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GUIDELINES
for the *IMPLEMENTATION* of
THE AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION:
African Common Position for the Advancement of Women

JUNE 1995

ACRONYMS

ACW	<i>African Centre for Women</i>
ADB	<i>African Development Bank</i>
AMU	<i>Arab Maghreb Union</i>
ARCC	<i>Africa Regional Corodinating Committee for the integration of Women in Development</i>
CODESRIA	<i>Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa</i>
COMESA	<i>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa</i>
ECA	<i>Economic Commission for Africa</i>
ECCAS	<i>Economic Commission of Central African States</i>
ECOWAS	<i>Economic Commission for West African States</i>
ESAMI	<i>Eastern and Southern African Management Institute</i>
GAD	<i>Gender And Development</i>
IDEP	<i>Institute for Development and Economic Planning</i>
IGOs	<i>Inter-Governmental Organizations</i>
IPF	<i>Indicative Planning Figures</i>
MULPOCs	<i>Multi-national Programmes and Operations Centres</i>
NGOs	<i>Non-Governmental Organizations</i>
OAU	<i>Organization of African Unity</i>

SADCC	<i>Southern African Development Community</i>
SWMPT	<i>System-Wide Medium-Term Plan</i>
UDEAC	<i>Central African Customs and Economic Union</i>
UMOA	<i>West African Monetary Union</i>
U N	<i>United Nations</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>
UNECA	<i>United Nations Economic Commission for Africa</i>
UNIFEM	<i>United Nations Development Fund for Women</i>
WID	<i>Women in Development</i>

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(i)

FOREWORD

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The African Platform for Action which was adopted by the Fifth Regional Conference preparatory to the Fourth World Conference on Women, is Africa's common position on the advancement of women. It provides a framework for committed and concerted action at all levels towards accelerated achievement of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies during the rest of the 1990s and into the twenty-first century.

The Platform has been conceived broadly for the whole region and each government is expected to adapt it to the specific national realities; to this end, a national plan of action with priorities clearly indicated should be developed by each country.

To ensure the effective implementation of the Platform for Action, the establishment of monitoring mechanisms at the national and regional levels has been deemed necessary. At the regional level, the Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC), a subsidiary organ of the Economic Commission for Africa, in close collaboration and consultation with Inter-Governmental Organizations and other regional structures, has been identified as the appropriate mechanism for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Platform for Action.

The guidelines have been formulated to assist all implementors as well as the monitoring mechanisms of the Platform. It is believed that their effective use could serve as a yardstick for measuring the extent to which implementation of the Platform for Action can be deemed successful.

The immediate objectives of the guidelines are to assist governments in the formulation of gender-responsive programmes and policies in line with the provisions of the Platform and to provide rules to be followed in policy and programme formulation, resource allocation and institutional arrangements that would ensure the effective implementation of the Platform. Thus, the guidelines should facilitate the process of transforming the actions called for in the African Platform for Action into concrete and tangible results.

It is hoped that governments and their development partners will do their utmost to establish and facilitate the work of national monitoring mechanisms. It is also hoped that all implementors of the Platform will make constructive use of these guidelines whose ultimate aim is the achievement of the strategic objectives of the critical areas of concern identified in the African Platform for Action.

GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Some of the difficulties which faced the implementation of the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the advancement of women were the failure to allocate responsibilities for the various aspects, sectors and levels of implementation, the absence of appropriate structures for undertaking implementation activities and the failure to identify the sources of necessary resources for enhancing effective implementation.

2. In the African Platform for Action, on the other hand, there is a specific section dealing with institutional arrangements for implementation of activities including, inter alia, the need for and the strengthening of structures for the advancement of women. There is a call for a strong political will on the part of African Governments. This latter point has been underscored in the declaration accompanying the Platform for Action, particularly operative paragraphs 5 and 6 which read respectively:

"Recognize that the African Platform for Action provides the African Common Position on the advancement of women, as well as a framework for committed and concerted action at regional, sub-regional and national levels for the accelerated achievement of the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies during the rest of the 1990s and into the twenty-first century;

" Adopt the African Platform for Action as a renewed commitment by African Governments and as a blueprint to further accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in line with the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and declarations at international and regional levels."

