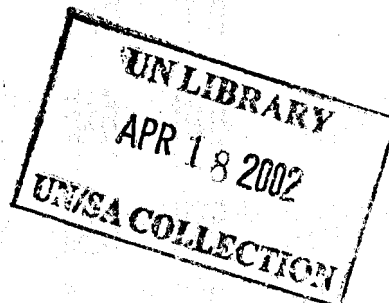**UNITED NATIONS**

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Sixth African Regional Conference on Women
on the Mid-Term Review of Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action

22- 26 November 1999
Addis-Ababa

SYNTHESIS OF THE NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORTS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DAKAR AND BEIJING PLATFORMS FOR ACTION

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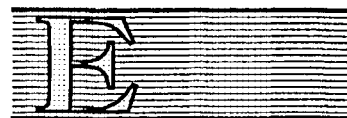
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SYNTHESIS OF NATIONAL REPORTS
Sixth African Regional Conference
For Women

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The Sixth African Regional Conference on Women to review progress made in the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action (PFA) was held from 22 to 26 November 1999. African States carried out an assessment of the efforts made in implementing the Platforms for Action and also seized the opportunity to adopt a common African strategy for the next five years.

The Sixth Regional Conference was part and parcel of a process that was launched by the United Nations (UN) in the 1970s with a view to improving the wellbeing of women around the world. To date the UN has organized four world conferences on women. The first one was held in Mexico in 1975, the second in Copenhagen in 1980, the third in Nairobi in 1985 and finally the Beijing Conference in 1995. The first three conferences culminated in adoption of "The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies (NFLS) for the Advancement of Women", while the Beijing Conference evaluated implementation of the NFLS.

The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) identified twelve (12) critical areas of concern to be addressed.

- Women and poverty,
- Education and training of women and girls,
- Women and health,
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflicts
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl-child

Regional perspective

At the continental level, each of the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations was given the mandate to put in place mechanisms that would link the commitments taken at the international level with national policies and programmes for the advancement of women. It is within this context that the Regional Commissions periodically organize regional meetings on women. In Africa, the regional conferences of Nouakchott (1977), Lusaka (1979), Arusha (1984) Abuja (1989), Dakar (1994) were organized under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The latter conference led to adoption of the Dakar Platform for Action within the framework of the preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, China, September 1995). ECA, through the African Centre for Women (ACW) is the Secretariat of these statutory conferences.

The Dakar Platform for Action identified eleven critical areas of concern for women. While similar for the most part to the Beijing Platform, the Dakar PFA did not include the reinforcement of institutional mechanisms among its priorities. It also considered the fight against poverty as going hand in hand with the economic empowerment of women (these are treated as two separate areas in the Beijing PFA). The Dakar PFA, however, introduced the issue of family, socialization and culture as constituting a specific priority area.

Preparatory process of the National Progress Reports for implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action

In their recommendations for implementation of the two PFA, African States noted that Governments have primary responsibility for implementing the strategies stated in the Platforms. In this context, they decided that each State should formulate and implement a National Plan of Action for the advancement of women in the priority areas of concern stipulated in the Platforms.

ACW was mandated to follow up and provide technical support to member States in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of their national plans of action and progress reports. To this end, ACW organized four post-Beijing subregional meetings in order to propose orientations, indicators, and monitoring and evaluation modalities for progress achieved in the implementation of their national plans of action on the one hand, and to review the constraints that hinder implementation, on the other. During these subregional meetings, the major points of discussions raised, included:

- The post - Beijing national environment;
- The formulation, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation of National Plans of Action with reference to the ECA/ACW guidelines for implementation of the Dakar Platform for Action;
- Suggested outline for a National Plan of Action;
- Guidelines for the preparation of national reports on the progress achieved in implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action ;
- Different preparatory steps towards the Sixth African Regional Conference for the mid-term review of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms.

By the conclusion of the subregional meetings, practically all member States were sensitized on their responsibilities in the process of evaluating implementation of the PFA at the national level. The first step involved preparing and sending national reports to the ACW and to the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW).

National reports

The national reports constituted an account of progress achieved five years later by each country, in implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. They covered the following points:

- Reiteration of the priority areas and objectives selected by each country for its national Plan of Action;

- Progress made in the implementation of the National Plans of Action;
- Impact with regard to the situation of women;
- Difficulties encountered;
- Strategic actions to be undertaken at national, regional and international levels to achieve the objectives stated in the Platforms for Action.

At the time of the drafting of this report, 43 out of the 53 national reports expected had been received. Comoros could not prepare a national report due to the prevailing political situation; another country was unable to mobilize sufficient resources in time to prepare the national report; and eight countries did not respond positively to the follow-up letters.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWELVE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

A. The national context

On the whole, most countries demonstrated political will and commitment to creating an environment conducive to addressing gender issues and enhancing the status of women. Some countries undertook legal reforms, thus amending their constitutions and basic laws to underscore gender equality. Laws (e.g. family, penal code, land ownership, etc.) were amended to integrate women fully in public and private life. Other countries either reinforced the existing institutional mechanisms (ministries, departments, offices, focal points, commissions, committees, and councils) or established new ones to promote the advancement of women.

Each of these structures was given a special mandate. Ministries and departments were charged with the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, plans, programmes and projects over the national territory. It was in this context that in some cases, intersectoral commissions headed by ministries were given the responsibility for preparing the national reports. The commissions, committees and councils in charge of the advancement of women were placed under various ministries. In Botswana for instance, they were placed under the Ministry of Labour; in Uganda, under the Ministry of Social Development, under the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community services (MOGYCS) in Malawi, and in Zambia, under the Presidency.

It must be noted that gender equality is a crosscutting issue. Resolution of related problems therefore requires involvement of several sectors such as Education, Health, Labour, Economy, Justice and so on. This approach has been adopted in several countries. A National Consultative Organ for the promotion of the advancement of women involving all structures working on women matters has been established in Central African Republic, and a National Ad Hoc Committee in charge of the follow up of the implementation of decisions dealing with gender equality has been established in Kenya. Ghana established a working framework through the National Machinery on Women and Development (NCWD) at the level of the Presidency with branches in ministries, departments, agencies and NGOs. Malawi has formed a national gender advisory committee comprising all principal secretaries and multisectoral gender-training team in the MOGYCS. South Africa has elaborate gender machinery that spans the Legislature, with the Committee on the Status of Women at the level of the Presidency, and Government Departments with Gender Focal Points. Outside the government, gender machinery includes a statutory body, the Commission on Gender Equality and organs of civil society such as women organizations, churches and unions. In addition, for the follow up of the post-Beijing conference, almost all governments established National Committees or Commissions.

In drafting their national reports, Governments were expected to collaborate with national NGOs, civil society organizations and development partners. NGOs dealing with women's issues began to multiply after the Nairobi Conference and there are thousands of them in Africa today. Apart from carrying out programmes at local, national and regional level in various

sectors, NGOs promote gender equality and raise public awareness on women's rights, through sensitization, dissemination of information, and training.

In the post-Beijing period, some countries suffered from serious political crises, social upheavals, wars, climatic disasters and other negative developments, all of which created major impediments in the implementation of the two PFA. Among these countries are Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya Rwanda, Tanzania and During these periods, however, some women fought for peace, evidenced for instance in the initiatives and dynamism of women's associations in Central African Republic. It must also be pointed out that, in spite of these difficult conditions, each country endeavored to formulate and implement national plans of action and other programmes for women.

B. The regional and international context

In the last 20 years, to reinforce economic integration at the continental level, African States have set up a number of subregional intergovernmental organizations. These include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Monetary Union of West Africa (EMUWA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) and the East African Community (EAC).

ECOWAS, ECCAS and SADC have established networks or specialized services to promote the advancement women. These include the West Africa Women Association (WAWA), Central Africa Women Economic Network (CAWEN), and a Gender Unit in SADC. Additionally, the SADC Heads of State signed a Declaration during their September 1997 summit, expressing their determination to "spearhead the implementation of the Declaration and ensure the eradication of all gender inequalities in the region". The other subregional inter-governmental organizations tend to leave the issues related to the advancement of women to the structures under national sovereignty.

On its part, ECA endeavours to sensitize its member States on their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the PFA, through the policies and programmes of their national, regional or subregional institutions. On the occasion of its fortieth anniversary, ECA organized an international conference during which the question of globalization was a major point of discussion. It was observed that the mobility of capital as foreign direct investment has been fostering new trends in the international division of labour, where labour-intensive manufacturing has been relocating to developing countries. Typically, countries with a high incidence of absolute poverty seem to attract this mobile production as low-wage locations. Where globalization matches the productive capacity of the poor and underemployed, improved livelihoods and a significant reduction in absolute poverty have resulted. For example, in Morocco, the incidence of poverty fell by half from 26 to 13 per cent of the population in five years - after trade was liberalized in the mid-1980s.

A central concern from the effect of globalization, however, is that some regions and countries have missed out on the benefits of integration. African countries are particularly

marginalized, connected as they are to the global economy, largely through capital flight, debt service payments and inadequate assistance from official sources. Successful participation in globalization is contingent upon a region's technological capacity, particularly in information and communication. Regions that lack these capabilities will be excluded from globalized manufacturing and may experience an outflow of production platforms, with a corresponding negative effect on the local labour market. Similarly, the introduction of new technologies and land uses may result in the marginalization of less-skilled workers, including much of the female workforce, from industrial production.

REPORT BY CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

1. WOMEN AND POVERTY

Introduction: **Forty-six out of the 48 countries selected this critical area as a priority.** Poverty is a particularly pressing burden for women who live in rural areas and for female-headed households. Their poverty is manifested by lack of a cash income, hunger, malnutrition, ill health and unsafe living environments. Women face discrimination and unequal access in the areas of housing, education and other basic services. They lack adequate access to and control of productive resources for sustainable livelihoods and are largely excluded from participating in related decision-making processes. They also lack essential skills for employment in the formal sector and are primarily employed in the informal sector. In the process of strategizing for implementation of the PFA on poverty, countries have identified key national gender issues and sectors with a view to engendering sectoral policies, programmes and projects.

Objectives:

1. Address women's needs concerning poverty;
2. Ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources;
3. Ensure access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions; and
4. Address the feminization of poverty by fact-finding studies.

Implementation and achievements: Countries have formulated new gender-responsive policies, reviewed legislation and reorganized administrative structures in order to create a conducive environment for implementation of the PFA. In the area of legal reforms, countries enacted new laws and revised the penal, civil codes and constitutions to ensure women's access to equal rights and economic resources. Eritrea, for example, has promulgated new laws and policies to allow women the right to own land and to receive equal pay for equal work. In countries where such provisions do exist but have been taken for granted, awareness campaigns were mounted to promote the advancement of women in the economic arena. Other countries revised their constitutions and laws to make them gender-responsive (Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda, and Senegal, among others). Ethiopia issued the 1995 Ethiopia Rural Land Administration Proclamation to guarantee equality of access to land for economic enterprises and later the 1996 Proclamation to provide for licensing and supervision of small-scale and micro-financing institutions in rural and urban areas.

Some governments have solicited women's contribution to review, modify and/or formulate macroeconomic and social policies. Ethiopia's National Women's Policy of 1993 has provisions to guarantee women equal rights in economic activities. Kenya is ready to present the National Policy on Gender and Development to the Cabinet for approval. In Eritrea, policies were formulated to shift agricultural investment towards private production in commercial and non-

commercial enterprises, assuring women of equal opportunities to participate in all sectors of the economy. Cameroon published a national declaration against poverty in 1998.

Based on the recent appreciation of the economic hazards perpetrated by Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that affect women directly, some countries such as Sudan, Malawi and Madagascar have reacted by developing plans, frameworks and programmes for poverty alleviation. Kenya recently developed the National Poverty Alleviation Plan (1999-2015) and proposes to reduce poverty by 30 per cent or more by the year 2010. Lesotho developed a Poverty Action Plan that led to the National Poverty Programme. Lesotho has created the Lesotho Fund for Community Development, a 'social fund' benefiting from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project royalties. Mali's Plan covers the 1998-2002 period. Burundi, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Liberia, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and others have specifically incorporated a "Social Dimensions of Development Programme" to cushion the adverse effects of SAPs on vulnerable groups. Eritrea and Malawi have lifted price controls, simplified licensing procedures and introduced tax regimes to encourage trade and investment. Libya provides subsidized goods and allowances for the poor.

As the traditional managers of food production, food security and nutrition, women are encouraged to increase agricultural production, ensure food security and nutrition and raise household incomes. Through its Agricultural Sector Modernization Plan for 1995 – 2003, Uganda has organized for increased access to markets at farm gate prices. Senegal's Eleventh Plan of Orientation to Economic and Social Development for 1996-2001 aims to combat poverty to empower women economically and to lighten domestic tasks. Targeting rural women and female-headed households, the plan focuses on land use and agricultural growth as the main vehicles for poverty eradication. Some programmes are community based, as in Gambia, and are designed to reach women at the grassroots level while enhancing awareness, encouraging participation and empowering communities to alleviate poverty. To facilitate economic productivity in order to achieve higher incomes, labour-saving devices have been introduced to women in Uganda and Malawi, to reduce their workloads and drudgery. Some countries focus on agricultural and environment-related programmes (Burundi, Congo Gambia, Malawi, Namibia, Senegal and Zimbabwe.

