamela@wildaf.org.zw">pamela@wildaf.org.zw</a>	92634752105
Petronella Matuture	HIVOS	<a href="mailto:petronella@hivos.co.zw">petronella@hivos.co.zw</a>	2634700704
Pouba Esso	Consultant/Reseacher	<a href="mailto:pouba14@yahoo.co.uk">pouba14@yahoo.co.uk</a>	2302345548
Priscilla Mpundu	ZARD	<a href="mailto:zard@microlink.zmt">zard@microlink.zmt</a>	260224536
Rafa V. Machava	Muleide	<a href="mailto:muleide@tvcabo.co.mz">muleide@tvcabo.co.mz</a>	82305590
Rebecca Matshpo Lepelesana	Positive Action Association	<a href="mailto:positiveaction@leo.ls">positiveaction@leo.ls</a>	92266321671
Rosa Namises	Women's Solidarity - Namibia	<a href="mailto:vrnamises@yahoo.co.uk">vrnamises@yahoo.co.uk</a>	26461812525243
Rose Gawayaya	OXFAM	<a href="mailto:rgawayaya@oxfam.org.uk">rgawayaya@oxfam.org.uk</a>	27828547764
Rudo Gaidzanwa	UZ/GSA	<a href="mailto:musitsana@yahoo.co.uk">musitsana@yahoo.co.uk</a>	2634304878

Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu	SADC Parliamentary Forum	<a href="mailto:rnhundu@sadcpf.org">rnhundu@sadcpf.org</a>	264612870004
Salome Anyoti	FAWE/Tanzania	<a href="mailto:salome_anyoti@yahoo.co.uk">salome_anyoti@yahoo.co.uk</a>	255784645628
Sam Phiri	OSISA	<a href="mailto:samp@osisa.org">samp@osisa.org</a>	27014033414
Sarita Ranchod	Freelance Consultant	<a href="mailto:sranchod@telkomsa.net">sranchod@telkomsa.net</a>	498411620
Seodi White	WLSA / Malawi	<a href="mailto:seodi@wlsamalawi.org">seodi@wlsamalawi.org</a>	2658829033
Seraphine Kilongozi	ACIDH/ DRC	<a href="mailto:jolkiza@yahoo.fr">jolkiza@yahoo.fr</a>	243997024865
Shamim Meer		<a href="mailto:shamim@iafrica.com">shamim@iafrica.com</a>	27824426850
Sheila Bunwaree	University of Mauritius	<a href="mailto:sheila_bun@yahoo.co.uk">sheila_bun@yahoo.co.uk</a>	2304651009
Sindiswa Mzamo	USAWID/BBWA	<a href="mailto:sindiswa@oshea.co.za">sindiswa@oshea.co.za</a>	27216709860
Slyvia Chirawu	WLSA	<a href="mailto:wlsazimbabwe@africaonline.co.zw">wlsazimbabwe@africaonline.co.zw</a>	263-4253001-3
Sonja Boesak	Rapporteur	<a href="mailto:sboesak@telkomsa.net">sboesak@telkomsa.net</a>	27498411620
Susan Nkomo	Facilitator		255784645628
Tamar Ezer	OSI-NY	<a href="mailto:tezer@sorosny.org">tezer@sorosny.org</a>	2125980600
Tariro Chikumbirike	SAFAIDS	<a href="mailto:tariro@safaid.org.zw">tariro@safaid.org.zw</a>	2634336193
Teresa Mugadza	FEPEP	<a href="mailto:teresamugadza@yahoo.com">teresamugadza@yahoo.com</a>	26311871700
Terezinha da Silva	WILSA	<a href="mailto:wlsamz@tropical.co.za">wlsamz@tropical.co.za</a>	258823138890
Theresa Nyirenda	NCCW	<a href="mailto:tenyirenda@yahoo.com">tenyirenda@yahoo.com</a>	26095752500
Thoko Matshe	OPC	<a href="mailto:thokomatshe@palmcenter.se">thokomatshe@palmcenter.se</a>	27826540207
Victoria Schimming	NAWA	<a href="mailto:nagirlch@iway.na">nagirlch@iway.na</a>	812798065
Walter Marwizi	Standard	<a href="mailto:waltermarwizi@yahoo.com">waltermarwizi@yahoo.com</a>	263914388804
Wangari Kinolti	ECWP/Women Direct	<a href="mailto:wangari@ecwp.org">wangari@ecwp.org</a>	2540203870386
Gcebile Ndlovu	ICW	<a href="mailto:gcebile@icw.org">gcebile@icw.org</a>	2684041915

**ANNEX IV****Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) OFFICE ADDRESSES**

WLSA Botswana  
Suite 14 El-Toro House  
Gaborone West Phase 1 Mall  
Gaborone  
Botswana  
Phone/Fax: +267-3923346  
E-Mail: [wlsa@info.bw](mailto:wlsa@info.bw)

WLSA Lesotho  
23 Motsone Road  
Industrial Area  
Maseru  
Lesotho  
Phone: +266-22-313123  
Fax: +266-22-310361  
E-Mail: [wlsales@ilesotho.com](mailto:wlsales@ilesotho.com)

WLSA Malawi  
Plot No. SW8/1/78  
Next to Limbe Primary School  
Off Grevillia Road  
Kanjedza  
Limbe  
Malawi  
Phone: +265-1-841534  
Fax: +265-1-841538  
E-Mail: [wlsamalawi@hotmail.com](mailto:wlsamalawi@hotmail.com)

WLSA Mozambique  
Rua Padre Antonio Vieira  
No. 68  
Maputo  
Mozambique  
Phone/Fax: +258-21-414811  
E-Mail: [wlsamoz@tropical.co.mz](mailto:wlsamoz@tropical.co.mz)

WLSA Swaziland  
Plot 193 Old Somhlolo Road  
Mbabane  
Swaziland  
Phone: +268-4047088