3. Sections III and IV of the Platform highlight eleven critical areas of concern and set out specific actions to be taken to address them. There is a call for ensuring accountability for expenditure in respect of implementation and, to ensure effective implementation, part B of Section IV has been devoted to the mobilization of resources, the implications, the modalities, the sources and the responsibilities for the mobilization.

4. Thus the Platform makes restitution for the omissions which contributed to the unsatisfactory implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Furthermore, the Platform will benefit greatly from the experiences and lessons learnt in the past decade during which, among other things, the question of gender in development (addressing the specific needs and concerns of men and women [the gender perspective] in all aspects of development) has gained recognition and appreciation.

5. *In implementing the provisions of the Platform, it will be necessary to take into consideration the recommendations of other global events since 1985 which also identified areas that require gender-specific follow up; these include the 1992 Conference on the Environment and Development - Agenda 21 and its chapter 24 on women, environment and development-; the Summit on the Economic Advancement of Rural Women, 1992 - The Geneva Declaration-; the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights - Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action which calls for the integration of women's human rights into the mainstream of UN human rights activities-; the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development- Cairo, Programme of Action and the 1995 World Summit on Social Development-Copenhagen, Programme of Action.*

6. *Many of the provisions of these declarations and programmes of actions have been incorporated into the African Platform for Action which is a product of the concerted and collaborative efforts of all African Governments, Inter-governmental organizations, Non-governmental organizations, regional and sub-regional institutions and organizations as well as Africa's partners in development. The Platform therefore offers a better and greater opportunity for effective implementation of these and other provisions contained therein.*

(i) Pre-conditions for implementation

7. *The sine qua non for the success of the implementation of the Platform is the commitment of African Governments to the implementation of the Platform and its implementation modalities; this is to be backed by a demonstration of a strong political will. However, in view of the economic crises which have engulfed the African continent since the early 1980s, most governments do not consider women's issues as a development priority. To enlist the commitment of governments to the implementation of the Platform therefore, it is necessary that mass campaigns be mounted in various African countries to sensitize government authorities to the need and value of integrating women into the development process. These campaigns should be carried out by national machineries for the advancement of women, NGOs, women's groups and associations concerned with women and development issues.*

8. *Commitment by governments should include the enactment of appropriate domestic legislation for implementing the Platform for Action, allocating appropriate financial resources, ensuring accountability of expenditure, and raising public awareness of women's issues. In addition, Governments must meet the basic needs of their populations in the areas of infrastructure, education, health, employment, food production and food security together with proper functioning institutions, all of which are prerequisites for the success of the implementation process. Furthermore, Governments need to improve their planning and management activities through transparency in the allocation of funds. Africa's partners in development must base their assistance to African countries on the ethics of*

mutual benefit, collective responsibility and sustainable development. Bi-lateral and multi-lateral partners need to commit themselves to meeting the targets set by them for Africa's human development programmes.

(ii) Resource implications and mobilization

9. Implementation of the Platform for Action will require the mobilization of all available human, technical, material, physical and financial resources internationally, regionally and nationally. Such mobilization will have to be based on short-, medium-, and long-term objectives and perspectives; commitments from central actors should be reflected in specific and substantial financial allocation comparable to their operating budgets. The responsibility for the mobilization of resources will lie with all parties concerned, including Governmental and Intergovernmental sources, Women's Organizations, National and International NGOs, and Africa's Development partners.

(iii) Institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Platform for Action

10. These arrangements call for core structures at the highest political/administrative levels for the effective implementation of the Platform. Several structures have been identified at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels and basic requirements for making these structures more effective have been stated.

11. Although the major elements for a successful implementation have been spelt out in the Platform, there is still a need for guidelines which could assist the various actors to carry out the implementation activities in a manner that can be easily applicable to all situations with, of course, a scope for modifications to suit any specific sector, need, political, and socio-economic condition of each country.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

12. The African Platform for Action, like the World Plan of Action (1975) and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies (1985) before it, should be implemented within the Decade (1995/2005). It has been conceived broadly for the whole region. Each Government should adapt it to the specific national realities by elaborating/developing a national plan of action with priorities clearly indicated. Such a plan of action should be formulated with the active involvement of all actors in development on the basis of the Platform and the Guidelines. Member States should segment measures to be carried out in the short, medium and long term as this would enhance the planning of activities, particularly the mobilization of resources.