Countries have also established institutions, many of them multisectoral, to focus on poverty alleviation through gender mainstreaming in policies, plans, programmes and projects and to coordinate and monitor the advancement of gender equality. The Units of Gender Issues in Kenya and the Gender Department in Malawi promote gender mainstreaming in policy formulation and collection of disaggregated data to portray the economic status of women. In Swaziland, the Gender Task Force, formed under the auspices of the Economic and Social Reform Agenda, identified the national critical areas and designed the implementation programmes. In addition, countries have established commissions, committees, units and designated focal points in sectoral ministries and departments to coordinate the collaboration among stakeholders and to promote gender mainsteaming in all activities. In the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, governments have supported the creation of NGOs, groups, cooperatives and financial institutions.

In pursuing the economic empowerment of women, countries have acknowledged the need for study programmes to determine women's poverty profiles in order to facilitate gender-

responsive policy formulation and planning (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, C.A.R, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Morocco, Seychelles, Senegal, Sudan, Swaziland and others). Countries have established gender databases of disaggregated poverty data and developed gender-based methodologies for poverty eradication. The Zimbabwe Poverty Assessment Survey, the Sudanese Comprehensive National Strategy 1992-2002, and the Uganda Participatory Assessment Project and related projects are geared towards addressing the socioeconomic concerns of marginalized women. Countries have also supported information dissemination and guidance in marketing. Women's business centres in Burundi and Senegal and gender focal points in countries such as Burkina Faso, Chad, and Kenya play a vital role in managing information. Training in business management and functional literacy has been carried out in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Gambia, Malawi, and Rwanda, among others.

Many countries have facilitated women's involvement in income-generating activities, individually and through groups. One of the crucial needs raised repeatedly in the National Progress Reports was the lack of savings and access to credit. In developing the entrepreneurial capacity of women, countries re-assessed the existing financial institutions and their mechanisms. They set up revolving funds, credit guarantee funds and credit schemes to provide access to credit (Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, and Uganda. These programmes provide loans and relevant inputs, sometimes without collateral, to women's groups and individuals for financing income-earning activities. Examples include Swaziland's Public Enterprise Fund, Eritrea's Community Development Fund and the Debub Zone Credit and Saving Scheme in Uganda and Burundi.

Savings and credit societies also encourage women to participate in credits and savings. Zimbabwe established a women's bank, the Oma Capital Account Bank. Similarly, micro-credit schemes encourage women to access credit. The micro-credit scheme in Algeria targets women who cannot work away from home. The scheme encourages home-based activities that meet family and economic responsibilities. The Micro Finance Institute in Uganda trains women in business management skills and facilitates provision of grants. Uganda's revolving fund and credit schemes encourage women's groups to accumulate funds from which they offer informal loans to their members. Women are encouraged to form cooperatives and similar groups in Burundi, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda. Lesotho creates employment through the Labour Construction Unit for maintaining and upgrading roads, and raises indigenous entrepreneurial skills through the Basotho Enterprises Development Corporation.

Resources: Algeria allocated Dinar14 million to anti-poverty programmes addressing social problems and the consequences of unemployment. Chad allocated CFA50 million. Nigeria allocated N32 million in grants and N23 million specifically for income-generation projects. Malawi allocated Kwacha (MK) 360 from the government budget and grants and established a further MK35 million-credit guarantee fund for off-farm employment. The Mali Government allocated 800 million CFA for the credit project under the Ministry in charge of the promotion of women. Botswana provided small loans for income generation activities while Kenya successfully included a line item in the budget for poverty alleviation. Special funds were

established in other countries to jumpstart national economies or to directly sponsor women's programmes. Communities were also encouraged to raise their own funds.

Constraints and gaps: (a) Shortage of human, material and financial resources remains a great obstacle; (b) Women perform multiple roles and are therefore unable to attend training sessions or to concentrate sufficiently on activities that can improve their economic status; (c) National debt burdens; (d) War trauma; (e) Lack of cooperation among group members; (f) Inability to repay credit when income-earning projects fail; (g) Lack of markets; (h) Insecurity when handling money; and (i) Ignorance of regulations governing cross-border trading.

Recommendations:

1. Decentralization of the administrative machinery to sustain programmes and rigorous information dissemination;
2. Special training for the disabled;
3. More access to irrigated land;
4. Increased employment opportunities for women;
5. Improved access to savings and credit;
6. Training in functional literacy;
7. Resettlement of displaced persons;
8. More business centres; and
9. Full participation by women in the eradication and prevention of corruption, as a strategy for eradicating poverty.

Emerging issues:

1. African countries need to develop social security and social welfare services to ensure minimum standards of living, particularly for women, the elderly and the disabled. Physical security, food security and shelter must be guaranteed as basic human rights. Minimum standards for civilized living should take into account not just the cost of living but also the universally accepted basic human rights. In setting these standards, the tendency to settle for second best should be discouraged given the reality of rapid globalization in which the African continent has become part of a global village.

2. The HIV/AIDS menace continues to spread at very high rates in the region. HIV/AIDS does not affect only certain categories of people, but threatens economies, populations and the survival of entire nations. Higher rates of infection are being reported among women, who are the custodians of survival for communities and races.

3. Poverty is closely related to issues of corruption. People may be tempted to promote corruption as a means of solving problems arising from their state of poverty.

4. While many countries are trying to eradicate harmful cultural practices and beliefs, it is important also to study and promote positive cultural values and practices that promote the advancement of women. This may serve to reduce resistance to change.

5. For survival and advancement of individuals and communities, countries should aggressively promote self-determination, self-help, self-pride and self-control;

6. The individual woman might wish to obtain access and control of resources at the local level. However, information about resources at the national, subregional and regional levels should also be disseminated and access and control at those levels ensured as well.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Introduction: Forty-three out of 48 reporting countries selected education and training as a priority area of focus. In presenting their current concerns, most of the reporting countries were quick to point out that their national constitutions proclaimed the right of all citizens to education. In spite of this, high rates of illiteracy persist in most countries with even higher rates for women. In Burkina Faso, 82% of the entire population is illiterate. Among women, the percentage is as high as 91.7%. Some 33.4% of Algerian women are illiterate, 29% in Uganda and 69% in Malawi. Adult literacy programmes have attempted to correct the situation, but they are not sufficient nor are they evenly distributed.

At the Beijing Conference in 1995, gender disparities in overall school enrolment were a source of great concern and the situation has not improved significantly today. In Ethiopia, only 18.2% of girls are enrolled at the primary school level and the percentage among the nomadic people is only 8%. Other enrolment figures for girls are 60% in Malawi, 50% in Madagascar, 17.6% in Angola, 49.3% in Kenya and 63.63% in Togo (this is in contrast to 79.76% for boys). In Mozambique, the enrolment rate for girls at primary level is 44% of the total enrolled population, 28% at the secondary level and 25% at the tertiary level (1995 figures). Tunisia, on the other hand, has attained the rate of 99% for both boys and girls. On the whole, however, disparities increase at the higher levels of education.

A related factor is the performance of girls in school. In general, girls do not do well. They are also poorly represented in the areas of science and technology. Dropout rates are yet another cause for concern. This often reflects the economic capacity of parents who give preference to boys' formal education over that of girls. In addition, the dropout rate is affected by socio-cultural constraints such as early marriage and early pregnancy. There is also need to adjust school curricula to make them more meaningful to the lives of students. Similarly, the need to revise the curricula to portray women and girls more positively has been raised repeatedly.

Other problems include insufficiency of schools and teachers and inadequacy of the school infrastructure including such basic provisions as toilets for both boys and girls. The long distances that children have to walk to school and the high cost of education with the introduction of cost sharing in countries undergoing SAPs were raised as well.

Objectives:

1. To ensure access to education by both boys and girls, maintain full retention and promote non-discriminatory education and training;
2. Promote girls' educational performance and achievement;
3. Eradicate illiteracy among women;

4. Remove gender biases in curricula and educational processes including school texts and other learning materials;

5. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education;

6. Allocate enough resources for monitoring the implementation of educational reforms;

7. Promote life-long education and training for girls and women in order to broaden their horizons.

Implementation and achievements: Although most countries reported that their national constitutions guarantee equal access to education irrespective of sex, religion or ethnicity, they acknowledged the need to take additional policy measures to ensure that the gender disparities observed above are rectified. *Universal access* to primary education was declared in Algeria, Burundi, Congo, Ghana, Seychelles, Tunisia and Uganda. Some Governments have guaranteed universal access by assuming the cost of education while others (e.g. Cameroon) have provided assistance to abandoned children or those families that are unable to send their children to school.

Some countries established special interdepartmental or homogeneous national committees to monitor girls' *performance* and ensure gender equity. Their tasks include facilitating access to education and other related services, e.g. distribution of free school materials and awarding prizes for good performance. Others established national commissions on basic education to coordinate and promote education activities.

A number of *programmes* have been instituted by States to ameliorate the status of education and training for girls. Some countries built *additional schools* (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Senegal) while others introduced a shift system whereby students attend school throughout the day in rotation. In an attempt to ensure that girls enjoy their right to education, a number of countries also developed special programmes to increase school enrolment for girls. The FAWE Rwanda Chapter, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has established one school of excellence for girls. Five similar schools are also planned. Free primary education in Malawi increased enrolment from 1.9 to 3.2, 60% of who were girls. Malawi also set up the Basic Literacy and Education Social Mobilization campaign to change community attitudes to girls' education. Ethiopia aims to increase the rate of girls' enrolment from 30 to 50%. Enrolment of girls in Mali increased considerably between 1996 and 1997. Algeria, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sudan among others have similar programmes of increasing enrolment.

Distance and physical isolation have also contributed to low school enrolment, especially for girls. Some countries have addressed this problem by establishing community mobile schools, particularly in pastoralist areas. Establishment of school canteens or feeding programmes has solved the problem of multiple trips home for meals. It also ensures that all children are guaranteed at least one balanced meal a day. Other countries, such as Algeria, provide school buses for children who live a long distance away. Other alternatives are boarding facilities and girls' hostels to provide girls with an environment that allows them to concentrate on their studies. Yet another strategy for increasing access to education is the use of *distance learning* whereby adult learners in particular can carry out their studies at home without interrupting their

family life and related commitments. It is a particularly useful alternative for mothers of young children as long as they can spare time to concentrate on their studies.

Another strategy that has been used to encourage girls' education is provision of *bursaries* to the intellectually gifted yet economically disadvantaged. The bursaries are provided by the government and/or the NGOs. In some countries, such as Nigeria, special scholarships are awarded to girls in science and technology. Other countries, such as Algeria and Madagascar, provide textbooks and other school materials to economically disadvantaged students. Malawi provides free tuition to girls in government-aided secondary schools. Teenage mothers are being readmitted in schools in Kenya. Other countries, such as Botswana, have programmes to allow expecting mothers to remain in school as long as they can.

The *instructional language* is sometimes a barrier to education of both girls and boys. To combat this problem, some countries encourage the use of local languages. In Eritrea, for instance, the mother tongue is the language of instruction in the rural areas for the first five years of school.

In order to remove the gender biases in *textbooks and other school materials*, awareness programmes have been set up for policymakers, teachers and women in several countries, including Zimbabwe. Workshops for curriculum developers, career guidance teachers, school directors, and teacher trainers have been organized in many countries for the same purpose. Specific manuals to guide teachers and other trainers in gender-sensitive teaching have been developed in a number of countries. Some countries, for example Angola, have revised their entire curricula to make them more gender responsive. The involvement of both women and men in the running of schools and developing the curricula has been encouraged. Increasing the number of female teachers is also being pursued so that they can serve as role models to girls in school.

The most popular strategy for eradicating *illiteracy* among women was through adult education. Illiteracy is one of the major problems experienced by women in Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi Namibia, Senegal and Sudan. Several countries established adult education centres that teach reading, writing and simple arithmetic as well as other functional skills to equip women for various activities such as income generation. In Malawi and Niger, 746 and 1890 adult literacy centres, respectively, were opened for this purpose. In some countries, computers are being used as a medium for literacy and dissemination of other information on health and population issues. On the whole, NGOs are highly involved in practical adult literacy for women.

Training and life-long education has taken different forms in various countries. In some, the focus has been on training adult literacy teachers. Malawi and Niger have trained 640 and 18,000 teachers, respectively. In Togo, 300 inspectors and education advisers were trained during the reporting period. Courses offered included leadership skills, career guidance and accounting skills. Centres for technical training in such skills as electronics, audio-visual technology, graphic arts and computer maintenance were also opened in a number of countries. The Central African Republic established centres of excellence for girls. Gender-responsive community centres were also created, where women and men meet for various types of training and information dissemination.

Other types of training provided to leaders of women's groups (Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Madagascar and Malawi) included management skills, population and family life issues, agriculture, health and environment, information-education-communication skills (IEC) on gender, and women's access to education issues.

In some cases, however, the *insecurities of war* have disrupted such activities especially in the rural areas, as is the case in Angola. The drop in the enrolment rate in adult literacy programmes that has reached 13.3% in total and 16.8% for women is a cause for concern in Kenya.