Fax: +268-4046750  
E-Mail: [wlsaszd@africaonline.co.sz](mailto:wlsaszd@africaonline.co.sz)

WLSA Zambia  
Plot 12509 Malila Close  
Off Lubambe Road  
Northmead  
Lusaka  
Zambia  
Phone/Fax: +260-1-237842  
E-Mail: [wlsazambia@zamnet.zm](mailto:wlsazambia@zamnet.zm)

WLSA Zimbabwe  
16 Lawson Avenue  
Milton Park  
Harare  
Zimbabwe  
Phone: +263-4-253001/2/3  
Fax: +263-4-252884  
E-Mail: [wlsazimbabwe@africaonline.co.zw](mailto:wlsazimbabwe@africaonline.co.zw)

WLSA Regional Office  
Plot 14022  
Off Katimamulilo Road  
Olympia Extension  
Lusaka  
Zambia  
Phone: +260-1-290512/ 260-1-291888  
Fax: +260-1-290512  
E-Mail: [Wlsazam@zamnet.zm](mailto:Wlsazam@zamnet.zm)

## ANNEX V

## Missions Undertaken from 2000 to 2006

Identifier	Purpose	Date of Mission
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2000/11	Mission report on the SADC Regional Parliamentarian Seminar on the Beijing + 5 Review Process; and consultation with SADC Secretariat and ACW on joint collaboration in gender programme implementation in 2000 and beyond	24-30 April 2000
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2000/17	Mission report on data collection in Zimbabwe and South Africa	12 –23 June 2000
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2000/33	To participate in a gender mainstreaming training workshop, ECA Headquarters	10 – 13 October 2000
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2001/27	To provide advisory services on gender mainstreaming in Namibia policies, programmes and processes	12 –23 June 2000
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2001/30	To participate, service and present a paper to the Committee on Women and Development	04 – 13 November 2001
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/04A	To participate in a feasibility/design workshop for a proposed international institute on gender and HIV/AIDS	16-18 January 2002
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/06	To prepare and present a paper to a technical meeting on policy development on gender mainstreaming for ECOWAS	25-28 March 2002
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/10	To participate in and guide the Round-table Meeting on Women's Access to and Ownership of Land in Southern Africa	15-16 April 2002
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/09	To provide advisory services on gender mainstreaming in Namibian policies, programmes and processes	8-12 April 2002
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/20	To present a paper to a Round-table meeting on coordinating support in the subregion	17-18 June 2002
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/21	To co-facilitate a workshop on training of trainers in gender and energy	19-20 June 2002
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/22	To co-facilitate a training workshop on monitoring and evaluation of the African Plan of Action for Eastern and	21-29 June 2002

	Southern Africa	
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/29	To design a National Gender Mainstreaming Programme for Namibia	18.09.2002 – 04.10.2002
ECA/SRDC/SA/MR/2002/31	To present a report on gender mainstreaming activities implemented by ECA/SRDC/SA for the meeting of the Committee on Women and Development and the Meeting of Experts and Ministers	09-12 October 2002
ECA/ SA/MR/2003/05	To participate in COMESA's Technical Committee on Gender	13-14 Feb. 2003
ECA/ SA/MR/2003/11	To participate in the SADC consultative meeting to revise the SADC HIV/AIDS Framework	7-8 April 2003
ECA/ SA/MR/2003/12	To participate in the regional planning workshop for the Platform for Women's Land and Water Rights	9-12 April 2003
ECA/ SA/MR/2003/22	To provide technical assistance to strengthening of Zambia's Gender National Machinery	
ECA/ SA/MR/2003/44	To participate in a CLEAR Consultative Expert Group Meeting on Addressing Women's Livelihoods and their Land Rights	26-28 November 2003
ECA/ SA/MR/2004/05	To undertake ECA/SADC joint consultations on preparations and organization of the subregional Decade Review of the Beijing +10	28 Feb – 2 March 2004
ECA/ SA/MR/2004/20	To participate in the African Women NGO consultative meeting on the Decade Review of the Beijing +10	22-23 July 2004
ECA/ SA/MR/2004/24	To participate in the Southern Africa Women NGOs consultative meeting on the Decade Review of the Beijing +10	6-8 August 2004
ECA/ SA/MR/2004/30	To participate in the Audit of United Nations agencies gender related activities	19 August 2004
ECA/ SA/MR/2004/46	To participate in the 8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Partners' Meeting of the Women in Development Southern African Awareness Programme	04 – 05 November 2004
ECA/ SA/MR/2005/06	To participate in the SADC Council of Ministers meeting	24-25 Feb 2005
ECA/ SA/MR/2005/09	To participate in invigorating and sustaining the women's movement in SADC	11-12 August 2005



ECA/ SA/MR/2005/12	To participate in the NEPAD Gender Task Force Launch and Induction Workshop	11-15 July 2005
ECA/ SA/MR/2005/21	To participate in the meeting of the Committee on Women and Development	
ECA/ SA/MR/2005/23	To participate in the SADC Consultative Conference on Gender and Development	6-9 December 2005
ECA/ SA/MR/2005/30	To provide technical support to the Centre for Land Economy and Rights of Women	
ECA/ SA/MR/2006/02	To participate in the meeting to review the draft background paper for the round-table on invigorating and Sustaining the Women's movement in SADC	2 – 3 Feb. 2006
ECA/ SA/MR/2006/16	To provide technical support to CLEAR	15-23 June 2006
ECA/ SA/MR/2006/19	To participate in the round-table on reinvigorating and sustaining the women's movement in the SADC region	9-11 October 2006

## **OTHER RELATED ANNEXES**

### **A. ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION ON THE COMESA GENDER POLICY**

We, the Heads of State and Government of the COMESA region meeting at our 7<sup>th</sup> Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 23 to 24 May 2002

Having undertaken a critical review of the COMESA Gender Policy;  
COMESA's common position for the advancement of women, in view of the grave concern for the overall peaceful, political, social and economic development of our region;