A. National Governments

13. *To ensure an effective implementation of the Platform by Governments, there is need for setting in place a monitoring mechanism. In each country, an autonomous Committee comprising government and NGO representatives, women and men researchers and development partners should be established to monitor, and evaluate Government's efforts to implement the African Platform for Action and report regularly to the government and the African Regional Coordinating Committee. Governments are free to use existing national coordinating committees but their composition will have conform to the above and their autonomy must be ensured to enable them to report fairly.*

14. *Efforts should be made to ensure that copies of the Platform are made available to all ministries, institutions and agencies*

15. *The Guiding Principles for governments are :*

- (a) *To set their own priorities within the critical areas of concern and establish a time frame for their implementation;*
- (b) *To allocate a percentage of the national budget for implementation;*
- (c) *To allocate responsibility to appropriate national ministries, agencies and machineries;*
- (d) *To ensure capacity and capability at all levels for implementation, monitoring and evaluation;*
- (e) *To formulate a time table of programmes and activities that set time limits or deadlines and indicating targets to be achieved by governments(national machineries), the ADB, ECA and OAU (joint secretariat);*
- (f) *To establish/strengthen mechanisms for implementation, monitoring and evaluation within each relevant Ministry;*
- (g) *Ensure decentralization of implementation;*
- (h) *Develop strategies for resource mobilization (matching funds, income generating activities, project elaboration for funding requests etc.);*
- (i) *To make full use of the ECA Regional Advisory Services by making frequent and specific requests;*
- (j) *To Organize nation-wide workshops/seminars for planners, programme officers of various ministries and agencies, institutions and community*

leaders with a view to create awareness and understanding of the critical areas of concern as described in the Platform for Action before its implementation;

- (k) To undertake activities to popularize and promote the African Platform for Action including the convening of workshops with close involvement of the African Centre for Women; to develop promotional materials and exchange of information among Member States;*
- (l) To make maximum use of Africa-based experts/consultants, both women and men;*
- (m) To develop joint programmes for the critical areas of concern with other countries within the same sub-region.*

B. NGOs and Grassroots Organizations

16. The Guiding principles for NGOs and Grassroots Organizations are:

- (a) To collaborate with national governments in setting priorities;*
- (b) To devise strategies for resource mobilization;*
- (c) To allocate resources;*
- (d) To liaise with governments and other NGOs in order to ensure complementarity rather than duplication;*
- (e) To ensure that their members are informed about the contents of the Platform and the suggested actions to be taken;*
- (f) To take part in the popularization, information and promotional activities.*

C. UN Agencies and International Development Partners

17. For these agencies and development partners the Guiding principles are :

- (a) To work with governments and NGOs around their priority areas and provide necessary support (financial, technical, material and human resources);*
- (b) UNDP and other specialised Agencies to ensure that Country Programmes*

contain elements that address the critical areas of concern.

D. National Coordinating Committees/Machineries

18. The Guiding principles with regards to national coordinating committees/machineries are:

- (a) To expand their mandates to include coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Platform for Action by various actors;*
- (b) To ensure close monitoring and decentralization of implementation;*
- (c) To ensure that women leaders, groups and associations have copies of the Platform for guiding local activities;*
- (d) To undertake regular assessment of the extent of implementation and accountability of the structures involved in the implementation.*

E. IGOs/MULPOCs

19. The Guiding principles in respect of IGOs and MULPOCs are:

- (a) To collaborate with member States particularly in the formulation and implementation of activities of joint sub-regional programmes;*
- (b) To coordinate with other IGOs to avoid duplication.*

F. Sub-Regional Institutions

20. The Guiding principles in the case of Sub-regional Institutions are :

- (a) To collaborate with other sub-regional institutions and governments to provide necessary training as appropriate;*
- (b) To conduct research on issues to be identified by various actors and disseminate findings regionally.*

G. ECA/ACW

21. For the ECA/ACW the Guiding principles are :

- (a) *To develop draft Guidelines to be followed by various actors for the implementation of the Platform for Action;*
- (b) *To popularize the Guidelines;*
- (c) *To ensure that the System-wide medium-Term Plan (SWMTP) for the advancement of women, the ECA Medium-term plan and subsequent programmes of work take into consideration the critical areas of concern of the Platform and are more responsive to the provisions of the platform;*
- (d) *To provide necessary technical assistance and advisory services to Member States and NGOs, including information regarding possible sources of funding and expertise;*
- (e) *To develop regional project proposals relevant to the critical areas of concern and mobilize funding for their implementation.*