Resources allocated: Governments have the main responsibility for financing education. Finances are usually mobilized through taxation as well as from other internal and external resources. Special funds are often created for scholarships and bursaries as mentioned earlier. Algeria spends up to 25% of its national budget on education; Namibia spends up to 28 %. Chad allocated CFA3 billion during the reporting period for education and training. Malawi has spent MK235, 000 for engendering the school curriculum while Cameroon has budgeted CFA113 billion for 1999/2000.

National budgets are nonetheless almost always inadequate for the assessed needs of educational programmes and projects. This is compounded by the poor performance of most economies on the continent and by the impact of SAPs, which have cut back spending on education as on other social services. A strategy that has been adopted by many countries as a result is to shift emphasis from universities to primary and secondary education. Entry into universities has therefore been cut back at a time when specialized skills are in demand to cope with the realities of globalization.

Constraints and gaps: Inadequacy of the budgets allocated to education has been the main constraint to national implementation of the PFA. This not only affected the quality of the infrastructure but also the quality of the education given. The shortage of teachers has often resulted in large classes. It has also limited the scope of the curricula as well as the teaching equipment and facilities. Cost sharing, where instituted, has been a stumbling block to equal access to education for the economically disadvantaged. Poor management of the resources allocated is also a constraint.

Attitudes, practices and beliefs in some cultures continue to be a barrier to girls' enrolment and continuation in school. Among these, the most frequently cited are female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriages. Wars and conflicts accompanied by the physical destruction of the infrastructure and general insecurity, particularly in the rural areas, have been important constraints as well. In addition, high military expenditures deplete national resources that could otherwise be invested in education.

Shortage of skilled staff in gender issues has also been a constraint in achieving the attitudinal change in schools that would foster high performance of girls and curtail dropping out. Inequitable distribution of schools, particularly in the rural areas where girls have to walk long

distances to school, has also been an important constraint. Similarly, choice of a language of instruction that is not understood by all has been a deterrent to school enrolment or retention.

Higher education and professional training at specialized levels provide the pool from which a critical mass of women will be recruited to decision-making positions. Unfortunately, economic constraints have resulted in cost-sharing policies that have de-emphasized higher education. Such policies are likely to put women, who already have unequal access to education, at a disadvantage. Monitoring mechanisms should therefore be established in every country to follow up on the impact of educational policies and practices on women and girls.

Recommendations:

1. Increase the capacity of schools;
2. Pay special attention to children in difficult situations (orphans, war victims, indigents, handicapped etc);
3. Place emphasis on the eradication of illiteracy among women and find strategies for more effective information dissemination and the positive involvement of the media;
4. Train parents to build their capacity to educate and guide their children more effectively.

Emerging issues: Excessive military expenditure is undoubtedly depleting national financial resources. Women, as members of civil society, will need to be educated for effective involvement in the search for peaceful mechanisms for conflict resolution. This should in turn release much needed national assets for development of the education sector and, in particular, closing the gap between women and men.

3. WOMEN AND HEALTH

Introduction: Forty-three out of the 48 reporting countries have prioritized women and health as the critical area of concern. In accordance with the 1994 principles adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), everyone has the right to enjoy the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health and appropriate measures must be taken to ensure universal access to health care services.

Women's health encompasses their emotional, social and physical wellbeing and is determined by the social, political, economic and biological context of their lives. Women themselves have emphasized in many fora that equality, development and peace are essential prerequisites to attaining optimal health throughout the life cycle. However, the majority of women do not attain health and wellbeing. Women's health is affected by gender-bias in policies, programmes and practices. Decreased health spending and privatization of health care systems in many countries without guaranteeing universal access to affordable health care has affected the health of women and girls. Poverty, violence, all forms of discrimination and lack of opportunities to influence decision–making have had an adverse impact on women's health. Countries devastated by natural disasters such as drought, wars and conflicts have had their health infrastructure broken and have population groups, particularly women, suffering from preventable diseases and psychosocial problems. There are high rates of maternal and infant mortality, STD/HIV/AIDS infections and malnutrition.

Objectives:

They broadly include:

1. Increasing women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services;
2. Strengthening preventive programmes that promote women's health;
3. Undertaking gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health issues;
4. Promoting research and disseminating information on women's health; 5. Increasing resources and monitoring follow-up for women's health.

Implementation and achievements: To increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, countries have reviewed existing provisions and drafted new *policies, plans, institutional mechanisms, programmes and projects*. While constitutions guarantee health rights to every citizen, specific laws have been enacted in countries such as Algeria to prioritize protection and promotion of the health of the mother and the child. *National women's machineries* deal with policy issues and national plans of action and are mandated to monitor implementation. They have mandates to guide policy formulation and to define strategies, working in collaboration with other major actors including professional associations, NGOs, women's groups and international organizations. In countries where a multisectoral approach has been adopted, other sectors also collaborate on health-related matters.

Through gender-responsive *National Plans of Action* and programmes for health guided also by a Primary Health Care (PHC) policy and strategy to attain health for all by the year 2000, countries have set out to reduce the high rates of female mortality and morbidity and infant mortality by providing affordable health, nutrition, water and sanitation services. They have gender-sensitized and trained health policymakers and providers. They have reviewed existing and/or established new gender-responsive national health *policies* (e.g. Algeria, Botswana, Congo, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, Nigeria, Togo, Sudan, and Zambia). National Health Policies have primarily focused on provision of essential drugs, reproductive health, STD/HIV/AIDS, and the health of the elderly and disabled. Burkina Faso, Ghana, Madagascar, and Namibia among others, focus on the *elderly* and have formulated policies or are in the process of doing so. The Family Support Programme (FSP) in Nigeria, working closely with the private sector and international organizations, launched the National Programme on Immunization in 1996. The Petroleum Trust Fund promoted procurement and effective distribution of medicines. Some *programmes* target *essential drugs* (e.g. in Benin and Côte d'Ivoire), or increased contraceptive coverage; the 1998 Ethiopian Health Sector Development Programme plans to increase coverage from 8% to 15-20% by year 2002.

The 1993 Ethiopian Policy on Women calls for the eradication of *Harmful Traditional Practices* (HTPs), to be implemented through the Ethiopian Society on Harmful Traditional Practices. FGM is outlawed in Ghana, Djibouti, and Togo, among other countries. To provide equal access to cost-effective, quality health care, the Zambian Health Reform Policy envisages decentralization of planning, budgeting and decision-making through District Health Boards and Hospital Management Boards. Population policies have been formulated and/or revised by Benin, Guinea and Kenya.

Community-based health care involves communities and individuals. Following policy shifts from curative to preventive health services, emphasis has been placed on health communication and community mobilization. This approach seeks to increase knowledge levels and encourage attitude changes to prevent diseases and empower individuals and communities to be responsible for their own health. Burkina Faso, Burundi, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Namibia, Sudan, and Uganda promote this approach through community health committees of traditional birth attendants (TBAs), traditional healers and community health agents. In Burundi, attendance at prenatal clinics rose from 64.2% in 1996 to 66.2% of pregnant women in 1998.

Baby-friendly Initiatives in hospitals and health centres (e.g. in Nigeria) create a conducive atmosphere for sick and well children as well as for mothers. Similarly, *Safe Motherhood Initiatives* adopted in countries such as Angola, Burundi, Botswana, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, and Zambia, provide services to women during pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery periods. They have also trained health workers in the provision of emergency obstetric care to reduce pregnancy-related illnesses and deaths.

Emergency health services are offered in Algeria, Benin and Burkina Faso for accident victims and for obstetrics. Health care in Seychelles based on decentralized PHC services is *free* at the point of service delivery. Free medical services are assured in Algeria, Burkina Faso, and Libya. The elderly in Ghana have received *free* medical services since 1998. *Health insurance*

systems in Guinea and Rwanda and the *social security system* (SSS) in Algeria cover illnesses, maternity, disability and death. SSSs provide family allowances, occupational health and safety insurance, early retirement and unemployment benefits for all Algerians.

Maternity services include free medical services and hospitalization for working women and non-working women with working husbands. *Paid maternity leave* is assured in countries such as Algeria, Kenya, Mali, and Seychelles and *adolescent health* programmes in such countries as Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Tunisia. These programmes focus on STDs and HIV/AIDS and integrate adolescent health needs and services at existing health delivery points. Uganda's Programme for Enhancement of Adolescent Reproductive Life (PEARL) in 8 districts creates awareness on values, virtues and the consequences of cultures and traditions affecting adolescent health. Parents and communities are similarly sensitized. *Abortion* is illegal in many reporting countries. Notably, Madagascar is concerned about problems of infertility and has designed relevant projects. *Victims of violence* in countries such as Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone are provided with health care, counseled and arrangements are made for repatriation of displaced persons. Training of trainers is carried out in the management of these special programmes.

In Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria and Togo, among others, gender-positive policies on *nutrition* promote the nutritional status of women and children. They focus on the availability of food and essential food supplements, particularly iodine and vitamin A. In Burundi and Nigeria, nutritional surveys are conducted to monitor growth, to depict wasting, stunting and birth weights and to determine the nature and extent of malnutrition. Government departments and NGOs in Guinea and Kenya promote universal iodination of salt, use of iron and foliate supplements for pregnant women, and discourage breast-milk substitutes, to improve the nutritional wellbeing of mothers and children and reduce the incidence of malnutrition, anaemia and iodine deficiency. Evaluation of the state of nutrition in the camps of disaster victims in Burundi and other regions established that malnutrition in certain provinces grew from 6% to 20% in 1993 but dropped to 11% in 1999.

To expand health facilities, *new hospitals, health centres and clinics* have been built while others have been rehabilitated (in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone}. New clinics and medical centres for women and children were constructed in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Tunisia to provide counseling and specialized health services. In Burundi, health centres increased from 290 in 1995 to 351 in 1998, while in Angola, mother and child centres increased from 64 in 1991 to 101 in 1996. There are 5 new mental health centres in Chad and new special health observation centres in Algeria. *Mobile health clinics* operate in Nigeria and Tunisia. Zambia has adopted a *supermarket approach* to offering all health services on a daily basis.

To *prevent ill-health*, countries recognize that safe and adequate water supply and suitable environmental sanitation are universal human rights. In Kenya, only 48% of households are estimated to have access to safe and adequate drinking water while only 46% enjoy suitable environmental sanitation. The Public Health Act of Kenya focuses on quality of *water, housing and sanitation*. The Water Act guides the overall responsibility on water availability and cleanliness. The Water Master Plan guides Kenya Government, NGOs, CBOs and the private sector on water and sanitation programmes. Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Malawi, Namibia, and

Togo have similar initiatives. In Uganda, only 38% of the population has access to safe water. Many people are exposed to preventable diseases that emanate from unsanitary environments. Continuous, repeated and well-funded *polio eradication programmes* promoted by WHO and other international organizations are being carried out in most countries. Free and/or subsidized *screening for cancer* is carried out in Algeria, Burundi, Burkina Faso and Zambia while a few countries test for STD/HIV/AIDS. Côte d' Ivoire has also targeted *worm eradication*.

IEC programmes in Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Botswana, Chad, Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia sensitize the public on HTPs and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Health education efforts cover reorientation of health planners and providers, community health workers and TBAs to improve the provider-client relationship. They also address issues of breast cancer, breastfeeding, safe sex, balanced diet, drug abuse, hygiene and sanitation. Useful health information is disseminated at user-friendly points of health delivery. The subject of women's health is featuring specifically in the programme curricula at universities and nursing schools in Ghana. While the need for *research, information dissemination and utilization of research data* is acknowledged, funding for these activities is inadequate. Baseline studies, needs assessments and research studies are conducted on specific health issues such as HTPs, MCH, RH/FP, STDs/HIV/AIDS, to guide policy formulations and development of the legal framework in Angola, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sudan, and Zambia, among others.

In undertaking gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, sexual and reproductive health issues, countries are concerned with control of communicable diseases including STDs, TB and HIV/AIDS within the PHC context. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has impacted on the lives of whole populations. It has impacted on national and socio-economic development, becoming a challenge to many governments because the number of those affected and those dying from the infections continue to rise. In Angola and Malawi, there are more women and girls registered as infected with AIDS than men and boys. In response, countries such as Burkina Faso, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Sudan Swaziland, and Zambia have formulated policies to deal with HIV/AIDS. They have concentrated on health education, condom promotion and epidemiological surveillance to monitor the trend of the epidemic. They counsel the dying and their relatives but screening, testing and treatment are yet to be stressed.

They also screen and promote *safe blood transfusion*. They have established National AIDS and STD Control Programmes. The National AIDS councils, commissions and committees coordinate activities in collaboration with other stakeholders to reduce transmission of infections and their socio-economic impact. Home-based care for HIV/AIDS patients is promoted in Botswana and Burundi among other countries. AIDS Focal Points, Education Health Units and NGOs educate and advocate for behavioral change. Nigeria organizes workshops at the national and zonal levels on STDs/HIV/AIDS to promote 'good health for all by the year 2005'. Botswana has responded to the risk and danger of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS by discouraging breastfeeding of babies by infected mothers and suggesting alternative foods.