Committed to the principles and objectives of the COMESA Treaty, the Dakar African Platform for Action on Women, The Beijing Platform for Action, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other conventions;

Guided by the relevant provisions of the Treaty establishing the COMESA, in particular Chapter 24, Articles 154 and 155 on Women in Development and Women in Business, and the primary objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action on the Advancement of Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as a framework for action to promote greater opportunity for women based on the principles of equality, development and peace;

Noting with satisfaction that the COMESA Gender Policy is a synthesis of our national and regional perspectives and priorities which provide an indispensable gender and development strategy for committed and concerted action at the national, subregional, regional, and international levels for the accelerated achievement of our development targets in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;

We therefore reaffirm our commitment to Articles 154 and 155 of the Treaty establishing COMESA in which we recognized women's significant contribution towards the process of socio-economic transformation and sustainable growth. We further reaffirm our commitment to Article 154 to:

- (a) Promote the effective integration and participation of women at all levels of development especially at the decision-making levels;
- (b) Eliminate regulations and customs that are discriminatory against women and specifically regulations and customs which prevent women from owning land and other assets;
- (c) Promote effective education awareness programmes aimed at changing negative attitudes towards women;

- (d) Create or adopt technologies which will ensure the stability of employment and professional progress for women workers; and
- (e) Encourage and strengthen institutions which are engaged in the promotion and development of labour-saving devices aimed at improving the productive capacity of women.

We further reaffirm our commitment to Article 155 of the Treaty, which recognizes the role of women in business with special emphasis on the need for women's participation in business as it relates to agriculture, industry and trade and to:

- (a) Increase the awareness of Women in Business issues at the policy level;
- (b) Create an enabling environment for the effective participation of women in common-market trade and development activities;
- (c) Promote special programmes for women in small and medium-size enterprises;
- (d) Eliminate such laws and regulations that hinder women's credit;
- (e) Initiate changes in educational and training strategies to enable women to improve their technical and industrial employment level through the acquisition of transferable skills offered by various forms of vocational and on-the-job training schemes; and
- (f) Recognize and support the Federation of National Associations of Women in Business established to promote the effective participation of women in common-market trade and development activities.

ENDORSE the decision of the Council of Ministers on:

Establishment of a technical committee on gender in line with the COMESA Treaty to facilitate the operationalisation of the Gender Policy;

And

COMMIT ourselves to among other issues:

- (a) Mainstreaming gender perspectives in the conceptualization, formulation of all policies, planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and activities;
- (b) Promoting the full, effective, equal and meaningful participation and benefit of women and men in all areas of regional integration and cooperation with emphasis on trade and investment;
- (c) Ensuring that policies, programmes and activities aimed at eradicating poverty are gender-responsive;
- (d) Ensuring that regional interventions encourage and support changes in attitudes, structures and mechanisms in order to eliminate gender biases;
- (e) Eliminating gender inequalities and ensuring women's economic empowerment and equal access to and control of resources and opportunities;
- (f) Giving special attention to positive and affirmative action to redress all gender inequalities;
- (g) Ensuring that there is sufficient and permanent expertise on gender issues at all levels in the COMESA Secretariat;
- (h) Enhancing the capacity of the COMESA Secretariat to facilitate implementation of gender policy;
- (i) Encouraging the mainstreaming of gender within member States and strengthening coordination and linkages between the COMESA Secretariat and member States on policy and practice;
- (j) Ensuring adequate financial and other resources for mainstreaming gender perspectives into COMESA activities;
- (k) Ensuring that gender analysis is mainstreamed at the macro, meso and micro levels;
- (l) Ensuring the generation, collection, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data and information at all levels;
- (m) Ensuring the equal representation of women and men in the decision-making of member States, COMESA structures and its institutions at all levels;

- (n) Addressing cross-cutting socio-economic issues such as: HIV/AIDS, human rights, environment, drug abuse, peace and security within all policies, plans, strategies and programmes of COMESA from a gender perspective;
- (o) Ensuring the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS and human rights in all its policies and programmes;
- (p) Integrating gender policy measures into each sector to ensure the policy is implemented and that the implementation is coordinated, monitored and evaluated;
- (q) Promoting mainstreaming of gender concerns in regional and international institutions and initiatives that contribute to the enhancement of the COMESA vision;
- (r) Promoting partnerships with the private sector, civil society, international and regional institutions and other Stakeholders for effective implementation of the gender policy.

**B. COMMUNIQUE FROM THE SADC GENDER AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT NGOS TO THE SUBREGIONAL DECADE REVIEW MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN SADC, LUSAKA 26-29 APRIL 2004**

**PRESENTED ON 27 APRIL 2004**

**INTRODUCTION**

At the invitation of the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness programme SARDC- WIDSAA, we, the representatives of women's human rights, women's empowerment and gender and development non-governmental organisations from eleven countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), met in Lusaka, Zambia on 25 April 2004, at a special session devoted specifically to reviewing the achievements, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by our States in September 1995.

We gathered in Lusaka to undertake a critical review and assessment of the situation and status of African women and girls and to reflect further on new challenges and opportunities that the leaders of our region can take to further add to those strategies that have thus far been moderately successful in advancing women's empowerment and equality.

We recognize and commend the efforts by our respective national governments and parliaments, our regional and continental organisations and national, regional international NGOs, particularly women's rights organisations and gender and development organizations that have over the last ten years remained consistently committed to improving the status and condition of women in the region.

We acknowledge the support that the international women's rights movement, the United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies, the private sector and other communities and stakeholders have provided in raising awareness about the importance of striving towards gender equality and equity.

We further acknowledge that, to successfully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Dakar Africa Platform for Action, the SADC Gender and Development Declaration, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and our respective national commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, there is need to provide a stronger and more committed political will.

There is further need to provide and strongly protect financial and human resources at national and international levels.