H. ADB/ECA/OAU/UN_Regional Coordinating Committee

22. The Guiding principles for the ADB/ECA/OAU/UN Coordinating Committee are:

- (a) *To work with National Coordinating Committees;*
- (b) *To prepare reports once a year and formulate recommendations to steer future action;*
- (c) *In accordance with paragraph 13 of the resolution on the implementation of the Platform for Action, in particular, monitoring of the implementation:*
 - (i) *ADB to monitor the mobilization, availability and 7disbursement/use (for transparency and accountability) of financial resources;*
 - (ii) *ECA to monitor programmes (implementation, paying particular attention to collaboration, cooperation, adaptability, participation etc.). In addition, to monitor the application of the Guidelines;*
 - (iii) *OAU to monitor the realization of specific policy, administrative and*

legislative actions called for in respect of various critical areas of concern;

- (iv) *UNDP, as the Coordinator of UN Development Operational Activities, to monitor, at the national level, the implementation of the country programmes of the various UN agencies with regard to the Platform's critical areas of concern and the flow and optimum use of resources (both financial and technical);*
- (v) *UNIFEM to monitor the inclusion of the gender perspective in all programmes as well as the mainstreaming of women's concerns into programmes at various levels so as to effectively address the critical areas of concern;*
- (vi) *All other UN specialized Agencies should ensure the inclusion of activities called for in the Platform for Action, in their respective fields of competence, as well as ensure their monitoring and evaluation.*

III. THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

23. *The Guidelines are intended to be a companion to the African Platform for Action and serve to facilitate the process of transforming the provisions of the Platform into tangible results. The ultimate goal of the Guidelines is the achievement of all the objectives outlined in the section dealing with the Critical Areas of Concern. These objectives can be achieved if the activities called for are effectively implemented. The activities include, inter alia, studies, seminars, workshops, training, adoption/formulation of policies, strategies and legal reforms, implementation of decisions/recommendations and the development and implementation of programmes and projects. By following the guidelines, the critical areas of concern will be effectively addressed.*

24. *It must be clearly understood that, as much as possible, women-specific programming should be discouraged as this ultimately leads to a marginalization and compartmentalization of women's concerns and issues. Rather it is the formulation of programmes/projects that address the needs and concerns of both women and men and, in the case of women, aim to achieve the strategic objectives of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action, that should be encouraged and employed.*

25. *The success of this undertaking calls for concerted effort, commitment, and determination on the part of all actors and, in addition, a strong political will on the part of governments.*

IV. THE GUIDELINES

A. Objectives

26. *The objectives of these Guidelines are:*

- (a) *To assist/encourage Governments and their development partners to formulate policies and programmes that would ensure the integration of gender considerations into all activities emanating from these policies and programmes in response to the provisions of the African Platform for Action;*
- (b) *To provide rules to be followed in policy and programme formulation, resource allocation and appropriate institutional arrangements, that would ensure the effective implementation of the Platform or Action.*

27. *In light of the above objectives, the following areas are addressed by these guidelines, namely. **Policy, Programmes, Structures and Resource Mobilization.***

B. Policy

28. *The guidelines addressing policy issues are meant to provide governments and their development with approaches they should adopt (including legislative and administrative action) in addressing the critical areas of concern while implementing the Platform for Action. They are listed below:*

- (a) *African Governments should replace pronouncements on improving the status of women by the **articulation of national policies on women**, (with health, education, employment, welfare and related social sectors as indispensable integral components), within the framework of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and the African Platform for Action; administrative and legislative measures (including special programmes) must be adopted for implementing these policies;*
- (b) *Policies must be reviewed and plans established to increase the proportion of women involved as decision-makers, planners, managers, scientists and technical advisers in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development including all programmes to be formulated for the implementation of the Platform;*
- (c) *In making policy decisions on Economic Recovery Programmes, in particular the withdrawal of subsidies, an analysis of the impact of such decisions on*

women who constitute the major vulnerable group is necessary, to facilitate developing alternate approaches such as credit schemes, rural development programmes and other job creation opportunities;