Gender-sensitive initiatives addressing STDs/HIV/AIDS also target schoolboys and girls and focus on safe sex and the use of condoms. Burundi and Zambia are among the countries that involve youth clubs in HIV/AIDS prevention. Burundi distributes condoms free of charge and

reviews traditional practices and initiation ceremonies to sensitize communities on issues of HIV/AIDS and STDs. Zambia Traditional Initiators work with gender-in-development staff to develop the curricula for initiation ceremonies, taking into account the national heritage of cultural and traditional norms and values. In Algeria, Burundi, and Namibia, counseling is stressed in IEC programmes for HIV/AIDS. Studies are carried out in Burkina Faso and Uganda to assess different aspects of HIV/AIDS including the extent of knowledge about the epidemic among the youth and the prostitutes. *To monitor and follow-up women's health*, health workers are trained and re-trained. A few countries such as Benin, Kenya and Uganda have endeavored to develop monitoring and evaluation systems with indicators and benchmarks and methods of data collection, collation and analysis.

Resources: Reproductive health issues are funded by the national governments, UN agencies, (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO), NGOs (e.g. IPPF) the World Bank and by individual victims of the various illnesses who participate in cost sharing programmes. Uganda spends 1% of its GDP on health; Togo 11.1%; Tunisia 6.2%; Burkina Faso 4.95%, Malawi 25%, and Chad CFA1.7 billion. Mali had an over-expenditure in the 1996/1998 programme period and 53% of health workers in Chad and Malawi are women. Angola has 597 doctors and 821 midwives, the majority of whom are located in the capital city.

Constraints: These include:
1. Limited dissemination of health information in rural areas;
2. Impeding cultural practices and attitudes;
3. Women are often unaware of the available health service facilities;
4. Violence against women, high illiteracy rates and poverty reduce women's ability to access adequate health services, exposing them to STDs/HIV/AIDS, cancers, and osteoporosis and other malnutrition-related diseases;
5. Ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems;
6. Lack of essential drugs;
7. Lack of expertise in controlling HIV/AIDS;
8. Insufficient knowledge of contraceptives by males;
9. Researchers may not always be willing to share their research findings;
10. There is insufficient capacity and knowledge to handle and care for HIV/AIDS patients, the elderly and the disabled.

Recommendations: Countries should:
1. Create an enabling environment to give women full enjoyment of their health rights;
2. Study the situation of prostitutes vis-à-vis STDs/HIV/AIDS;
3. Debunk the myths about HIV/AIDS;
4. Establish social security systems and install health insurance for those who cannot afford to pay for quality health services;
5. Integrate useful traditional aspects of health practice;
6. Rehabilitate health infrastructure;
7. Ensure emergency services particularly with respect to obstetrics care.

Emerging issues:

1. Many countries promote exclusive breastfeeding but mothers carrying infections might transmit the disease to their children. It is important to inform mothers of this risk and provide and/or suggest alternative baby feeds to reduce the risk;

2. The human rights of the uninfected including unborn babies are of critical concern, as are the rights of those already infected with AIDS.

4. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Introduction: **Thirty-two of the 48 reporting countries retained violence against women as an area of priority.** Violence against women is perpetrated in different forms, including physical, sexual and psychological. It continues to occur in the family mostly, in the form of battering, sexual abuse of female children and/or wives, violence related to bride price traditions, marital rape, FGM and exploitation. In the community and society at large, rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, intimidation, trafficking and forced prostitution are also common forms of violence. In Ethiopia, for example, marriage by abduction is widely practiced, affecting young girls of 10-16 years of age.

Domestic violence is common as reported by countries such as Eritrea, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi and Morocco. Wife beating is generally interpreted as "reasonable chastisement" and is therefore often ignored by law enforcement authorities, while women are often reluctant to report it. In times of war, women suffer violence in the form of murder, systematic and sometimes mass rape, sexual slavery, and forced pregnancy. Other types of violence take the form of forced sterilization, forced abortion, forced use of contraceptives, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection.

While these different forms of violence continue to plague African women, national constitutions and the legal frameworks of most countries are inadequate for dealing effectively with this phenomenon, according to most reports. As noted by Morocco, there are generally gaps in legal provisions against sexual harassment and violence against women, particularly within a marital situation. There is also an absence of data as to the extent of the problem. In addition, support structures for victims, such as reception centres and qualified personnel to provide needed services, are non existent. Certain laws also overtly or covertly encourage the practice of violence against women (for instance permitting men to abduct young girls as long as they marry them later).

Objectives:

1. Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women;
2. Study the courses and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures;
3. Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

Implementation and achievements: A number of countries have promulgated new laws or modified the existing ones in order to address the issue of violence against women. Eritrea drafted laws to prohibit intentional bodily harm, kidnapping, abduction, and sexual assault among other forms of violence. In Ethiopia and Seychelles among others, the Penal and Civil Codes were revised to exclude discriminatory clauses and to add protective measures for women. They also revised the Penal Code to make provisions for specific kinds of violence including sexual harassment. The code reversed the burden of proof in sexual offences and made it possible

to convict rapists without corroborating evidence. The 1995 Evidence Amendment Act allows abused children and women to give evidence *in camera* accompanied by friends and relatives. The Family Tribunal deals with family legal issues. In Botswana, the Rape law of 1998 demands more strict sentences for rape and allows trials to be held *in camera*

Under on-going general legal reform, Swaziland is drafting a Family Violence Bill. Zambia plans to pass a bill on the prevention and elimination of violence against women. In Namibia, the Directorate of Legal Aid protects women and their property while the Legal Assistance Centres supports mass-media campaigns on domestic violence. Combating of Rape and Domestic Violence Bills are also in the pipeline while the Women and Child Abuse Protection Units provide shelters for abused women and children. Côte d'Ivoire has adopted 3 different types of laws on violence against women and Tunisia has ratified the Convention against Torture. Cameroon has drafted a bill on violence against women and has set up some legal clinics for services to victims of violence and other crimes. However, in Sao Tome, besides ratification of CEDAW, the judicial structures and courts have no provisions for dealing with violence against women, sexual abuse, prostitution of minors and other gender-related crimes. Morocco organized a 15-day campaign against violence on women.

Other responses to the challenge of violence done to women have involved policy measures, education, training and awareness raising of law enforcement agents and the general public. The Lesotho Ministry of Justice and Human Rights supports awareness creation through drama, marches and workshops. The Ethiopia National Gender Policy has provisions for setting up a multisectoral National Committee on Rape and Abduction and Trafficking of Women that will study the situations and make recommendations for policy solutions to the problem. The Zambian Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education is making efforts to influence the socialization of the girl-child. The Algerian Government has created community police teams that include women. Their mission is to survey neighbourhoods and respond to women's needs and concerns while installing a sense of confidence and security.

In Uganda, there is a training programme for law enforcement agents on how to provide sensitive service to victims of violence. In Rwanda, as in many other countries, assistance is provided to victims of violence. Several countries also participated in the UNIFEM-sponsored campaign against violence in 1998, which involved seminars, workshops, and radio and television programmes. A number of countries (e.g. Angola) have also supported research on causes and consequences of violence and data collection on the subject.

Resources allocated: While governments have been the main financial contributors NGOs supported by external resources have also played a vital role in the sector. However, insufficient financial resources have been cited as a major constraint

Constraints and gaps: The existing legal frameworks in most countries lack adequate provisions to address the problem of violence against women. Legal reform and effective new laws are urgently required. Public awareness on the causes and consequences of violence against women is still low and the media continues to perpetuate negative images of women that contribute to violence against women. Poverty also places women in situations where they become easy victims of exploitation -- for instance when they cross international borders in search of employment as domestic servants. Cultural attitudes that associate violence with normal

relationships between men and women are difficult to eradicate. Few men have joined the fight to end violence against women while women continue to be intimidated into silence by the imperatives of tradition and culture. Besides, there is little statistical documentation of the extent of the situation to facilitate informed planning in this regard.

Recommendations:

1. The causes of violence against women and its magnitude should be documented comprehensively with accompanying supporting evidence in order to facilitate appropriate policy measures to eradicate the problem.
2. The media should commit itself to erasing negative images of women that encourage violence-prone attitudes and behaviour.
3. Special Family and Children's Courts should be established to handle criminal matters relating to domestic violence.
4. Appropriate structures run by well-trained personnel should be established by States to support the victims of violence.
5. Each country should ensure that its national legal framework has provisions for addressing all forms of violence against women with sufficient deterrents to ensure total eradication.

5. WOMEN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Introduction: Twenty out of the 48 reporting countries selected this concern as a priority area. For the most part, these were the countries that have either suffered from war or have had to cope with huge masses of refugees. Of the 20 million estimated refugees in the world, 35% are found in Africa. Women and children constitute at least 80% of this population. The long years of continued conflict have caused near-total destruction of socio-economic infrastructure. War has also led to increased conflict at household and community level due to the increase of poverty and the preoccupation with survival. Ethnic and religious prejudices, the destruction of people's sense of security and the rise in poverty, particularly among women, have characterized the war-torn countries of Africa. Nonetheless, the positive contribution of women in coping with these disasters and promoting peaceful resolution of conflict has been significant.

Objectives:

1. Promote women's contribution in fostering a culture of peace by increasing their participation in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and to protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts;
2. Reduce excessive military expenditure and control the availability of armaments;
3. Promote non-violent ways of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations; and
4. Provide protection, assistance and training for refugees and internally displaced women who are in need of international protection.

Implementation and achievements: Women have participated in such important decisions as the constitutional review of Uganda in 1995, the Arusha Peace Talks for Burundese women, the mediation of conflict resolutions at both national and international levels in Congo and the Lomé Peace Agreement for Sierra Leone. The African Women Peace Committee, through its representatives, all of who are women, has conducted peace missions to Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sierra Leone, among others, in an attempt to find peaceful solutions to the prevailing conflicts in these countries. The Federation of African Women for Peace has similarly conducted peace missions in several countries while the First Ladies Peace Mission has sent relief materials to war victims of Burundi and Liberia.

Activities to promote a culture of peace within the context of rehabilitation and reconstruction were intensified in Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Sudan. Rwanda has enacted a law to set up a National Unity and Reconciliation Human Rights Commission and a Legal and Constitution Commission to encourage and facilitate dialogue and debate on issues of peace and the peaceful resolution of conflict. In addition to repatriating refugees and helping them to get resettled in Rwanda, the Government has also created peace villages and a Commission to oversee the rehabilitation and reconciliation process. Rwanda has also passed a law on genocide that classifies criminals guilty of rape as first category cases deserving heaviest penalties. Sudan reports success in involving women and girls victims in productive activities, as well as sensitization at all ages.

Tunisia has introduced the teaching of a culture of peace in schools. It has also reduced its military budget, as has Nigeria during the reporting period. Benin has played host to refugees from Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Nigeria, Togo, and Rwanda. In fact, almost every African country has played host to refugees from other African countries. Mali has plans to set up a Pan-African Forum for demobilizing child soldiers.

Constraints and gaps: Lack of funds is a major impediment to rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. This particularly affects war victims whose care and survival depends primarily on women and the internally displaced who fall on "no man's land". Elimination of landmines would positively influence re-establishment of a sense of security. Unfortunately, the will of political leaders to foster peace seems to be lacking.

Recommendations:

1. Allocation of a budget to launch educational programmes on a culture of peace in schools and in the communities;
2. Forging an active partnership between governments and all stakeholders to promote and foster peace;
3. Building women's capacity for peace negotiations and for networking for peace;
4. African countries may wish to form lobbies of solidarity for women to lead sensitization on conflict and opposition against those selling arms to fan the conflicts.

6. WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Introduction: Twenty-nine of the 48 reporting countries prioritized economic empowerment of women in their National Plans of Action. By 1995, most economies in the region were experiencing a downturn. Large sections of the population were living below the poverty line. At the Beijing Conference, governments reaffirmed their moral responsibility to facilitate the economic empowerment of women and to promote sustainable livelihoods for them.

The primary economic activity in the reporting countries is agriculture. Most people live in the rural areas with poor infrastructure and inadequate social services and with a lower income per capita than the urban dwellers. Most women earn their livelihood from the informal economy and few own land or other capital to enable them to earn a decent livelihood. With high illiteracy rates and lack of access to savings and credit facilities, women have had little chance to cross the poverty line.

Most countries reported women's performance in trade and industry as being poor. This was due to low capital, low educational levels, socio-cultural attitudes as well as legal barriers. Women were poorly represented in economic decision-making, and formulation of financial, monetary and other commercial policies. There were improvements in women's participation in remunerated work but they lacked bargaining power to achieve equal pay for equal work.

Globalization, the uncertain economic environment, reforms and the restructuring processes further enhanced gender inequalities in favour of men. In the public and private employment sectors, women suffered lack of promotion and sexual harassment. The work place was family-unfriendly, lacking childcare facilities and having inflexible working hours that prevented women from balancing their domestic and external work responsibilities to achieve their full potential. Constitutions, laws and regulations do not necessarily discriminate on the basis of gender in the work place but the reality of employment practices is different.

Besides their lack of access to and control of economic resources, women are over-burdened by family responsibilities and attitudinal obstacles, which inhibit their participation in economic matters affecting them. They are underutilized as a productive force to the detriment of the same economies that marginalize them. National accounts undervalue women's work and underestimate their economic and social contribution to national development.

