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Expert Group Meeting to Follow Up on the Fourth World Conference
on Women (Beijing + 10)
Second Meeting of the Consultative Committee for Non-Governmental
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Beirut, 8-10 July 2004

**RESPONSES OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO GOVERNMENTS ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR
ACTION (1995) AND THE OUTCOME OF THE 23RD SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000)
REPUBLIC OF YEMEN**

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Introduction

Yemen has witnessed since the early nineties many and great transformations probably the most significant of which, is the Yemeni Unity; the new constitution which was based on democratic principles and rights of all humans, women and men; and the emerging of a sequence of legislations and laws based on the constitution and sustaining and defending human rights.

National strategies and policies, therefore, emerge from the spirit and commandments of the Yemeni constitution in attending to enhancing and improving the status of Yemeni women. This is based on the analysis of Yemeni women's status and reading from their development reality where the gender gap between men and women is significant in many aspects of life, especially women's access to opportunities, services and resources. Many efforts had been paid by the government, by the civil society organisations and donor parties, however, the challenges against women's development remain.

Beijing + 10 is a report that highlights a collection of relative achievements that were realised in education, health and decision-making fields. This report also approaches a number of persisting challenges, which stand against speeding the process of women's development. It also highlights the responsibility of the concerned national establishments and organisations to translate the women's development strategy into executive plans, and practical programmes and projects as well as to improve the partnership with the various active organisations in the government, civil societies and donors.

In this context, I would like to present my deep appreciation and thanks to the working group behind the accomplishment of this report in a relatively remarkable time frame. Thanks are also extended to Oxfam-GB who supported this project financially and logistically.

Through this report we hope that we have presented a holistic and comprehensive insight into the reality of Yemeni women's development, simultaneously looking into the horizons for enhancement and development of women in Yemen.

I. BRIEF REVIEW ON YEMEN'S EXPERIENCE THROUGH 10 YEARS IN IMPLEMENTING BEIJING WORKING APPROACH

1. The Yemeni government's dedication to the Beijing working approach commitments is becoming a felt reality in variously increasing domains. However, the government still faces great difficulties that stand against the transformation of commitments to realistic actions in many domains.

Such obstacles vary from the point of orientation and ability to be overcome. For example there are the scarce resources, the deterioration of economy, the social, cultural and political infrastructure all of which stand as hurdles against women's empowerment efforts and expanding their participation.

However, there have been achievements, although modest, and they form as serious indicators growing rapidly and becoming an obvious fact, and a reality that a number of active men and women in the society, government bodies and civil society organisations are behind its existence.

2. The Supreme Council for Women's Affairs is the supreme governmental body and which is concerned with integrating women's issues in the general political directions of the country and which aims at enhancing women's status in the society. The Council was restructured in 2003 and is chaired by the prime minister and includes seven ministers and one deputy minister, private sector representatives six female personalities among which is the chairperson of the Women's National Committee (WNC), her deputy and coordinators of the WNC in all the proveniences. The WNC is the consultative, executive and administrative body of the Supreme Council for Women's Affairs, which in turn has taken important decisions that aim to endorse the infrastructure if the WNC and its branches in its meeting in March 2004.

3. The government has supported the principle of partnership with the civil society organisations and the private sectors in order to share the responsibility of improving women's status responsibility. A number of partnership domains have been established such as incorporating political parties and nongovernmental organisations in the structure of WNC and its branches in the various proveniences, in addition to the direct promotion and participation in establishing the modern networking mechanisms among many national and international organisations, as well as to dedicate energies and resources to support women's demands and enhancing their situation.

4. The WNC followed the amendment of legislative laws that discriminate against women, and it succeeded with the cooperation with government and nongovernmental organisations in amending many of discriminative articles in five laws. It also managed to through a pressurising campaign to terminate a legal statement of "Bait al-ta'a" (House of obedience) that was proposed for ratifying and which is considered a

clear form of discrimination against the wife in favour of the husband. The campaign led to President Ali Abdullah Saleh using his constitutional rights to solve the issue and cancel the statement.

5. The Strategic Vision for Women's Development has been subjected to continuous revising in order to develop its concepts and indications in a way that satisfies the requirements for women's enhancement. Efforts were to align the strategic vision with the strategic objectives of the Beijing approach and the CEDAW. This appears clearly in the latest review and from which the gender strategy for women's development has been adopted and approved by the council of ministers in September 2003 and which included four main strategic issues of high priority in women's development.

6. Relative and varied progress has emerged regarding the government and government's bodies' dedication to the gender approach and women's need for more empowerment tools. This has been clear through the various national development strategies and policies that were approved in the last few years of which is the National Population Strategy (2001-2025), Basic Education Development Strategy, National Strategy for Literacy Training Adult Education, National Strategy for Integrating Youth in development, National Strategy for Women's Employment, The National Strategy about Incorporating Gender in the Main stream in Agriculture and Food Security, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2003-2005) and others.