- (d) *As women are generally among the poorest of the population and at the same time key actors in the development process, eliminating social, cultural, political and economic discrimination against women is a prerequisite for, inter alia, eradicating poverty, promoting sustained economic growth, and achieving a balance between population and available resources;*
- (e) *Appropriate measures, including the development of appropriate training programmes, should be adopted to improve women's ability to earn income beyond traditional occupations, to achieve economic self-reliance and ensure their equal access to the labour market and social security systems;*
- (f) *Rural women's access to resources could be improved through alternative policy instruments that ensure more equitable gender-based distribution of land, labour, technology, social services and infrastructure e.g. law reforms, appropriate legislature etc;*
- (g) *Socio-economic development policies should give consideration to increasing the earning power of all adult members of economically deprived families, including the elderly, and women who work in the home, and to enabling children to be educated rather than to work;*
- (h) *Enhancement of women's productive capacity is to be achieved through better access to productive resources by the removal of barriers that restrict women's access to economic resources including landholding and credit;*
- (i) *Governments should at all levels ensure, through the execution of legislative and administrative measures, that women can buy, hold and sell property and land equally with men, obtain credit and negotiate contracts in their own name and on their own behalf and exercise their legal rights to inheritance;*
- (j) *Bi-lateral and multi-lateral partners must ensure, by including into their conditions for development assistance, express demands that portions of development assistance is used for the empowerment of women for the specific purposes identified in the platform viz: poverty alleviation and economic empowerment through:*
 - (i) *employment generation programmes;*

- (ii) *credit schemes for the poor, for women and self-employed, rural employment generation programmes;*
 - (iii) *non-farm employment in the women-dominated programmes for education, nutrition and health;*
- (k) *Financial institutions should endeavour to create new procedures for reaching rural beneficiaries and for promoting community groups that will provide a local structure for improving rural women's access to information, training and guarantees, so that credit can be readily available to them.*

C. Programmes

29. *Because almost all development assistance and development activities are provided in the form of programmes, the involvement of women in programme activities both as participants and as beneficiaries is important. The actions called for in the Platform for Action, though meant to address the needs and concerns of women will affect all communities. However, it is to make these programmes particularly responsive to the needs and concerns of women, that these guidelines have been formulated. Below are the points to be considered in respect of programmes:*

(a) *A multi-sectoral approach should be adopted in the development and formulation of programmes/projects. This recognises the expertise and mandates of various implementing partners and by pooling together the available resources for the accomplishment of a common goal, it enables these partners to address women's concerns from different but complementary perspectives. The development of integrated programmes/projects which will address more than one critical area of concern will thus involve the collaboration of various specialised and development agencies, government ministries, institutions and NGOs. Because women's issues cut across the board, such programmes will benefit not only women but the community at large. Implementation activities should therefore include men, women and the youth;*

(b) *The design of development interventions should take account of the demands on women's time from responsibilities of childbearing, food provision, housework and income-generating activities (to include revolving loan funds, training in functional literacy and numeracy, the provision of day care centres, health clinics, labour-saving devices);*

(c) *As beneficiaries, women's priorities and concerns should be taken into consideration in the design of programmes and in the adoption of policies and*

measures in ways that ensure equality and equity, e.g. introduction of programmes that will guarantee equal opportunity between the sexes in education, employment, housing and business;

(d) Specific procedures and indicators should be devised for gender-based analysis of development projects and for assessing the impact of those projects on women's social, economic and health status and access to resources (establish in-built monitoring and self-evaluation by participants/beneficiaries and encourage them to develop their own indicators);

(e) Initiatives essential for raising the productive capacities of both men and women should be launched paying special attention to rural women from disadvantaged households, female-headed households, young rural women, disabled women and migrant and displaced women;

(f) The objectives of development programmes should include meeting the needs and aspirations of youth, particularly in the areas of formal and non-formal education, training, employment, housing, health, thereby ensuring their integration and participation in all spheres of the development process and preparation for leadership roles (projects should have youth-specific components);

(g) All efforts should be made to involve youth in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development activities that have direct impact on their daily lives particularly with respect to information, education and communication activities;

(h) Regional structures (ADB, ECA, OAU) together should provide guidelines and economic indicators to be utilized for development of programmes/projects aimed at mainstreaming women;