Objectives: In response to the above problems, countries defined their objectives as to:

1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment and appropriate working conditions;
2. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination;
3. Facilitate women's equal access to and control over economic resources;
4. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology to low-income women;
5. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks;

6. Promote harmonization of the work and family responsibilities of women and men.

Implementation and achievements: Countries are enacting and enforcing legislation as well as revising and adjusting national *policies* to promote gender equality and economic empowerment. The Ugandan and Malawian constitutions have classified women among disadvantaged and marginalized groups, to ensure attention. Under the liberalization of domestic and foreign trade, women should have equal opportunities to participate in all sectors of the economy. Countries such as Eritrea recognize how difficult it is to compete in liberalized economies, especially by women without capital or relevant skills. Eritrea and Malawi have simplified licensing procedures and reduced import tariffs and income taxes to enhance income generation.

By gaining access to savings and loan facilities and acquisition of knowledge and skills, women are gaining confidence in business and income-earning activities. Governments have also formulated micro-enterprise policies to support women. Kenya reported a revamped policy and strategic framework for small- and medium-enterprise development, creating a conducive environment for women in industrial development. In 1998, Algeria formulated a policy to enable those working at home to subscribe to the social security and retirement programme. As a result, home-based work started to provide better remuneration than employment outside the home for many women. However, despite 48% of women being engaged in home-based work, this is still not documented in national accounts except in cases where it has financial implications, for instance in terms of medical expenses.

The current national development *plans* are gender-responsive and aim to develop infrastructure and services for equal access and control of resources, and equal access to employment, markets, trade, business services and information. Senegal has set up the Eleventh Plan of Orientation to Economic and Social Development: 1996–2001 with a number of objectives, including reduction of domestic tasks (for example the time spent in fetching water and fuel), to enable women to engage in income-generating activities. National machineries promote women's economic empowerment and coordinate the activities of NGOs and other collaborating *institutions*. In Uganda, the national women's machinery is engaged in a consultative process to establish an Equal Opportunities Commission to address issues concerning the economic empowerment of women. The Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association is an umbrella organization for women in business. Under the Young Enterprise Scheme, the Seychelles Industrial Development Corporation promotes self-employment for women and men. International institutions such as UNDP play an important role in supporting such programmes as the Sustainable Livelihood Programme in Swaziland and Malawi.

Awareness programmes have led to the revision of labour laws, land acts, and succession and inheritance laws to ensure that women and men are treated equally. Organizations are sensitized to promote women businesses; for instance, financial institutions are being sensitized to support women in employment and in accessing savings and credit (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Malawi, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia). Poverty alleviation programmes in Côte d'Ivoire Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Rwanda, Tanzania, Swaziland, Uganda and Zambia, have specific *projects* to facilitate access to productive resources, education, training and participation in decision-making. Micro-enterprise programmes and projects create an enabling environment for

women to engage in income-earning activities. In Ethiopia for example, the 1997 Micro and Small Enterprise Development Proclamation exempted low-income earners (below Birr 5000) from paying income tax and simplified registration and licensing procedures. A similar situation exists in Eritrea. The Botswana Government, jointly with NGOs, CBOs and women's groups, has provided loans and subcontracted women to harvest and process veld.

On *employment,* countries have taken specific measures to protect women against discrimination by addressing terms and working conditions, such as remuneration, benefits and privileges. But women's share in the labour force remains low. In Eritrea, a recent study revealed that women's participation in formal employment in 1998 was 31% in manufacturing, 26% in trade and 41% in service sectors, declining by 8% in the manufacturing sector in 1999. Seychelles and Algeria have instituted flexible working hours and home-based work. Seychelles has also extended paid maternity leave to up to six months, has built 9 day-care centres in 8 different districts and leased them for operation on condition that they open between 7.00 am and 5.30 p.m. to enable women to take up full-time employment. Although day-care centres are costly, they are imperative as acknowledged by countries such as Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi and Mali. Elsewhere, Algeria's pre-employment contract programme for unemployed graduates builds experience to increase employment chances. Some 40% of the posts offered have benefited women.

In most countries, the right to inherit *land* is gender-biased. Countries have therefore sought to amend these laws, including customary laws. Gambia and Malawi have preceded law reviews and enforcement with studies and subsequent recommendations on how land allocation patterns affect women. Burundi, Congo, Rwanda and Senegal support women's cooperatives in land allocation and housing besides promoting participation in related decisions. Malian women are allocated land for agricultural activities and for building houses in groups or as individuals. Mali has also undertaken studies on financing small-scale farming to support women in agriculture. Some countries promote agricultural production for household consumption and income generation and provide access to implements, seeds, fertilizers, agricultural training and information through specialized extension services. Extension services also support the key role that women play in processing and preserving agricultural products

Access to credit for women is being promoted in almost all countries. Funds, credit schemes, savings and credit societies and micro-finance institutions provide loans, grants and training in business and management skills. Financial institutions have funded projects in many countries including Sudan. In Zambia, the Women's Finance Trust Micro-Credit Scheme and the Zambia Federation of Women in Business facilitate credit services to women entrepreneurs. In 1998, the 19 micro-finance institutions in Uganda, with a membership of over 31,000, had a 73.2% women membership. Women credit beneficiaries have increased considerably in Algeria, Madagascar, Malawi and Mali (from 13% in 1995 to 35% in 199 in Algeria).

Ghana implements pilot programmes for women to access revolving loans on soft terms, for example, to process oil. Under the Young Enterprise Scheme, the Seychelles Industrial Development Corporation disbursed $2.3 million women, this being 41% of total loan approvals. Nigeria granted grants to NGOs/CBOs totaling nearly N55 million in 1997 and loans amounting to N5.1 billion to cooperatives and individuals. To *access markets and trade,* women in Mali are involved in economic enterprises such as basketry, market gardening, poultry farming, food

storage and processing and leather tanning, using appropriate technology. Zimbabwe has institutionalized flea markets to protect small traders. Other countries promoting access to resources, markets and trade include Comoros and Sudan.

To *build capacity*, women are trained in bookkeeping, business management and marketing in Mali and Malawi. Algeria has a capacity-building programme to ensure that rural women (49% of all women) can access credit and increase the yield of agricultural production. The programme includes financial assistance, mainly through rural cooperatives for cereal and livestock production, while the agro-pastoral pilot project targets girls. The Local Initiative programme trains the youth in skills to increase their chances for employment. Through this programme, women took up 25% of the jobs created in 1997. In Uganda and several other countries, the micro-finance institutions, chambers of commerce and industry as well as manufacturers' and traders' associations, provide business and management training. The Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) supports the Entrepreneurialship Development Programme for capacity building among business men and women. Sudanese women are trained in various sectors. To *develop information services*, women in Uganda are encouraged by the UMA to utilize business services provided by business organizations. Zambia's Central Statistics Office collects data on gender-based discrimination and analyses them, to help to facilitate business development for women. Women business centres collect and disseminate business information and organize training programmes, particularly on information technology.

Economic capacity and commercial networking has been strengthened in countries such as Botswana and Kenya. The Agro-business Unit in Uganda assists women and men farmers to undertake cost-benefit analysis of their enterprises. The Unit encourages business women and men to maintain good records of activities, accounts and statements. National and regional networks are developed through groups, cooperatives and associations. To develop commercial networks, women are encouraged and supported by government, NGOs and the private sector to attend trade shows, fairs, expositions and exhibitions where they exhibit their products and services and make invaluable marketing and entrepreneurial contacts.

Resources: Governments are providing resources from their national budgets but the funds are inadequate and have to be supplemented by funds from NGOs, women's groups and by multilateral and bilateral lenders.

Constraints:
1. High dependency on external resources leads to collapse of activities once the supply of these resources ceases and debts have to be repaid;
2. Women's low level of education and entrepreneurial skills hampers their participation in productive economic activities;
3. Women lack assistance in technical and market research for business development;
4. High interest rates prevent business growth. Credit facilities are still not easily accessible to women entrepreneurs with or without collateral;
5. Inadequate marketing arrangements and storage and processing facilities cause farmers to lose their perishable products or to receive very low prices at harvest time;

6. Extension services often fail to provide adequate vaccines, pesticides and other drug supplies to deal with disease outbreaks or appropriate implements, feed supplements, seeds and fertilizers at the time they are required;

7. There is restricted access and control over productive resources such as irrigated land;

8. Wars and conflicts destroy the infrastructure, cause military over expenditure and displace populations;

9. There is imbalanced division of labour, denying women invaluable opportunities due to their domestic responsibilities;

10. Day-care centres are costly to establish and to maintain.

Recommendations:

1. Prohibit women from working at night, on official holidays or in situations dangerous to their health;

2. Legalize maternity leave and allocate time to breastfeed and nurse babies;

3. Recognize the need for wives to take leave of absence to accompany their husbands or to raise children or take care of handicapped children without losing their jobs;

4. Update women on information technology;

5. Train women in operational and management skills and facilitate exchange programmes within and outside countries;

6. Enhance access to financial support, productive land and other productive inputs including a sustainable water supply;

7. Continue reviewing relevant laws on access and control of resources;

8. Open employment opportunities to women through education and training, and where necessary, through quota systems;

9. Create export villages;

10. Carry out studies where women have suffered economically through attrition, in order to help women who have lost their jobs;

11. Resettle disaster and war victims quickly and provide them with adequate services;

12. Facilitate equitable income generation not only by gender but also by districts and regions;

13. Create more business centres for information dissemination and networking.

7. WOMEN IN POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

Introduction: Out of the 48 reporting countries, 34 selected the critical area of women in power and decision-making as an area of priority in their National Plans of Action. Despite the proclamation of equality of all citizens in most national constitutions, women continue to be invisible in the decision-making arena in most sectors. The international human rights instruments as well as the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action endorsed by almost all African countries continue to be a far cry from the reality of women's representation in parliament, high-level civil service positions, local and national administration, diplomatic service and other sectors.

Objectives:

1. To increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership;
2. To ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making;
3. To produce and disseminate data disaggregated by sex for purposes of planning and evaluation.

Implementation and achievements: Countries adopted a variety of strategies in an attempt to resolve the problem. Policy promulgation that facilitated the movement of women into decision-making positions in critical numbers was the strategy chosen by such countries as Angola, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Eritrea has reserved 30% of seats for women in the regional and national assembly; Tanzania guarantees 15% and hopes to raise it to 30% in the amended constitution currently being revised. Uganda reserves 16% of parliamentary seats for women. South Africa has already achieved 30% representation of women in the national legislature and there are eight women ministers out of a total 27. The representation of women at local government level is estimated at 14%.

Swaziland and Zambia are advocating for 30% of parliamentary seats for women by 2005 as recommended by the SADC Declaration. Ethiopia, on the other hand, encourages the presence of at least two women on all committees dealing with personnel matters. Its National Policy on Women aims to strengthen grassroots organizations for more effective political participation and as such is expecting their representation at federal and local levels to increase from 2.3% to 15% and 20% respectively. Burkina Faso plans to lobby for quotas in order to include women in the electoral list. Women national machineries supported by NGOs have also been strong advocates for the mainstreaming of gender in all government policies and programmes and including women in decision-making positions in all sectors. Political parties and trade unions have been lobbied particularly hard by NGOs.

To increase women's capacity to participate in the political process (political campaigns, negotiations, lobbying, etc.), several countries have launched awareness campaigns through workshops, training, and dissemination of information. Women national machineries have encouraged women to organize themselves into groups and associations in order to consolidate

their power for lobbying and negotiations. The media also has been used to pass on confidence-building messages to women in order to encourage them to run for political offices, as in the case of Namibia, in collaboration with UNESCO.

Greater awareness and participation by women in the political process and in decision-making is evident in many countries. In Burkina Faso, campaigns to render the Family Code gender-sensitive also insisted on including provisions for equal participation in decision-making at family, community and national levels. In Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, women-orientated NGOs are heavily involved in the constitution review deliberations. Nigerian women participated in the 1999 democratic transition process. Many of them operated under the newly created Forum for Nigeria Women in Politics to enhance their political participation. In Algeria, eight women entered the Conseil de la Nation while 13 sit in the People's National Assembly. Some 143 women sit in the People's Local Assembly and two women are heads of political parties. This enhanced involvement of women is a consequence of the withdrawal of the practice of husbands voting for their wives as well as the political will demonstrated by women's appointment into the Conseil de la Nation and Conseil de l'Etat.

Rwanda has established women's organizational structures in the urban administrative units where women are elected to serve as decision-makers in matters concerning health, local administration, etc. In Botswana, government departments and NGOs collaborated to target potential women leaders for capacity building so as to increase the number of women in decision-making. In Mali, six women Ministers were appointed and 18 women elected to parliament while Burkina Faso saw a 5% increase in parliamentary representation during the reporting period. In Seychelles, 23% of ministerial appointments and 24% of parliamentary positions were taken by women. In Malawi, 17 out of 193 parliamentarians are women; two out of 28 and two out of eight cabinet ministers and deputy ministers respectively, are women. Malawi has also appointed women as ambassadors, judges and as 50% of the chairpersons on statutory boards and community project committees. The Zimbabwean project on women in politics and decision-making aims to achieve 50% representation of women in decision-making by the year 2000 through a variety of activities. In Benin, a woman heads the constitutional court and women head two out of the six parliamentary committees. Comoros, Senegal, and many others have made great strides in increasing women representation in the national assembly and on the regional councils.