7. A high percentage of the WNC's efforts and activities, women's departments in the ministries and government bodies in addition to the activities of the national and international NGOs have been focused on awareness, advocacy. The activities were dedicated to building capacities, enhancement of awareness and gender culture that is anti discrimination against women and anti depriving of women's rights. The support and adoption of international organisations and donor countries to those activities has played a vital role in this domain.

8. Principle obstacles against implementing urgent procedures:

(a) Weak commitment to serious and regular follow-up of the general strategies and policies. Although there is relative commitment towards the gender approach general policies, the practical implementation of these policies into action plans, program and projects is still limited, with the exception of the WNC's efforts in supervising the gender/ women development strategy and gender prospective in the poverty reduction strategy.

(b) Necessarily financial resources are not dedicated for bridging the gender gap in the various fields, and the related general programs and projects that target women and programs that attend to women's needs and requirements with regards to their reproductive roles.

(c) Integrating steps of gender into the general policies, programs and legislations nevertheless face many barriers such as the perseverance of parental thinking and male culture that clearly dominates, even of the behaviour of influencing elements in decision making positions.

(d) In spite of the relative prevalence of gender classified information and data in the official reports and documents, it remains inefficient in reflecting the reality of the gender gap and the actual contribution of women's roles in economic, social and political domains. Currently evaluative, analytical reports are being prepared on the level of implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), supporting statistics and data on the extent of targeting women in those programs and projects especially in the education and health domains, which are highlighted in most of the general strategies and policies particularly the PRSP.

II. PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND IMPLEMENTATION HURDLES

A. WOMEN'S POVERTY REDUCTION

1. Poverty related data of the subsequent governments since 1995 has been explicit, and various programs and pro-poor policies had been adopted by the government with support from the donors. On top of the list is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper PRSP (2003-2005) that was adjusted in line with the with 2025 strategic vision of the country, with the 2001-2005 second five year plan and with the millennium development goals.

2. A supreme mechanism (a ministerial committee lead by the head of government) was established with an affiliated body specialized in follow-up and monitoring (Follow-up and Monitoring Unit FMU) of the PRSP. This monitoring body has branches in all ministries and government offices, national and local. There are five thematic groups working in the monitoring of the PRSP implementation and the WNC has taken lead in the gender thematic working group, in which the WNC, GOs and NGOs are represented along with a group of donors. The WNC established a unit in its managerial structure concerned with the regular follow-up of poverty and gender issues. Three representatives of the WNC have been appointed in the FMU's branches so as to supervise the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy at the ministry and providences levels.

3. There have been many achievements in the field of poverty reduction – with the support of donors. The expanding of the social security network is one of the main indicators that confirm the achievement. The social security network includes the following programs and projects:

Social Development Fund; Social Care Fund; National Productive Families Program, and which concentrated mainly on women's requirements while benefiting all family members; Micro-Industries development Unit, from which 48% of the beneficiaries are women; General Works Projects, Enhancing Labour Productivity Project, Women Integration in the Socio-economic Development Project.

A number of NGOs have also participated in poverty reduction such as the Mini and Micro Microstart Loans Project, Economic Empowerment of Women Project and others. However, many of the detailed and final quantitative/ qualitative indicators are still being formulated and audited, moreover general and secondary databases are quite insufficient.

4. Challenges and gaps persist strongly in the way of eradicating women's poverty, mainly:

- Scarcity and inaccuracy of poverty information, and statistical indicators, also the absence of gender based statistical and methodological methodologies. Therefore the evaluation of women's poverty is subjected to many estimations and guesswork. The obvious weakness in the direct integration of gender approaches and in using accurate indicators in the approved strategies and plans for eradicating poverty, this weakness generalises the policies and causes ambiguity while follow-up and evaluation becomes increasingly difficult.
- Although there has been an increase in the general expenditure dedicated to poverty reduction, along with support from donor organisations to eradicating poverty, the resources actually dedicated for this issue remain limited and requires reallocation in a way that allows more economic opportunities for women and facilitates women's access to the productive resources.

For example the income generating mini and micro-projects share reached only 7% of the total poverty reduction programs and funds expenditure, although it is one of the most suitable projects to poor women and the support of their families.

- Available indicators on poverty (1998, 1999) confirm that the phenomenon represents one of the most dangerous challenges faced in the next decade, where:
 - Poverty Ration in the rural areas is 45% and in the urban areas 30.8%
 - The highest poverty percentage was registered in Taiz provenience (56%) and the lowest was registered in al-Baidha at 15%.
 - Percentage of population living under the Food Poverty Line is 17.5%
 - Percentage of population living under the Upper Poverty Line (Education, health and clothing poverty) is 41.8%
 - The poorest inhabitants who represent 20% of the total population consume only 6% of the total public expenses while the richest inhabitants (20% of the population) consume around 50% of the total public expenses.
 - The percentage of poor families (below the minimum poverty line) that are head by women reached 13% being 10% lower than the percentage of poor families headed by men.
 - The percentage of families in acute poverty where a women is the head of the family reached 7.6% while those headed by men reached 5.6%
 - The average income of a family headed by a woman is one third less than that of families headed by men.
- Considering the continuous suffering women are subjected to because of the prevalence of forms of discrimination against women and economic

and social segregation of women, therefore the percentages in poverty and other indicators are higher of women than that of men. And while the country's economic and investment conditions have not improved in the last five years, these numbers remain liable to reflect worse poverty indicators and especially when it comes to women.