(i) Extension services should be made more effective by including gender-sensitization in the curriculum of extension workers, increasing the number of women extension workers and the training of local women as extension workers;

(j) Development partners should ensure that programmes/projects they support should be within the context of the Platform for Action and that programme monitoring systems maintain gender-and income-specific data on targets and achievements;

(k) The social dimension should be incorporated into the design and implementation of all economic reform programmes;

(l) Health-related programmes should be developed to ensure equitable access by integrating the various facets of Primary Health Care, by making use of community-based services, social marketing and cost-effective recovery schemes;

(m) *Financial institutions should endeavour to create procedures for reaching rural beneficiaries and for promoting community groups that will provide local structures for improving rural women's access to information, training, guarantees, so that credit can be readily available to them;*

(n) *Training programmes in statistics, data collection and analysis should be designed at the national and regional levels, with enhanced technical and financial support through international cooperation and greater national resources;*

(o) *Grassroots and Community-based activist women groups should be expanded and strengthened and be made the focus of national campaigns to foster women's awareness of the full range of their legal rights including rights within the family;*

(p) *Gender-sensitive planning and evaluation should be applied to all public spending including identification of the amounts directed to benefit women, and their impact;*

(q) *For effective interventions into programmes and for ensuring effective gender-responsive/sensitive programming and planning, baseline studies are an indispensable tool. Data from these studies, (to be disaggregated) should give information about the situation in a given place, including existing capabilities, so that support is given in such a way as to encourage and develop these capabilities as a basis on which self-reliant development will occur;*

(r) *Disaggregated data, particularly in the social and economic areas could indicate the magnitude of women's contribution to the national economy and quantify their activities and thus justify the recognition of women in the mainstream of development as well as enhance national planning and the distribution of the proceeds of economic development;*

(s) *In order to ensure continuity in the advocacy of women's cause, programmes should be organized to involve, encourage and expose young people, especially at the national level; specific programmes should also be designed for youth about gender issues and create awareness among them to encourage and develop self confidence and to benefit from exposure;*

(t) *Schools of Journalism and Communications should introduce into existing syllabi a particular accent on gender issues and sharpen the analytical skills of their students analysing social data in a manner which highlights women's contribution to development in relation to the critical areas of concern as described in the Platform for Action;*

(u) *Information and documentation centres should be established at the national*

level to serve as a pool of information on women's concerns and national associations should be encouraged to develop them into resource centres containing print materials, audio-visuals, films, video, TV etc. for wide publicity of the Platform for Action and its implementation.

D. Institutional Arrangements

30. For the implementation of the Platform it is proposed that a starting point should be the effective use and strengthening of existing institutional arrangements in support of programmes for the advancement of women. In most African countries national machineries for the advancement of women have been set up to promote the integration of women's needs and concerns into government policies and programmes, to mobilize grassroots support and to provide information at the national and international levels. While in some countries national machinery is a significant factor in promoting the advancement of women, most of them lack a strong technical capacity or are precariously placed in the government structure (often based on temporary and contingent funding), they frequently lack resources for staff and equipment; they are often not considered essential to the operation of the public sector, especially when there is an emphasis on incorporating women's issues into the mainstream of development.

31. While the Platform for Action has indicated how institutional arrangements can facilitate implementation, the guidelines are intended to emphasize the need for such institutional arrangements, and what should be done to make them more effective in enhancing the implementation process.

32. The institutions identified, what they are and how they can be used to facilitate the implementation process are discussed below.

(a) National Machineries

33. National Machineries are structures established primarily for the integration of women's concerns into government policies and programmes. Several of these machineries were established after the first World Conference on Women and during the ensuing years. The effectiveness of these machineries depends on strong political will for the advancement of women; such political will should lead to giving the machinery an institutional location which will allow it to have a direct effect on government policy, have access to information and reach out to grassroots organizations and the main implementing organizations for programmes that affect women. For various reasons most of these machineries did not prove to be effective.

34. For a well coordinated and smooth implementation of the platform provisions, in

addition to the national machinery, it will be necessary to establish Focal Points (WID UNITS) within ministries; in this case, those ministries within which critical areas of concern are identified in the Platform, namely: Agriculture, Education, Culture and Social Affairs, Health, Environment, Defence, Foreign Affairs, Economic Planning and Development, Justice, Information as well as the national Bureau of Statistics and major national Financial Institutions.