Resources: Financial allocations by government are reported to be inadequate for the intended programmes.

Constraints and gaps: There is a general lack of gender-disaggregated data analyzing the representation of women in power and decision-making and their skills. Women continue to be significantly unaware of their political rights due to poor management of information systems. Other constraints include the low level of education among women, inadequate financial and human resources to implement planned actions, weakness of women's organizations at grassroots and national levels, political disturbances and armed conflicts as well as socio-cultural attitudes and practices that continue to obstruct women's participation in public life. Many men (and women) lack confidence in women's leadership while women also underestimate the challenges of decision-making.

Recommendations:

1. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems should be developed for implementation of programmes with clear goals and indicators. . On a limited scale some countries are starting to develop clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In South Africa for example a Gender Audit is currently under way with the specific aim of developing baseline information for the purpose of tracking progress overtime.

2. Countries need to conduct regular studies to collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data on women in power and decision-making throughout society. The data should be subsequently disseminated for utilization in policy and other planning needs.

3. There is also need for inventories on women's skills and dissemination of the same to interested parties.

4. The few women in decision-making should be used as role models through the media and other forms of communication to encourage and inspire others.

5. The concept of a Children's Parliament should also be encouraged to give the youth early experience and exposure to political life.

6. Women should be trained in decision-making, public speaking, political campaigns, and self-confidence building.

7. There is need to target women in small isolated rural communities to increase their economic security and promote their participation in decision-making.

8. Governments, as recommended by ECOSOC, should guarantee the representation of women in the public, political and private sectors. To accomplish this, countries should use quotas for women until the goal of attaining an equitable society is reached.

Emerging issues: The issue of role sharing at home needs to be addressed as seriously as power sharing in the public arena. The multiple roles that women play in the home are often a serious constraint to their participation in political life as well as other areas in the public domain. This is central to the attainment of equality, development and peace both at home and outside the home. Decentralization as a strategy can also accelerate the promotion of women in power and decision-making.

8. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Introduction: Twenty-eight out of the 48 reporting countries retained this critical area as a priority in their National Plans of Action The Dakar and Beijing Platforms stressed the importance of establishing and/or strengthening appropriate institutional mechanisms for promotion of activities related to the advancement of women. At the national level, several countries have established such mechanisms and these are diverse in structure, mandate, scope and resources. The establishment of specific national women's machineries was recommended under this critical area with the mandate of promoting formulation and implementation of policies for gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women. The machineries should also have the mandate to coordinate, monitor, evaluate, and mobilize support for implementation of related programmes in all government sectors. In 1995, the institutionalization of comprehensive, even sectoral gender policies was just beginning to take shape in a few countries despite the multiple international policy instruments already in place. The slow start needs acceleration.

Objectives:

1. To create or strengthen national machineries and other government bodies;
2. To integrate the gender perspective in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects;
3. To generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

Implementation and achievements: Out of the reporting countries, 22 countries had already established full ministries in charge of women and affairs in addition to other portfolios in some cases. Some were upgraded from departments or State Secretariats to full ministries during the reporting period. In South Africa, the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) is the highest gender structure and has been placed at the level of the Presidency. It has provincial offices. This office functions through Gender Focal Points located in the National Ministries as well as in the provincial departments. The Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women is a full parliamentary committee that monitors government's delivery of gender programmes. The Commission of Gender Equality is structured as a statutory body. This status enables it to monitor implementation of gender programmes.

Other national machineries are still operating under the umbrella of other ministries as departments, units, bureaux or desks. However, their mandate is similar, incorporating gender policy formulation, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation process. They have also been entrusted with important advocacy work with regard to the mainstreaming of gender in all government policies, plans and programmes. Where the national machineries are full ministries, there is also an attempt to decentralize the structures into the provinces and other local units, for instance in Ethiopia and Malawi.

In some countries, the national machineries established national committees for follow up of the activities related to the Dakar and Beijing Platforms. Other sectoral structures were established in various countries to focus on specific issues. Burkina Faso, for example,

restructured the National Committee on Discrimination Against Women. Burundi created the Commission on Women and Children within the League of Human Rights to inform women of their rights and to develop their capacity to defend and promote them. Nigeria established the Family Support Programme. The concept of Gender Focal Points in sectoral ministries who are expected to facilitate the process of gender mainstreaming has become almost standardized.

Other machineries include NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and women's groups and associations that have become important actors in the implementation of the National Action Plans. In addition to having national umbrella coordinating bodies of these institutions, the government national machineries also play a coordinating role in relation to their activities. Information centres have also been set up to collect, collate, analyze, store and disseminate relevant information as required. Such centres are also responsible for compiling gender-disaggregated data that are central to meaningful planning and policy formulation. Examples can be found in Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

More and more countries have formulated and/or adopted national gender policies, the prime objective of which is to mainstream gender in all aspects of national development. The following countries have formulated their gender policies: Botswana, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. As the strategy to implement the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, National Plans of Action have been adopted by 40 of the 48 reporting countries.

Resources allocated: Botswana allocated 1% of its national budget to the National Women's Machinery. Ghana allocated Cedis299 million for the work of the national machinery. Swaziland increased its budget for gender-related work by 200% and Malawi by150%. But with the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all sectors of government ministries, it is difficult to have a reasonable estimate of the total budget reserved for gender-related work. At the civil society level, resources are mostly internally generated through self-help efforts even though there is some contribution from external sources. On the whole, there has been improvement in the level of funding during the reporting period even though the total budgets are still found to be inadequate.

Constraints and gaps: Countries without decentralized structures have serious difficulties reaching the rural communities, particularly in light of the inadequacies of current communication infrastructure. Inadequate financial and human resources also plague the national machineries. Capacity building in gender analysis, planning and mainstreaming is also essential for the staff in the national machineries and the Gender Focal Points, in light of their role in promoting gender mainstreaming everywhere. The mandate of the national machineries to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation process is not sufficiently explicit nor is it accompanied by the necessary tools and resources.

Recommendations:

1. There is need to appropriate national budgets so as to ensure that the national machineries have adequate resources to facilitate gender mainstreaming and coordination of gender-related activities nationally. Commitment for the implementation of gender-sensitive national budgets needs to be demonstrated.
2. Building capability for gender analysis, planning and gender mainstreaming within the government is central to the success of effective gender mainstreaming.
3. The mandate of the national machineries to coordinate, monitor and evaluate activities related to gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women should be made explicit through policy and/or administrative directives.
4. The requisite tools and resources should also be made available.
5. The national machineries should devise concrete strategies and mechanisms for coordination, monitoring, and evaluation and reinforce their rigorous application. In particular, strategies for reinforcing information and databases in each country and building linkages in and out of the countries around this information should be clearly formulated and implemented.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Introduction: Out of the 48 reporting countries, 39 selected the area of women's human rights as a critical area of focus. A number of them linked it to the issues of violence and peace as well. Most of the reporting countries have also ratified the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, albeit with reservations on certain Articles. They have similarly ratified most of the international human rights instruments including the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981. By 1995, many countries had already established Human Rights Task Forces and National Commissions on Human Rights to follow up implementation of the international instruments at the national level.

Unfortunately, according to the reporting countries, women's enjoyment of their rights continues to be undermined by discrepancies between some national legislation and the provisions of the international human rights instruments. These discrepancies also exist between modern law and customary and religious laws in several countries. Unduly complex administrative procedures, lack of awareness within the judicial process, inadequate monitoring of the violation of women's human rights in judicial systems, insufficient information on individual human rights, and persistent negative attitudes towards women are among the many reasons why women do not fully enjoy their human rights.

Objectives:

1. Promoting and protecting the human rights of women through full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially CEDAW;
2. Ensuring equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice;
3. Achieving legal literacy.

Implementation and achievements: A few of the reporting countries have reviewed their national constitutions to ensure that they protect women's human rights as well as they protect those of men. The new constitutions of Malawi and Uganda (1995) are reported to prohibit laws and cultural practices that violate women's human rights. Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Seychelles and Sudan have reviewed their constitutions to render them gender-responsive. Several countries have created National Commissions on Human Rights or other equivalent public institutions. Their main task is to protect, promote and co-ordinate activities related to human rights, with a view to ensuring that all citizens enjoy equality in accessing their rights (for example Chad, Congo Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tunisia and Uganda). Their activities include organization of awareness and training workshops and seminars as well as provision of legal advice to women and men. In addition, South Africa has adopted a National Plan of Action on Human Rights that incorporates the rights of women as a critical component of human rights.

There have been attempts to harmonize national laws with the international legal instruments. Malawi and Zambia have enacted intestate acts to change and integrate customary

laws and practices relating to intestate succession and to harmonize them with the international provisions for human rights. Burkina Faso has repealed the law that prohibits public promotion of contraceptives, while the requirement in Morocco that wives obtain husband's authorization to enter into a work contract has also been repealed. The Kenya Human Rights Task Force was set up to review all laws relating to women *vis a vis* marriage, divorce, matrimonial property and the rights of children under the principle of equality of spouses. Namibia's Legal Aid Act of 1990 enforces such principles already.

Other countries, such as Angola and Ghana, have set up committees, or their equivalents, to monitor implementation of CEDAW, in collaboration with other human rights bodies. Yet other countries have revised their labour laws and regulations to ensure access to employment rights by women, for example, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, Seychelles, and Zimbabwe. Given the experience that tensions arising between customary law and the constitution often lead to women's rights being undermined, South Africa has taken the position that, in such instances, the Bill of Rights should prevail.

In an attempt to ensure access to legal services and legal education both in the urban and rural areas, NGOs and women lawyers associations in many countries have set up legal aid clinics and centres where they provide legal counseling and disseminate information at low costs. In some cases, the economically deprived receive the services free of charge. NGOs and governments have also mounted many campaigns to sensitize and educate their populations about their human rights, the provisions of the law and how they can access these rights through courts, legal clinics and other structures.

Some countries have translated the laws into national languages and disseminated them to render the population legally literate. Gender Resource Centres have been established in some countries to develop and facilitate the dissemination of information on gender-based human rights violations, and the mechanisms in place to redress them. Training programmes on the provisions and implementation of human rights have been targeted at law enforcement agents such as the police, prison warders, and the judiciary in a number of countries. NGOs and women's groups, as well as government structures on human rights, including the Ministries of Justice in some countries, have played an important role in these activities. In countries such as Senegal, women particularly apply pressure for change.

Resources allocated: A main constraint in implementation of the planned programmes is the inadequacy of resources allocated to this critical area by the governments. There is heavy dependency on financial resources from national and international NGOs, UN agencies and the bilateral/multilateral organizations.

Constraints and gaps: Despite the efforts that some countries have made so far, the need for harmonization of the multiple-origin and multi-tiered national laws within the context of the international legal instruments on human rights was frequently cited as an urgent problem. In some countries, the existing laws seem incomplete in their provisions for protection of women's human rights. In some cases, appropriate laws are absent altogether, for example, laws protecting individual rights. Reservations in the CEDAW ratification selected vital areas that continue to allow discrimination, for example, the reservation that renders the Lesotho Constitution supreme over CEDAW, limiting women from occupying high levels of authority within the church

institution, and succession to the chieftainship. Lack of co-ordination mechanisms for the different approaches and activities of the multiple partners in this field was also cited as a problem. In some cases, Ministries in charge of Women Affairs seem weak as co-ordinators of other government ministries.

The high rate of illiteracy among women was highly correlated with the low legal literacy rate, which is a major constraint to women's enjoyment of their human rights. It renders them helpless in situations of clear violation of their rights, particularly by those who are expected to ensure that the law is applied as provided. The gap between the provisions of the law and their application also persists in the absence of a clear accountability system. While there are structures that educate and train the public on the legal applications, the same structures do not have the power to sanction those who grossly violate them, a situation that is a major constraint to the respect for the law. The low financial resource base also leaves the countries too dependent on external funding which dilutes the sense of ownership of some of the related programmes. It also results in inequitable coverage of the national territory with regard to services provided by NGOs and the government.

Recommendations:

1. Greater commitment to revision and harmonization of national laws needs to be demonstrated as a matter of urgency.
2. A viable co-ordination mechanism of the multiple actors in the field is also of essence.
3. A viable monitoring and evaluation mechanism is necessary to keep track of the implementation rate of the provisions of the legal instruments and their impact on women.
4. Accountability for their implementation should also be clearly defined and applied.
5. The resource base should be augmented to support some of the structures and institutions that are promoting and providing human rights services.
6. Introducing human rights education systematically in school curricula should help to mainstream the human rights culture.

Emerging issue: The heavy dependence on external funding postpones ownership of the attitudinal and value-base change that must accompany respect for individual and people's human rights. As Africa continues to search for its appropriate development paradigm, so must it be ready to finance the process whereby it is sought and implemented in order to build in a sense of ownership.

10. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Introduction: To implement the PFA on women and the media concerns, **26 out of the 48 reporting countries selected this critical area as a priority and adopted a comprehensive approach or treated it as a crosscutting area of concern**. Some countries, for instance Seychelles, combined media, information, communication and arts. They recognized media as an effective method of reaching and educating the public but noted the risk of promoting and sustaining stereotyped images of women and ignoring their achievements in national development. Women are often portrayed in negative and degrading images in the media. The slow pace of advancement in information technology, that is also bypassing women, was also noted, This is evidenced by the low representation of women in the communication sector.

Countries acknowledged Management of Information Systems (MIS) as an asset for development as it provides accurate, reliable, timely and user-friendly data that could be used for monitoring organizations' performance and for broader aspects of policy analysis. Information provides knowledge and informed women make informed choices. A number of countries therefore set up information and data centres for data collection, collation and analysis. They established units, desks and focal points to collect and relay information on issues affecting women. They embarked on reviewing and/or formulating gender-friendly media and information policies, developing plans and designing programmes to implement the national plans of action guided by the objectives below.

Objectives:

1. Increase participation in decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication;
2. Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped protrayal of women in the media;
3. Focus on successful women as role models;
4. Create awareness;
5. Facilitate networking among women.

Implementation and achievements: To improve the status of women in and through the media, countries:
1. Carried out deliberate recruitment of women in media establishments;
2. Promoted those already in posts and empowered them through improved skills and knowledge including information technology;
3. Targeted professional and other media personnel and policymakers in media agencies for sensitization and skills training;
4. Increased enrolment of women in journalism and mass-communication training;
5. Strengthened media institutions through financial and moral support;
6. Portrayed successful women as role models to change the image of helplessness, failure and dependency and to sensitize women to break barriers;

7. Women have used their skills, knowledge and access to information technology to confront the negative portrayal of women in the media. Consequently, gender-sensitive media is emerging in several countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Sudan; and.

8. Pornography is prohibited in most countries.

To collect and disaggregate data, countries have established resource centres and programmed training, research and surveys on specific issues in Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi and Swaziland. Kenya's Units of Gender Issues and focal points in other countries were mandated to set up computerized databanks for data-disaggregation by gender.

To create public awareness, newspapers, television and the radio have been commissioned to publish columns and to broadcast programmes regularly in order to cover gender issues positively. Newsletters, leaflets, brochures, stickers, drama and popular theatre have been used to highlight issues such as incidences of violation of women's rights through violence, rape, HIV/AIDS, child abuse and harmful traditional practices such as FGM. There has been a notable increase of television airtime, radio broadcasting time and frequency of items of news and feature articles in the newspapers on these issues. Burundi, Chad, Guinea, Madagascar, Nigeria and others have translated essential documents such as plans of action and training manuals to ensure wider dissemination of information.

To facilitate networking, Equatorial Guinea, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, among others, established women's media networks, clubs and associations.

Resources: Allocations remain inadequate. Fundraising in Ghana led to UNICEF, UNDP and WHO committing cedis100 million for data and translations for the period 1999-2001.

Constraints and gaps:

1. Shortage of resources and high illiteracy rates;
2. Heavy commercialization of the media;
3. Little community ownership of radio, television and newspapers;
4. Many languages are spoken and written and translation is costly;
5. Lack of gender-disaggregated data and poor state of communication networks;
6. Lack of communication and information policies;
7. Lack of monitoring and evaluation systems.

Recommendations:

There is need to:

1. Support and improve the use of telephones and the new information technology for accessing the internet by improved telecommunication networks;
2. Increase efforts in research and information management;
3. Train women in appropriate information technology;
4. Strengthen the managerial capacity of women professionals in the communication sector;
5. Perform statistical analysis by cadre of the current status of women in the media;
6. Support gender-sensitive publications;
7. Create rural radio stations; and
8. Promote use of national languages.

Emerging issue: The advancement of communication through new information technology requires heavy investment in up-to-date telecommunication systems.

11. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Introduction: To enhance the important role that women play in environmental preservation, 27 out of 48 countries prioritized this critical area. Environmental issues included agriculture, forestry and tourism.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the follow-up international conferences acknowledged the significant role that women can play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resource management. Women remain largely absent at all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resource and environmental management, conservation, protection and rehabilitation though they could productively contribute their skills and experience in natural resources management. In Burkina Faso, women provide 93% of domestic energy. They spend between 32 and 36 hours a week looking for wood and almost as many hours searching for water. As women depend almost totally on the environment and natural resources for their livelihood, their income is adversely affected by environmental changes in flora and fauna. Women are affected by oil spillages (in Nigeria) and by environmental degradation through wars, floods, drought and bush fires.

As the primary agricultural producers, women are responsible both for environmental management and destruction. They inadvertently contribute to environmental degradation when, despite their clear knowledge of the need for environmental protection and sustainable use of resources, they are forced by heavy workloads and limited choices, to over-exploit natural resources for survival.

Objectives: Broadly, countries aimed to:

1. Strengthen or establish mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women;
2. Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development;
3. Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels and in the implementation of national plans of action.

Implementation and achievements: Countries have strengthened or established mechanisms to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women and to integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development. Countries such as Benin, Kenya, and Madagascar have mandated specific ministries, departments or agencies to coordinate gender mainstreaming into policies, plans, programmes and projects. Organizations and groupings are encouraged to work on specific aspects of environmental preservation, for example, the Market Women Association in Nigeria on market sanitation, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMADEC) in Nigeria on creating zonal offices, the LUNGOS in Seychelles on setting up of the Environmental

Commission, or the SWEES Committee, also in Seychelles, on setting up cottage industries for women in the low- income bracket. Programmes and projects on environmental preservation are managed by individual organizations or in consortia under the guidance of the national machineries. Swaziland's Drought Consortium of NGOs participates in sensitization of traditional leaders and communities on environmental issues. Swaziland plans to implement the Convention to Combat Desertification. Botswana's joint programmes with NGOs include the women's project on harvesting of veld products.

Income-generating activities such as cottage industries in Seychelles and Mali, where women's groups sell wood, keep bees and prepare nurseries for tree planting and afforestation will protect the environment and alleviate poverty. Other programmes involve soil conservation (Burkina Faso, Mali, Sudan,), pollution control (Congo) and reclamation of wetlands in Benin. Institutions such as Benin's Agency and the Task Force in Kenya are mandated to review relevant laws such as land acts. In Burkina Faso, the Environmental Code and the Forestry Code were reviewed with the participation of women at all levels. Benin, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia and Togo have promulgated gender-sensitive policies and/or developed national plans of action sensitive to the role of women in environmental preservation. In Burkina Faso, the Government has promulgated gender-positive policies on land ownership and use. Sudan has set up the Arid Zone Development Project besides the project for promoting salt production by means of solar energy.

Programmes were also designed to provide technical assistance to women in issues related to the environment, for example, appropriate energy-saving technologies in manufacturing industries. Attention was paid to sanitation, especially in urban areas, with projects for garbage collection and street sweeping. Countries such as Benin and Gambia have programmes to clean and increase water supply. To reduce women's workload. Togo and Tunisia provided waterholes and promoted afforestation, which eventually will readily provide energy for household use. Alternative sources of energy were also promoted. Chad targeted food security and capacity building, construction of waterholes, sanitation, gardens and afforestation. Environmental Education was integrated into school curricula and research promoted on environmental impacts of women's equal access and use of natural resources. Sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns were carried out through workshops, meetings and the mass media. Nigeria launched an outreach news bulletin, *the Ozone*, to provide further enlightenment on the ozone layer. Campaigns were also organized on several issues such as tree planting and market sanitation.

To involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels and in the implementation of national plans of action, NUEW in Eritrea mobilized women in afforestation programmes. The Eritrean Government sponsored a programme to plant and care for over 60,000 trees in the National Park to commemorate Eritrean martyrs. Malawi, Niger, Togo, and Tunisia *are* among those involving women in tree planting. Benin developed a 'Women and Forestry' programme. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, and Togo facilitated increased access by women to information and education on environmental protection. They encouraged them to uphold the Convention on Biological Diversity, to protect indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices in environmental matters and to analyze linkages between gender relations, poverty and environmental issues. Togo created rural radio stations which raised the level of awareness on the impact of environmental dependence.

In Eritrea, the Summer Work Programmes for Secondary School Students in collaboration with women's groups aim to promote environmental ethics. In Ghana, the Government's ongoing Water and Sanitation Health Education (WAHSE) Programme aims to ensure a clean and safe environment and to empower communities in looking after water facilities. Nigeria has established the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMADEC) to look into the environmental needs of oil-producing communities. To integrate women in environmental decision-making positions, countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Nigeria, and Togo are building confidence in women's leadership by appointing women into agencies, consulting groups, committees, boards and organizations. Women's advancement in education, particularly in science and technologies, is promoted in Congo and Kenya.

Resources: Financial and human resources are supplied by governments, communities and women's groups, NGOs, international organizations and foreign governments.

Constraints and gaps:

1. Women are still under-represented in decision-making positions;
2. There is a general lack of awareness on environmental issues;
3. Shortage of water and energy make involvement of women in environmental management a difficult task;
4. Environmental policies are yet to be formulated and enforced;
5. Sectoral projects are sometimes developed and implemented without due screening for their effects on the environment.

Recommendation: There is need to train women in essential management skills.

Emerging issues: Women not only need to access and manage natural resources but also to have control so that they and their families can benefit from better-managed economic exploitation of these resources.

12. THE GIRL-CHILD

Introduction: Twenty-eight out of the 48 reporting countries prioritized the girl-child as the critical area of concern. Countries such as Botswana addressed the subject of the girl-child as a crosscutting and integral component of other critical areas of concern. Educational aspects of the girl-child concerns are discussed under Women and Education. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1993), which has been ratified by many countries, states that for the girl-child to develop to her full potential, she needs to be nurtured in an enabling environment where her spiritual, intellectual and material needs for survival, protection and development are met and her rights are assured. The rights of the girl-child are violated by harmful attitudes, beliefs and practices which result in early, forced and child marriages, son preference, violence, sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse, discrimination in food allocation, over-burdening workload and restricted access to education and other social services.

Objectives: Countries aim to:
1. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child;
2. Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;
3. Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential;
4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training;
5. Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work;
7. Eradicate violence against the girl-child
8. Promote the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life; and
9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.

Implementation and achievements: To eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child, reporting countries have started to adopt necessary legislative, administrative and other measures, besides fostering an enabling environment to encourage full respect for the rights of the girl-child. Countries such as Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Congo, Ghana, Tunisia and others, have revised existing and/or formulated new policies in favour of girls. Similarly, National Action Plans, programmes and projects are designed to give attention to the plight of the girl child by:

1. Raising public awareness on socialization of girls and boys for different gender roles in society;
2. Outlawing FGM and ritual slavery (Djibouti and Ghana);
3. Raising marriage age to 16-18 years to stop child and forced marriages so that girls can remain in school;
4. Legislating against withdrawal of girls from school and early pregnancy in teenage girls (Nigeria); and
5. Developing girl-child units, task forces, civil child centres, guidance and counseling units and clubs with mandates to create awareness on the rights of the girl-child (e.g. in Algeria, Benin, Chad, Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda,

Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). In Seychelles, safety nets have been created to enable counseling against abortion for girls and to find employment for them. Les Li Viv, Apana and Caritas and similar agencies provide training and empower girls for self-reliance. The girl-child in Seychelles enjoys equal opportunities in education, health, nutrition, employment and political activity. Collaborating agencies such as FAWE in Kenya, Namibia, Swaziland and others are active in promoting the rights of the girl-child.

Education acts (Namibia), Children's Law (Nigeria) and family codes (Algeria) have been revised and new ones promulgated. The laws on rape are introducing stiffer sentences, while the criminal codes are being amended to ensure protection of the rights of women and children. The Interstate Succession Act of Zambia guarantees equality of the sexes in succession and related economic issues.

To protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential, countries (e.g. Benin, Guinea, Sudan, Tunisia), have emphasized children's rights through educational materials, improved child care and establishing databases for disaggregated data to promote the socio-cultural and economic status of girls. Eradication of FGM, early marriages, violence, high rates of school dropout and teenage pregnancies has been targeted. To improve *self-confidence*, Algeria, Benin, Eritrea, Guinea, and Nigeria among others, encourage girls' participation in clubs, group discussions and debates. Programmes focus on literacy, skills training in home economics, health and hygiene (Algeria) and training in strategies for venturing into male-dominated careers. The career guidance curriculum has been reviewed for gender sensitization and 'Child Parliaments' are promoted in Guinea, while Sudan has revised the education curriculum and reduced the cost of educational services. Tunisia has reduced school dropout rates from 4.4 % to 3.1%.

Focusing on violence against the girl-child, health and nutrition, countries such as Zambia have established Women's Legal Clinics offering free legal advice and counseling to women and girls in poverty whose rights have been violated through violence or other means. Others such as Nigeria, Rwanda, Swaziland, and Tunisia have victim-support units and drop-in centres within the Police Service. In many countries, communities are sensitized through trade shows, road and talk shows, visits and campaigns. The general public is mobilized through television, radio, discussion and drama groups, production and distribution of video cassettes, posters, leaflets and gender-training manuals. Problems of forced labour and poor nutrition are remedied by alleviating poverty, improving the environment, health and nutrition status and by raising the educational standards of women and girls. The vesico-vagina fistula (VVF) theatre and rehabilitation centres in Nigeria provide care for underage married women with infections. Ghana reported increased openness in discussing violations of women's and girls' rights.