We are deeply concerned about the rapid spread of HIV infection in our countries and the millions of deaths caused by AIDS, which is testimony to the continued unequal power relations between women and men in our societies. The June 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS established a clear link between women's inability to exercise their human rights and their vulnerability to HIV infection. As the majority of the continent's caregivers, women and girls experience first-hand the devastating and severe impact of the diseases.

We recognize that, given women's subordinate position and lack of power, special measures will be required to protect Africa's women and girls from all forms of public and private sexual and gender-based violations.

We note with grave concern the misconceptions that have arisen around "gender mainstreaming" as the identified approach to give women equal access to opportunities in all sectors. Some governments have interpreted the approach to mean mainstreaming "traditional gender roles" whereby women are still unable to break through the "glass ceilings" into decision-making positions.

Gender mainstreaming also has been simplistically defined as the social roles of women and men without any analysis of the unequal power relations within structures which hinder women's effective participation. This interpretation of the approach has led to situations where gender mainstreaming is viewed as the sole responsibility of women, and it is seen as a "favour", rather than as a strategic means to bring about gender justice and equality.

A strong review of “gender mainstreaming” at the continental, regional, national and civil- society levels within countries must be undertaken to develop approaches that result in transformation, rather than mere reform, of the patriarchal structures.

Information is a key resource for development, yet the advancement of women has been hampered by the lack of adequate sex-disaggregated data in all sectors to monitor and evaluate women’s progress in relation to men. This is a gap in measuring the real gains and setbacks since the 1995 Beijing Conference, and is essential for developing effective and responsive policies and programmes that bridge the inequalities between women and men.

In this regard, we recall and reaffirm of our commitment to all relevant decisions, declarations and resolutions in the area women’s empowerment and equality, gender and development and human rights.

**C. The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; and, (B) inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources**

We acknowledge the commitments made by SADC governments to eradicate poverty. We make note that despite the concerted efforts of the leadership of the region, there has been a huge increase in poverty among the region’s populations and that women and girls form a startling 70 per cent of those living in extreme poverty. It has resulted in a massive growth in cross-border and informal trading activities by women, who often endure dehumanizing conditions as they strive to supplement their family incomes.

Poverty also is a result of high levels of corruption and the non-strategic allocation of resources in countries’ national budgets (e.g. more spending on defence than health or education).

As AIDS increases the numbers of the infirm in our populations, women and girls have been over-burdened with the twin responsibilities of home-based care giving and economic production at the household and community level, all this in an environment of globalization and economic neoliberalism.

Women’s growing food and nutrition insecurity, the increased number of households and especially poor households that are led by women provide overwhelming evidence of the feminization of poverty in our region.

Debt servicing and economic structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have disproportionately harmed women, in many cases forcing them to adopt additional mechanisms for economic survival. This has in many cases included transactional sex. Given the region’s phenomenal burden of HIV and AIDS, it is critical to provide lasting, rooted solutions that eliminate the economic impoverishment and oppression of women.



Research carried out in the SADC region shows that women and girls did not benefit from economic structural adjustment programmes. In fact SAPs have seriously affected the direction of expenditure in the social services of health and education, sectors that are most beneficial to women and girls.

Women are the majority of the population in the SADC region, yet they are minority actors in so far as making critical economic decisions is concerned. Women do not have access to and control over resources and have remained locked into micro-credit, small-scale loans and income-generating projects. These have broadly failed to uplift women from poverty permanently.

While economic reforms had the aim of improving the region's economic performance and benefit women who form the bulk of economic contributors in the informal and communal sector, economic reforms have in fact continued to sideline women.

Recognizing these concerns, the following actions should be taken:-

### **Governments**

1. Adopt macroeconomic and monetary policy frameworks that promote pro-poor growth that has a trickle-down effect.
2. By December 2006, all SADC countries adopt pro-poor gender-responsive budgeting as the approach for allocating resources at the national and local government levels.
3. By December 2006, all countries in the SADC region should conduct a time-use study and develop indicators to account for the work performed by women as unpaid care work in national accounts.
4. That there be a concerted effort to invest in infrastructure so as to bring resources closer to homes and reduce the burden of women's care work.
5. That women form no less than 50 per cent of all bodies that make decisions on economic policy.
6. That to democratize the economic decision-making process, all parliamentary committees responsible for finance, industry, commerce and trade have no less than 50 per cent of their members as women and ensure that 50 per cent of all economic resources are targeted towards directly benefiting women; and further that 50 per cent of all macroeconomic, substantive trade and industry business opportunities are made available to women.
7. Enforce laws that guarantee that women form no less than 50 per cent of the beneficiaries of land redistribution schemes and have access to, control over and ownership of land in their own right.

8. That countries develop monitoring mechanisms to measure the impact of economic policies.

### **NGOs**

1. Develop parallel processes to monitor the implementation and impact of macro-economic policies on women and girls.
2. Provide expertise on gender-responsive budgeting to all stakeholders for effective implementation.
3. Lobby governments to include unpaid care work in national accounts; provide statistics and indicators illustrating the methodology that may be used to account for unremunerated labour.
4. Raise public awareness and provide fora for public debate on the impact of macro-economic policies on women and girls.

### **D. Inequalities and inadequacies in access to education and training**

We acknowledge the gains some countries have made in advancing towards the target of education for all by providing universal free primary and secondary education to girls, especially those in vulnerable positions and/or living in the rural areas.

The following actions should be implemented to slow the rollback in educational gains in many countries:

### **Governments**

1. Establish commissions to review the quality and content of education with a view to improving declining standards.
2. Revise and rewrite all curricula in a gender-responsive manner.
3. Remove school fees and other indirect fees and levies that limit girls' access to education.
4. Put in place scholarship programmes specifically for girls.
5. Put in place special provisions to enable girls to enter tertiary education institutions, especially in areas where there is a deficit of girls, such as the sciences.
6. Put in place stiffer penalties to punish teachers who sexually abuse their pupils.