The following factors are important regarding national machineries:

- (i) Both national machineries and WID Units or Focal Points need strengthening through training, and the provision of technical, material, financial and human resources. Networks of focal points are also important and national machineries can assist in developing these networks and provide for a regular exchange of information between them.*
- (ii) Ensuring regular funding is an important factor as without established posts and assured operating budget the national machinery may be temporary and its activities ad hoc; it may also not be able to survive a change of government.*
- (iii) Because technically trained staff are indispensable for the effective functioning of a national machinery, its prestige within the government structure can be a deciding factor in attracting good candidates.*
- (iv) To be functional, national machineries must have clearly spelt out mandates which must be institutionalised.*
- (v) For effective implementation of the provisions of the Platform by National Machineries, their capacities need to be strengthened, particularly in the following areas: management; policy; strategic planning; staff training particularly in gender awareness and gender analysis; data collection and research; legislation; project preparation, implementation monitoring, and evaluation; coalition building and advocacy on behalf of women.*
- (vi) National Machineries should undertake, in collaboration with relevant NGOs and Women's Organizations, to explain the contents of the Platform to Policy-/ Decision-makers, Planners, Community and Religious Leaders, Grassroots Organizations, Rural Communities, Media People etc. using the most appropriate tools including local languages and other traditional media where necessary/possible.*
- (vii) The implementation of the platform's provisions by national machineries must of necessity be in conjunction with non-governmental organisations; decentralising the management of outreach programmes to national and community non-governmental organizations is one technique for improving implementation.*

(viii) *National Governments can use core allocations of the indicative planning figures (IPF) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to obtain resources to strengthen national machineries. National machineries at the coordinating level should devise mechanisms for self-evaluation of their activities and report on successful activities which could be replicated in all parts of the country and revise other activities where obstacles for their implementation are identified.*

(b) Sub-regional level structures

35. *The African region has a number of sub-regional structures which are well placed to implement the Platform . There are the Economic Structures - the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADCC), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC), the West African*

Monetary Union (UMOA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). All of these structures must have focal points or WID units if they do not already have them and every effort should be made to strengthen these units or focal points on women and gender issues as well as skills training for mainstreaming of women's concerns into their economic development programmes. They must be involved in the sub-regional activities called for in the implementation of the platform and must work closely with the national machineries in their sub-regions.

36. *The Economic Commission for Africa has five Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCS) and since 1982 Sub-Regional Committees for the integration of women in Development were established . One of the functions of these committees is "to act as a clearing house for information with a view to promoting coordination and mutual support among programmes designed to promote the advancement of women at various levels and for the sharing of relevant experiences among the countries of the region". A major problem with these committees at the moment is the lack of WID/GAD experts. The Committees need to be strengthened at the same level as other machineries for the advancement of women to enable them to carry out the functions for which they were established. Because of the importance and urgency attached to the implementation of the Platform, priority should be given to the strengthening of these Committees of the MULPOCS.*

(c) Regional Structures

37. *The three main regional organizations on the continent are the African Development Bank (ADB) , the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) all of which have units on women namely, the ADB*

Women's Unit, the UNECA's African Centre for Women (ACW) and the OAU Women's Unit, respectively. In addition to the general need for strengthening these units for enabling them to play an effective role in the implementation of the Platform each unit, through its parent organization needs to play a specific role in the implementation process as indicated below:

(i) The ADB should enhance women's access to productive factors including training and markets and in particular, credit; in this respect the ADB should make efforts to promote women's economic advancement and support the establishment of the Regional Bank for Women.

(ii) The OAU, within the context of the African Economic Community, should make every effort to enforce the implementation of the special protocol on women, and to involve women and encourage their full participation in all aspects of the economic activities outlined in the Treaty.

*(iii) The OAU should give serious consideration to the visibility of women in its **Central Organ** dealing with Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management.*

(iv) The OAU should, through its various ministerial conferences, ensure that policy, legislative and administrative recommendations in the Platform are implemented by establishing a mechanism for reporting by member states on the implementation of these recommendations.