Resources: Allocation is inadequate. Chad spent CFA26.5 million on this critical area.

Constraints and gaps: These include:

1. Gender-biased economic, social and cultural factors affecting the rights of mothers and their daughters;
2. The low level of gender awareness on the plight of the girl-child;

3. Poverty of parents;
4. Disabled girls are often sexually abused and deprived of educational, economic and appropriate medical services.

Recommendations:

1. Promote girls' sports;
2. Institute a world day for the girl-child;
3. Create and strengthen networks.

Emerging issues: The girl-child is undoubtedly receiving deserved attention. However, on the other hand, the boy-child should not be ignored in the process of improving the status of the girl-child, to achieve inequality in reverse. The girl-child and the boy-child are both the adults of tomorrow and need to be equally prepared to face that tomorrow together.

II. CONCLUSION OF THE SYNTHESIS

It is evident from the synthesis of the national progress reports that much progress has been achieved within a relatively short time. This is essentially a reflection of the political will articulated by the African States that have responded positively to recommendations reiterated during international, regional and national meetings. This political will, which has been demonstrated through the formulation and implementation of national plans of action, must be endorsed by all actors in the political and technical arena and by the entire society.

In their reports, countries acknowledged that implementation of the National Plans of Action has been slowed down by a number of constraints and gaps. The primary obstacle, which is partly the result of the enthusiasm generated by the Beijing Conference, is the multiplicity of initiatives and projects to promote the advancement of women by actors in the public sector, civil society, and external cooperation agencies. Each sector has adopted a specific approach in the implementation of its activities. This diversity of strategies, lack of coordination, lack of genuine expertise in the "gender" approach, as well as the waste of energy and resources due to duplication of initiatives all constitute major obstacles in implementation of national plans of action.

In Beijing, all States committed themselves to foster the promotion of gender equality. To achieve this in practice, it is necessary to mainstream the "gender" approach in policies and programmes. Unfortunately, no national report has outlined an overall gender approach or philosophy to serve as the basis for determining what actions are to be implemented. *Ad hoc* training in a gender approach was carried out but such efforts were insufficient.

A number of recent developments have also raised concern regarding the situation of women. It was reported that in many countries, more than 70% of the population is living below the poverty line, with women constituting the bulk of this population. This is the reason why many countries have placed an emphasis on the fight against poverty. Some countries have also taken measures to foster the wellbeing of the poor and other vulnerable groups. In most cases, however, these efforts have not achieved the expected results as demonstrated by the increasing number of indigents and vulnerable groups, namely beggars, street children, prostitutes, and growing HIV/AIDS victims. The AIDS pandemic and its devastating effects on women and children is highlighted in many reports.

These obstacles and the difficult overall socio-economic environment must be taken into consideration by all States in implementing the decisions taken and adopted by the Sixth African Regional Conference for Women.

ANNEXES

TABLE I –National Gender Policies and Plans of Action

	NATIONAL GENDER POLICIES	NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION
ALGERIA		yes
ANGOLA		yes (to 2000)
BENIN		yes
BOTSWANA	yes	yes
BURKINA FASO		yes (1998/00)
BURUNDI		yes (1998/00)
CAMEROON	yes	yes
CAPE VERDE		yes (1996/00)
CEN. AFR. REP	yes	yes
CHAD	yes	yes (1995/99)
COMOROS	(in prep.)	yes
CONGO	yes	yes (2000/02)
DEM. R. CONGO		yes (1999/04)
DJIBOUTI		yes
EQUAT. GUINEA		yes
ERITREA		yes
ETHIOPIA	yes	yes
GABON		yes
GAMBIA	yes	yes
GHANA		yes
GUINEA	yes	yes (1997/01)
GUINEA-BISSAU		yes (1998/03)
COTE D'IVOIRE		yes (2000/05)
KENYA	yes	yes
LESOTHO		no
LIBERIA		no (in prep.)
LIBYA		no
MADAGASCAR		yes
MALAWI	yes	yes (1997)
MALI		yes (1996/00)
MOROCCO		yes
MOZAMBIQUE		no
NAMIBIA	yes	yes
NIGER	yes	yes
NIGERIA	yes	no
RWANDA		yes
S. TOME and PR.		Yes
SENEGAL		yes (1997/01)
SEYCHELLES		yes
SIERRA LEONE		yes
SUDAN		yes (1998/02)
SWAZILAND		yes
TANZANIA	yes	no
TOGO	yes	yes (1999/04)
TUNISIA		yes
UGANDA	yes	yes
ZAMBIA	yes (draft)	yes
ZIMBABWE	yes (by December 1999)	yes

Source: National Reports, 1999

TABLE II -Countries' Priorities in Strategic Objectives and Actions

	Poverty	Education	Health	Violence	Conflict	Economy	Decisions	Institutions	H. Rights	Media	Environmt.	Girl-child
ALGERIA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		
ANGOLA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
BENIN		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓
BOTSWANA	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓	
BURKINA FASO	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
BURUNDI	✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓		
CAMEROON	✓			✓			✓	✓				✓
CAPE VERDE	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CEN. AFR. REP.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
CHAD	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
COMOROS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
CONGO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
DEM. REP. CONGO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DJIBOUTI	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓				
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	✓	✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	
ERITREA	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			
ETHIOPIA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
GABON	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
GAMBIA	✓			✓		✓				✓	✓	
GHANA	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	
GUINEA	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
GUINEA-BISSAU	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓						✓
COTE D'IVOIRE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
KENYA	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			
LESOTHO	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓			
LIBERIA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LIBYA	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			
MADAGASCAR	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	
MALAWI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
MALI	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓	
MOROCCO	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
MOZAMBIQUE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NAMIBIA	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓
NIGER	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
NIGERIA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RWANDA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S. TOME and PR.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
SENEGAL	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓
SEYCHELLES	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
SIERRA LEONE	✓	✓	✓		✓							
SUDAN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SWAZILAND	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓		✓
TANZANIA	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓				
TOGO	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	
TUNISIA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
UGANDA	✓		✓	✓					✓			✓
ZAMBIA	✓	✓	✓				✓					✓
ZIMBABWE		✓				✓	✓	✓				

Source: National Reports, 1999

Figure I. Country Priorities
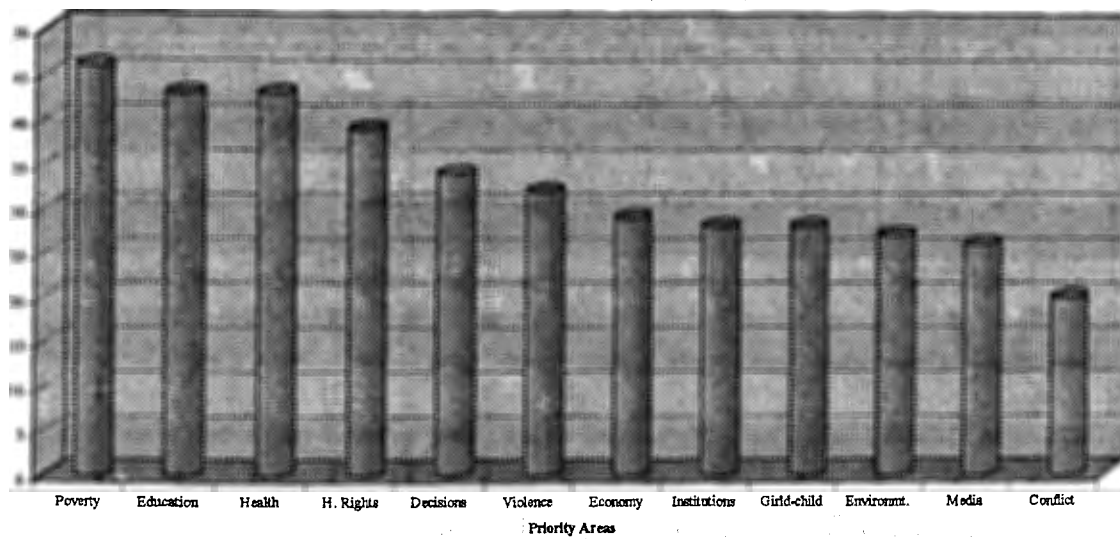
TABLE III. Health and Education

	Health				Education					
	Maternal mortality[1]	Infant mort.[2]		Access to medical serv.	Contraceptive usage rate%[3]	Illiteracy rate%		Pri. sch. enrol%[4]		Sec. sch. enrol%[5]	
		Fem.	Male			Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male
ALGERIA	146 ('97)	54.6	59.5	98% ('95)	49 ('95)	33.4	23.6	46.5	53.5	53.73	45.1
ANGOLA	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BENIN	221 ('97)	94 ('96)		-	4.3 ('97)	71.0	-	-	-	-	-
BOTSWANA	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BURKINA FASO	566 ('95)	115 ('95)		-	9.8 ('96)	91.7	77.0	-	-	-	-
BURUNDI	541	-		-	3.5	72.6	51.7	-	-	46.0	54.0
CAMEROON	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAPE VERDE	-	-		-	33.2 ('97)	63.6	36.3	48.9	51.1	50.7	49.2
CEN. AFRI. REP.	948	-		-	3	76.0	-	40	51	-	-
CHAD	-	132		-	-	84.0	53.0	-	-	-	-
COMOROS	500	116		80%	11.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
CONGO	890	123 ('97)		-	3.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
DEM. R. CONGO	1837	125 ('97)		-	-	Rur:60	-	-	-	-	-
DJIBOUTI	740	114		-	26.0	74.4	42.7	-	-	-	-
EQUAT. GUINEA	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ERITREA	330('97')	136(95')		-	-	90.0	70.0	45.3	54.6	40.1	59.8
ETHIOPIA	500-700 ('97')	105		48.5%	9.8	75.0	-	36.0	63.9	-	-
GABON	-	-		-	-	63.0	-	-	-	-	-
GAMBIA	1050 ('93)	126 ('95)		-	12.0 ('95)	73.0	-	42.6	57.4	31-37	-
GHANA	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GUINEA	686	136		-	2.0	83.0	62.0	-	-	-	-
GUINEA-BISSAU	700	132		-	-	8.5		38	53	-	-

[1] Per 100,000 live births.
[2] Per 1000.
[3] All methods.
[4] Percentage of the total enrolment.
[5] Percentage of the total enrolment.

TABLE III (continued) -Health and Education   *(-) No data*
available

	Health				Education					
	Maternal mortality	Infant mort.		Access to medical serv.	Contraceptive usage rate%	Illiteracy rate%		Pri. sch. enrol%		Sec.sch. enrol%	
		Fem.	Male			Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male	Fem.	Male
COTE D'IVOIRE	400	100		-	-	67.6	48.1	-	-	-	-
KENYA	365-590	66.8	74.5	-	39%	45.0	-	49.4	50.6	46.7	53.3
LESOTHO	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LIBERIA	500-600	134		-	-	78.0	46.0	40.0	60.0	32.0	68.0
LIBYA	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MADAGASCAR	596 ('94)	93		65%	-	57.0	52.0	-	-	-	-
MALAWI	620 ('96)	133 ('96)		36% ('96)	14.0	69.0	44.0	-	-	-	-
MALI	577	102		-	12.4	89.0	?	Ratio 0.62 w.		-	-
MOROCCO	228 ('93/'97')	61.6		-	58.8	67.0	41.0	42.8	57.2	44.2	55.8
MOZAMBIQUE	-	-		-	-	-	-	44.0	56.0	28.0	72.0
NAMIBIA	-	-		55%	-	20.0	17.0	50.1	49.9	52.7	47.3
NIGER	1020	127		32% ('97)	7.9 ('96/'97)	87.9	78.9	-	-	-	-
NIGERIA	-	-		-	-	61.0	38.0	54.4	45%	-	-
RWANDA	-	-		-	-	-	-	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
SAO TOME and PR.	209 ('93)	63.5 ('97')		-	15.5 ('97')	57.5	26.8	47.5	52.4	-	-
SENEGAL	510	60		80%	14.0	64.3	63	-	-	35.4	-
SEYCHELLES	-	8.1 ('97')		-	51.0	-	-	50.8	49.2	51.3	48.7
SIERRA LEONE		169 ('96/'97)		28.0%	6.0%	77.0	64.0	43.0	57.0	-	-
SUDAN	-	-		-	15%	57.6	33.4	54.8	46.2	47.2	52.8
SWAZILAND	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TANZANIA	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOGO	-	-		-	-	63.0	33.0	-	-	-	-
TUNISIA	56	24.4	30.5	90.6%	65.6%	42.9	21.2	47.7	52.3	50.6	49.4
UGANDA	-	-		-	-	-	-	47.0	53.0	-	-
ZAMBIA	649	-		-	19 ('96)	-	-	Equal (ratio 1.1)		-	-
ZIMBABWE	-	-		-	-	-	-	49.0	51.0	42.4	57.6

Source: National Reports