7. Allow pregnant girls to return to school after delivery in all countries. This procedure should be backed with a conducive, non-discriminatory policy framework.
8. Make special provisions for girls in difficult circumstances, especially those in households that have been affected by HIV and AIDS, to receive education.
9. Ensure that the curriculum at tertiary institutions includes mandatory modules in women's, gender and feminist studies.

### **NGOs**

1. Develop public campaigns to build public understanding and attitudinal changes towards allowing the return of pregnant girls to school.
2. Develop public campaigns to raise awareness about the sexual abuse of girls in schools.
3. Monitor the extent of implementation and enforcement of affirmative action programmes for girls to enter tertiary education institutions, and report on any gaps in policy implementation.

### **E. Inequalities and inadequacies in access to health care and related services**

The 1997 SADC Gender Declaration's commitment to making "quality and reproductive health service more accessible to women", reinforces the Beijing Platform for Action's commitment to providing equal access to quality health care to ensure the full rights of women. The socio-economic context of most SADC countries provides a challenge to securing this right as most economies are depressed, and macroeconomic policies have impacted negatively on socio-economic rights, including provision of quality health care, particularly reproductive and maternal health care for women.

Very few countries still provide free access to health care for expectant mothers and post-maternity support. Few countries have reviewed primary health-care services, and no serious inroads have been made to reduce maternal and infant mortality. There are few campaigns to provide women with more information on their reproductive rights, as well as those aimed at tackling the socio-cultural issues affecting women's ability to negotiate both their reproductive and their sexual rights.

We recommend that:

### **Governments**

1. Remove user fees for all women seeking health-care services.

2. Reduce maternal mortality in line with Millennium Development Goal No. 5 ( i.e. reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio).
3. Provide expectant mothers with antiretroviral (ARVs) drugs to reduce parent-to-child transmission of HIV and ensure that once HIV-positive women have given birth, they are placed on comprehensive ARV treatment programmes for their own health.
4. Reduce infant mortality or underweight births.
5. Provide access to a broad range of female-controlled protective devices such as microbicides and condoms as contraception and protection from HIV and Sexually transmitted infections.
6. Revising macroeconomic policies to ensure that they are pro-poor and that national budgets are gender-sensitive to take into account women's health-care needs.
7. Conduct medical research in the field of women's health-care needs and ensure health-care service provision responds to women's specific health-care needs.
8. Expand rights through legislative reform that permits access to safe and affordable abortion.

## **NGOs**

1. Undertake massive campaigns to raise awareness of and advocate for health-care services in the areas of cervical and breast cancers.
2. Advocate for pro-poor gender-responsive national budgets.
3. Lobby for legislative reforms so as to permit widespread access to safe and affordable abortion.
4. Advocate for the provision of high-quality, gender-friendly public health-care institutions and services.

## **F. Violence Against Women**

The 1998 SADC Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children is a significant accomplishment of the region. It makes provision for law amendment, review, enactment, legal services and legal literacy as strategies to eliminate violence against women.

We acknowledge that there has been progress in legislating against gender violence, in particular domestic violence and sexual offences. A number of countries in SADC have now widened the concept of rape, to include the rape of men and boys; recognized marital rape as a criminal offence; provided for stiffer penalties, including higher

minimum penalties for perpetrators of crimes against women; provided a broad definition of domestic violence, including the concept of family to protect the rights of men, women and children. Some countries now provide supportive structures for counseling crime survivors, have instituted victim-friendly support units and courts. There is now provision in some countries in the region for post sexual violence medical therapies and counseling, including ARVs to reduce the risk of contracting HIV. Penalties are now in place for perpetrators of incest, particularly to protect the rights of the girl child.

Despite these provisions, we note with grave concern that violence against women and girls is reported to have increased to endemic proportions right across the SADC region.

To ensure that the region takes very seriously the matter of protecting its female citizens from all forms of violence, we recommend that:

### **Governments**

1. Implement judicial reforms by putting in place gender-sensitive structures to provide legal services and counseling for women and girls seeking protection from violence.
2. All SADC countries provide post-sexual violence medical therapies for women and girls, and especially those therapies that prevent and reduce the transmission of HIV and STIs.
3. All countries enact legislation that makes marital rape a criminal offence. That all countries enact legislation that criminalizes domestic violence and sexual offences committed in both the public and private spheres.
4. All SADC countries report at the annual meeting of ministers substantively on the extent of violence against women, measures that have been taken to eradicate violence against women and targets for the following year of reducing further violence against women.
5. All SADC countries ensure that they make and protect budgetary provisions for implementing measures to protect women and girls from violence.

### **NGOs**

1. Lobby for judicial reforms that put in place gender-sensitive structures to provide legal services and counseling for women and girls seeking protection from violence.
2. Lobby for the provision of post-sexual violence medical therapies and services for women and girls who have survived violence.

### **G. The effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation**

While the equal participation of women and men in peace processes is important to the attainment of sustainable peace and democracy, the involvement of women in the preparation and implementation of peace agreements in the Southern African region remains minimal. Peace negotiations and agreements as well as the formal and informal process leading up to them are not engendered.

The heightened increase and vulnerability of women and girls to all forms of gender-based violence during armed conflict is unacceptable and violates their right to human security and life.

In the light of the adoption of the Protocol, which identifies rape as a war crime, governments, humanitarian aid organisations, United Nations agencies working in conflict areas must give more public attention to the issue of gender violence in armed conflict and view gender violence during armed conflict as punishable offences.

We therefore recommend that:

#### **Governments**

1. Put in place mechanisms to strengthen women's participation in national and regional peace-building and reconstruction initiatives and processes.
2. Work with international humanitarian agencies to map out strategies and put in place mechanisms to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation and violence during conflict situations.
3. Establish tools to integrate gender at every stage of a peace process, such as guidelines on the role of women in peace processes and reconstruction. A gender checklist must be provided for all those involved at every stage of the peace process to strengthen their capacity to promote gender equality and ensure that women participate effectively.
4. Ensure that peace agreements lay the foundation for women's equal right to participate in and benefit fully from measures directed at economic restructuring.
5. In collaboration with the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other key agencies, establish safe spaces in refugee camps where abuses and violations of women and human rights can be reported.