(v) The UNECA/ACW, in collaboration with other divisions of the ECA, should identify and develop, with interested partners, joint projects addressing the various critical areas of concern; such projects should then be implemented in collaboration with national governments and relevant international agencies and NGOs.

(vi) The UNECA/ACW should assist National Machineries and NGOs and encourage the establishment of networks among various sub-regional organizations and national machineries for the exchange of information, experience and ideas.

(vii) The UNECA/ACW should assist National machineries and the MULPOCS in their implementing activities through the provision of a Regional Adviser specifically appointed for that purpose.

(viii) The ACW should work very closely with regional and sub-regional institutions in the implementation of the Platform.

(d) Regional and Sub-regional Institutions

38. *Regional and sub-regional institutions such as the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the Institute for Development and Economic Planning (IDEP), and the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI), among others, are concerned with research and training. Many of them have included women's issues among their training and research activities.*

39. *The services of these institutions should be sought and utilized, as appropriate, by the various implementors and results particularly of research should be disseminated as widely as possible.*

40. *At the national level, similar institutions do exist in most countries and much use should be made of their services by, especially, national machineries.*

(e) United Nations

41. *At the level of programmes for the advancement of women several specific United Nations organizations and agencies are mandated by the United Nations General Assembly (resolution 3520 [xxx]) to focus largely on gender issues and, since the 1970s, all United Nations Organizations are required to include a strong gender component in all their programmes. Most of them work with national machineries and women's groups and associations. During the implementation of the Platform, each of these organizations is expected to assist in its field of competence and governments are advised to make use of the services of these organizations.*

(f) Specialised bodies and agencies of the United Nations

42. *These bodies/agencies have provided support to women's units in ministries through their work with sectoral ministries.*

43. *However, due to the absence in many countries of direction on women's issues in respect of priorities and strategies, there has existed duplication of efforts, overlaps in projects, and dissipation of much needed resources while programmes of assistance to women have often been uncoordinated and thinly spread. There is therefore a need for exchange of information among development assistance organizations on their activities on behalf of women. Governments must also set up coordinating mechanisms preferably within existing machineries for women for all development assistance; this will make them more focused and enhance their impact on the implementation process.*

(g) International non-Governmental Organizations

44. Numerous international NGOS deal largely and, in some cases, exclusively with women's issues. Most of them have strong regional, national and local emphasis and their activities are carried out at these levels; they are action-oriented at the local level and at the regional they are focused on the exchange of experience and information. Altogether they cover a wide variety of activities focusing on women's rights, education, environment, women's role in decision-making and income generation. Their micro-level work often helps to determine which experimental approaches are most useful.

45. Other international NGOs are active in developing materials such as visual aids, speakers, brochures, manuals and in arranging regional and international discussions of themes. They usually cooperate with national machineries or through local affiliates. The involvement of NGOs in the various programme/project implementation cannot be overemphasised;

(h) National NGOs and Women's Professional Organizations

46. These NGOs/Organizations are also involved in working with women in all fields of development and their activities are similar to those of international NGOs though many work at the local level and in rural areas. Many of them are used in implementation of projects as they are familiar and deal with grassroots groups, and associations.

47. The involvement of NGOs in all phases of the implementation of the Platform is very important. It is however important that their activities have to be coordinated at every stage.

E. Resource implications and Mobilization

48. While the Platform has indicated the need for resources and the responsibility of various partners in mobilizing these resources, it is pertinent to state that a major responsibility for mobilizing these resources lies with Africa and its governments, peoples and institutions. In this respect the following points need to be borne in mind:

(a) A very important approach to resource mobilization will be the development of realistic, implementable and sustainable programmes that would attract and encourage various partners to make the necessary inputs of financial, material technical and human resources.

(b) At the national level, Governments have to make appropriate and realistic plans of action based on realistic prioritization of activities in line with the strategic objectives of the African Platform for Action . Adequate resources will have to be

mobilized for the implementation of these activities at various levels.

(c) Government Machineries and departments, Women's Organisations and Associations as well as other national NGOs should organise fund-raising and other activities that will attract the interest and input of the population as a whole as well as that of development partners.

49. With the implementation of the Platform in mind, multi-lateral and bi-lateral partners should include in their programmes of assistance and development budgets, provisions for inputs into national programmes and projects addressing the various critical areas of concern within their areas of competence and interest.