#### **NGOs**

1. Organizations working in armed conflict areas must be provided with a regular forum to present gender concerns that must be brought to the attention of the

intergovernmental organs working on the negotiation and implementation of peace agreements.

2. Increase the monitoring, documenting and dissemination of reports on women's and girls' experiences during conflict situations in their countries in timely fashions to governments, international and national media, church organisations, among others, to speed up the response time to violence and abuse in conflict situations.

## **H. Inequality between men and women in sharing of power and decision-making at all levels**

We recognize the growing acceptance of the importance of women's participation in decision-making. Affirmative action policies in place in some SADC countries have contributed to women's advancement in decision-making.

However, women's participation in decision-making continues to be low. For example, as of January 2004, only Seychelles, South Africa and Mozambique had reached the SADC target of at least 30 per cent women in their parliaments. The majority of countries have not and will not meet the SADC target due to various political, economic, social and cultural factors that impede women's progress.

The following actions should be taken:-

### **Governments**

1. Meet the African Union's target of 50 per cent women in managerial and decision-making positions in all parastatals, public institutions, regional bodies, media institutions, the judiciary, the public service and trade unions.
2. All public and private institutions should use gender and organizational development models to review institutional structures and values in order to restructure them to operate in a gender-responsive manner, and to permit the fair and full participation of women.
3. Enact special measures to increase women's participation in structures and policy-making processes at all levels, from the village to the national and regional levels.
4. Redefine political priorities and the political playing field to ensure that good leadership, national democracy and governance reflect women's specific concerns, values and experiences and needs.
5. Work with civil society to mount civic education which aims to eliminate discriminatory attitudes and practices that discourage women from holding decision-making positions, especially in the public sector.



## NGOs

1. Raise awareness about the importance of ensuring that women are part of the decision-making structures and processes.
2. Monitor elections so as to ensure that they are conducted in a manner that permits the full and equal participation of women as voters and as candidates.
3. Build capacity of and provide support for women so that they can be strong, empowered candidates for public office.
4. Conduct campaigns to overcome the public's attitudinal barriers with respect to supporting and voting for effective women candidates.
5. Monitor and hold governments accountable for the implementation of their commitments and report on the gaps in reaching the targets to gender equality.
6. Conduct studies that illustrate qualitatively and quantitatively the differential impacts women bring to decision-making and power sharing.
7. Lobby for a conceptual and structural redefinition of the patriarchal structures of governance and decision-making that present blocks to women's effective participation.

### **I. Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women**

Almost all SADC countries have some form of national machinery responsible for gender, as well as gender focal points within various ministries.

However, in the 10 years since Beijing, these units, departments or ministries have become weak and unable to be responsive to the challenges presented by the struggle for gender justice. Poor resource bases, few staff and no power or authority within governments to advance equality and justice for women are just a few of the constraints that national machineries face.

Political will to gender equality is demonstrated through strong, well-resourced (financial and human) structures with power and authority from the highest level to act. Without such structures, Southern African governments will continue to experience a rollback in important gender justice gains which are intrinsic to meeting the Millennium Development Goals and stemming the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The United Nations General Assembly 2001 Special Session on HIV/AIDS made a clear link between women and girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS with the unequal power relations between women and men, girls and boys, and to the inability of women and girls to exercise their human rights.

Recognizing the above, the following steps are needed to move forward:

## **Governments**

1. Rebuild the institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality to well-resourced and well-staffed offices placed at the level of full ministries or in the President's Office by 2006. Progress in this regard should be checked at the SADC Annual Heads of State Meeting.
2. Provide a certain fixed percentage of the national budgetary allocations for the institutional mechanisms, and this percentage should be protected and guaranteed by an act of Parliament.
3. Starting in 2004, institutional mechanisms should not be downgraded further in any country as a sign of SADC governments' commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action and other instruments they have signed.
4. Governments should set up and enshrine in law commissions on gender equality or an equal opportunity commission, with the mandate to oversee the legislative framework and to keep government and all institutions accountable to gender justice and equality. These entities also should develop areas of research and study for the generation of gender-disaggregated data and introduce consistently policy papers on the status of women within their countries; and interface with all sectors of society to ensure accountability and the incorporation of gender justice into the public, private and civil-society sectors.

## **NGOs**

1. Civil-society groups working in the areas of gender and human rights should form by 2005 an umbrella body or coalition in countries, where such an entity does not exist, to serve as a focal point on gender justice activism in the country.
2. Women's coalitions or umbrella organizations should set up a task force to be responsible for the regular monitoring of governments' attainment or non-attainment of targets set by national, regional and international commitments on gender equality. Reports from these monitoring exercises should be distributed at all levels in the public, private and civil-society spheres, and form the basis for continued lobbying.
3. NGOs should make a concerted effort to be key players in providing gender expertise, knowledge and information to the development of policies and laws in all sectors of society.

## **J. Lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women**

We acknowledge that SADC governments have adopted, ratified or acceded to important frameworks for promoting women's human rights. As of March this year, all SADC

countries had ratified the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, only four countries in the region have either signed or ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol.

Recognizing that gender equality is a fundamental human right, SADC adopted its Gender and Development Declaration in 1997. In 1998, SADC signed an addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children, recognizing that gender-based violence is a gross human rights violation.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted by the African Union. Only six countries in SADC have signed the Protocol; none have ratified or acceded to the Protocol.

The SADC Charter on Fundamental Social Rights, adopted in August 2003, seeks to reaffirm the social rights of SADC nationals. The Maseru Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted in July 2003, amongst other things, recognizes that the pandemic is a development issue, and it also recognizes the fundamental rights and freedoms of people living with HIV/AIDS and the specific connection between HIV and AIDS and gender inequality.

Whilst the adoption, ratification and accession records of SADC countries are relatively good, we are concerned that SADC State Parties to CEDAW have failed to report regularly and periodically on progress. Most CEDAW reports are extremely late, some by more than four (4) years; this signifies little commitment to the implementation of the Convention. Failure by SADC countries to ratify or accede to the Option Protocol to CEDAW curtails the full range of rights that would be available to groups or individual women to present issues of gross human rights violations to the relevant United Nations body.

Commendable efforts have been made in enacting empowering gender-sensitive laws. These important inroads in the area of legislation have included women's equality in marriage, including protection from marital rape; women's equality in the acquisition of movable and immovable property rights; women's labour rights with respect to equal pay for work of equal value, maternity benefits, as well as protection from sexual harassment in the work place and affirmative action.

The non-binding nature of all the Declarations adopted by SADC and their non-domestication at country level, place limitations on the extent to which the region's female citizens can formally claim protection for their rights.

SADC governments have failed to provide easily accessible legal facilities; the responsibility has largely been carried by NGOs.

There are weak *pro bono* or *pro deo* systems, and there is a narrow conceptualization of service provision for indigent persons in these systems. Review documents languish on shelves for some time before action is taken. The complexity of legal processes in most

formal courts persists, mostly based on colonial precepts of meting out justice. Context-oriented solutions to justice delivery must be put in place – procedures have to be simple and accessible to women.

Few law review commission structures in SADC countries have prioritized the mandate to address gender and law concerns. Few Attorney General's chambers and offices are proactive in providing technical assistance to governments *vis a vis* gender-sensitive legislation; increasingly this responsibility is being carried by civil-society experts.

There is a lack of gender parity in most judicial structures in SADC and a lack of proactive approach in interpretation in most judicial structures – international human rights law instruments such as CEDAW are just “paper rights”.

Despite these significant improvements in the law, gaps remain.

We recommend that:

### **Governments**

1. Adopt far-reaching measures within the framework of the elections unfolding in the region over the next 18 months, to fulfill the commitment of reaching the target of a minimum of 30 per cent women in strategic political and decision-making positions by December 2005.
2. All policies and programmes mainstream a rights-based approach so that all persons in SADC acquire full citizenship rights.
3. Enact legislation that domesticates all regional and international instruments that are legally binding – the role of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the SADC Secretariat must be recognized.
4. Enforce the effective and gender-sensitive administration of the law.
5. Transform declarations entered into by SADC countries into protocols.
6. Strengthen a peer review mechanism on gender at the highest level in SADC, which must also include experts from civil-society.
7. Amend all constitutions urgently to eliminate the provisions that currently exist for the discrimination of women and girls through customary and personal law.

### **NGOs**

1. Lobby and advocate for the target to fulfill the commitment of a minimum of 30 per cent women in strategic political and decision-making positions by December 2005 to be met.

2. Lobby for the enactment of legislation that domesticates all regional and international instruments that are legally binding.
3. Monitor the extent to which the administration of law is conducted in a gender-sensitive manner and report oversight.
4. Lobby that the SADC Gender and Development Declaration becomes a protocol.

**K. Stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems, especially in the media**

Recognizing that every citizen should be guaranteed the right to freedom of expression, and that this right should be protected against sexist, racist and other forms of biases which are forms of censorship; and

Acknowledging the research findings of the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline Study of women and men in the news in Southern Africa which revealed that in over 300 media in the region women comprised only 17 per cent of the known sources.

The following actions must be part of concerted planning and action to achieve democracy in and through the media:

**Governments**

1. Create the space and regulatory environments that are conducive to the development of a free, independent and pluralistic media in all Southern African countries;
2. Set the example for all sectors in society by adopting and implementing policies that advance gender justice; and by eradicating all laws that promote all forms of sexism in the public and private spheres.
3. Make the findings of the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline (GMBS) Study, both regional and country reports, known to all policymakers, ministers, parliamentarians, judiciary, commissioners, etc. to create awareness at the level of decision-makers on sexism in the media.
4. Set targets for the advancement of women in the media; and set up an independent regulatory media authority to monitor the implementation of these targets and which ensures all media houses have instituted editorial and employment policies that eradicate sexism in the media.
5. Enshrine and guarantee within national constitutions the right to access to information for all individuals.

## **Media**

1. Develop editorial and employment policies which prohibit discrimination against women in the workplace, ensure their promotion to key positions and develop policies which mitigate against sexist stereotypes, negative portrayal and the absence of women's voices and perspectives in the media. The media should give a fair and balanced portrayal of women in the media in all of their diverse roles.
2. Revisit outdated style manuals and editorial policies, where they exist, to ensure that these documents are not gender-blind and promote the highest professional standards.
3. Gender justice should be covered in the media from a rights-based approach and should not be relegated to only a few columns or placed on special pages periodically; gender justice should rather form part of the regular coverage in the media of political, economic, reproductive, health, social and civil rights issues for all citizens.
4. Women's voices and perspectives in the media should move from 17 per cent (2003) to at least 30 per cent of sources by (2006) through a concerted effort by the media to access women as sources on all issues within countries' media. Each country should use the national GMBS report as a starting point to set internal targets on women as sources, to contribute to the 30 per cent regional goal.

## **NGOs**

1. Incorporate media literacy into their programmes to build awareness on how to read the media for gender.
2. Gender and media activism centered on campaigns for women's right to freedom of expression should be developed within women's coalitions in the SADC countries.
3. Conduct regular monitoring of the media for gender bias and stereotypes and women's absence of voice should form the basis of regular "complaint" reports to the Ombudsperson, independent media or human rights commissions within countries that make public reports.
4. Use May 3 -World Press Freedom Day- to present independent analyses of gender in the media and/or wage campaigns in and through the media on women's right to communicate.
5. Gender activism should become more pronounced at the national and regional level to influence media and ICT policies;
6. Ensure that the country's national gender policies include a well-developed section on media in the context of freedom of expression and gender bias as a form of

censorship against women; and gender should be integrated into countries' information and ICT policies.

#### **L. Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment**

Women have the responsibility for managing household resources, but they typically do not have managerial control. Given the variety of women's daily interactions with the environment, they are the most keenly affected by its degradation. In Southern Africa, environment issues include deforestation, decreasing availability of water and desertification. Increased deforestation leads to soil erosion and flooding, reduces agricultural productivity, contributes to decreased water availability and contributes to the burden of women.

Deforestation makes it more difficult for women to collect wild herbs, fruits and natural medicines or fuel wood for cooking and boiling water. When women must travel longer distances and take more time to collect fuel wood and water, girls are often taken out of school to assist. In areas where water is in particularly short supply, women use even more energy, putting them at risk of malnutrition and reducing their economic productivity.

The participation of women in environmental protection and management has continued to be inadequate and hampered by limited access to technical skills and resources as well as gender-insensitive environmental policies.

We recommend the following action:

#### **Governments**

1. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, including as managers, designers and planners, and as implementers and evaluators of environmental projects;
2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives into policies and programmes for sustainable development;
3. Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environment policies on women.
4. Governments must make financial and human resources available for the involvement of women in environmental and natural resources management.
5. Take urgent measures to avert ongoing rapid environmental and economic degradation in their countries that generally affects women and children in rural areas

suffering drought, desertification and deforestation, natural disasters and the aftermath of the use of unsuitable agrochemical products.

6. Implement measures to protect farm workers, the majority of whom are women, from exposure to certain agricultural and industrial chemicals which increase women's vulnerability in pregnancy and childbirth.

7. Establish official channels to give women a voice in environmental decision-making. More often than not, women are not associated with discussions on the environment and very often the decision about location of water sources types of water sources and who will maintain the operation of the facilities are made without consulting women, resulting in nobody taking responsibility.

### **NGOs**

1. Raise public awareness of the importance of women's involvement and demand that space be created for the effective participation of women as decision makers in matters of environmental and resource management.

2. Undertake research and publish findings on women's roles and responsibilities in protecting the environment so as to build credible knowledge in the field of gender, environment and development.

3. Monitor the enforcement and administration of environmental legislation to ensure that its provisions protect women's environmental rights.

4. Ensure that all research in the field of plants and medicines is gender-responsive and has clear benefits to women who are the guardians of knowledge about natural herbs, fruits and medicines.

5. Take steps to develop new technologies that eliminate women's dependence on fuel wood for cooking and boiling water so that there is less pressure on natural resources.

### **M. Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl child**

We note that SADC governments have signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We commend States for the efforts made especially in the areas of education and providing legislative measures for the protection of children from abuse, particularly through such practices as child labour.

Yet development indicators across the region reveal that the status and condition of the girl child remain extremely low in our societies. There has been limited progress in ensuring that African girls in the SADC region do not top the statistics of children living in poverty, without adequate education, nutrition, shelter and in conditions of violence and conflict.



Over the last 10 years, girls have become increasingly subject to the growing unscrupulous trade in trafficking and are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse by men who believe in the myth of virgin cleansing as a cure for HIV. Deteriorating public health-care facilities have meant that girls are also increasingly carrying the burden associated with caring for people living with HIV and AIDS.

We recommend that the following measures be taken:

### **Governments**

1. Stiffer penalties for perpetrators of incest to protect the rights of the girl child.
2. Enact legislation to protect girl children from abduction.
3. Enforcement of the rights of girl children against labour, including labour related to HIV and AIDS home-based care.
4. Enact new legislative measures to protect welfare rights of child-headed households, particularly girl-headed households.
5. Implement effective legal interventions to protect teenage mothers' rights to education.
6. Adopt victim-friendly measures that ensure effective reporting on violence against girls.
7. Introduce reproductive health education as a compulsory subject in the school curricula from primary school.

### **NGOs**

1. Raise public awareness about the need to penalize perpetrators of incest.
2. Lobby for the adoption of legislation that protects girl children against abduction.
3. Lobby for the protection of girls from labour abuses, especially those related to performing work related to HIV and AIDS home-based care.
4. Lobby for the revision of macroeconomic policies to ensure that they protect the rights of girls.
5. Lobby for the gender-responsive allocation of national budget resources in favour of girls.

6. Monitor the administration of legislation to ensure that provisions that protect the rights of teenage mothers to education are implemented.

**Organizations represented at the working session**

1. Adult Education Association of Zambia
2. Coordinating Assembly of NGOs from Swaziland (Cango)
3. Centre for Violence Against Women – South Africa
4. Council of Churches in Zambia
5. Environ Green Care Association of Zambia
6. Emang Basadi of Botswana
7. Feminist Activist Coalition of Tanzania
8. Forum Mulher - Mozambique
9. Gender Links
10. Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (Lecongo)
11. Namibian Women's Association
12. National Council of Catholic Women
13. Rede Mulher - Angola
14. Society for Women and AIDS in Zambia
15. Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre Women in Southern Africa Awareness Programme (SARDC-WIDSAA)
16. Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
17. Women for Change - Zambia
18. Women in Land and Water Rights in Southern Africa
19. Women in law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)
20. Women in Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (WLSA)
21. Women's Action Group - Zimbabwe
22. Women's NGO Coalition – Botswana
23. Young Women's Christian Association - Zambia
24. Zambia Alliance of Women
25. Zambia Association of Research and Development
26. Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
27. Zambia National Women's Lobby Group
28. Zambia Non-Governmental Organization Coordinating Council
29. Zimbabwe Women's Coalition
30. Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network



Irene Lomayani with SADC gender machineries at the E-net workshop  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2006