- The government conducts a survey on family budget in 2005, and the WNC will work on integrating women's development indicators in this survey so as to become aware of the improvement in women's status.

B. WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

1. The government adopted during the previous phase strategies and policies that emphasise on the importance of improving and enhancing education and training and to decrease the existing gap between women and men in this field. Of the most strategies taking up this issue is the National Strategy for Literacy Training Adult Education, National Strategy for Girls Education, Enhancement of Basic Education Strategy. As for the main objectives relating to women they are:

- Eliminating illiteracy and establishing an adult education system (1996-2020)
- Increasing girls enrolment in basic education to 55% in 2005 and to 70% in 2010 and to 90% in 2015
- Reform and development of the system of education

2. Education indicators are much below ambition and there is a great gap between male and female education:

- In 1999 female illiteracy reached 39.9% in the cities and 78.2% in the rural areas, and although the percentage of illiterate women below 15 years of age percentages has decreased from 82.8% to 74.1% during 1994-2000, this is considered of the highest in the region.
- Female enrolment in basic education in the academic year 2002-2003 has reached 49% in the urban areas versus 41% in the suburbs whereas the same for males is 51% and 59% respectively. As for the total number of girls in basic education in 2002 they reached 36.8% versus 63.2% for boys.
- The percentage of female students in secondary education in 2003 reached 40% in the cities against 20% in the suburbs.
- While the university enrolled females reached only 25% of the total university students.
- The situation seems more balanced in the pre-school education and kindergarten it reached 47% although the total number of enrolled kids

generally is very less 14 limited to the main cities and some governorate centres.

3. Female vocational training and education has improved especially since the establishment of a ministry concerning with this in 2001. After the increase in the dedications for establishing new schools and training centres. However the gap between male and female students in such disciplines is very large, as the number of females enrolled in the two-year course is insignificant, while those in secondary level ranges between 5-10% during the past four years. In the academic year 2003-2004 the number of female vocational training centres was only 8 centres distributed among 6 governorates only in which only 514 female students have enrolled among the total of 6462 students. Meaning that the number of girls registered is around 8% of the total number moreover this number is limited to the typical disciplines such as nursery, sewing and some computer maintenance and secretary work and accounting.

4. The objectives mentioned in the educational strategies such all elimination of illiteracy by 2020, and increasing girls enrolment in basic education to 90% by 2015 and to limit drop-outs are the main challenges in this field, however there are a number pressing needs:

5. Activating the committing legislations that ensure basic education and to exercise punishments on parents who deprive their children from basic education and simultaneously procedures that encourage and incentives to those who educate their children

- Developing the education syllabus to attend to the youth and children educational requirements and to expand their knowledge and health, psychological, and physical requirements according to the general national objectives and relating those to the development requirements
- Attend to the globalisations needs and to face the challenges through technical education built on modern technology such as computers in schools and focus on learning foreign languages

C. WOMEN AND HEALTH

1. The paid efforts aiming at improving the health services according to the National Population Strategy's objectives have resulted improvement in the following indicators:

- Average life span has increased to 63 for females and 62 for males in 2002.
- Infant mortality has decreased to 72 and 78 deaths in every 1000 live births for females and males respectively.

- Fertility rate decreased from 7.7 to 6.5 children for women in reproductive ages.
- Mother mortality post-birth has decreased to 366 deaths per 100 thousand live births (according to the latest health survey)
- The number of married women using contraceptives has reached 23% in 2003

2. Due to the scarcity of dedicated resources in this domain among other factors; the health sector is quite fragile and suffers from obvious weaknesses in its provided services quantitatively and qualitatively:

- The coverage of health services only fills 80% in the urban areas and 25% of the rural areas.
- The percentage of mothers who receive health care during pregnancy in the cities is 61% while the same in the rural areas is 27% only.
- Percentage of mothers who receive professional health assistance during delivery of 22% while more than 50% of the women deliver with the assistance of relatives and other women
- Morbidity and malnutrition indicators of females are many times more than that of males (anaemia, kidney disease and contagious disease) and the main reason for this is the reproductive roles; pregnancy, childbirth and breast feeding and their complications and the postpartum period
- Only 61% of women who had sexual infections received medical advice while 39% of those women were deprived of this because of geographic, material or social barriers.

3. The challenges and hurdles in women's health domain are numerous: need of increasing the expenditure on public health, eliminating the existing gaps in health protection facilities provided to women, provision of emergency obstetric care in order to decrease the mother's mortality rate to 75 case in all 100,000 delivery by 2015, and to decrease maternity mortality and morbidity in 2005 by 25% of what it was in 2000. Also to avail health and antenatal care services to 60% of pregnant women while deliveries under professional medical supervision to be 40% of the total deliveries in 2005.

D. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

1. Many legislations and constitutional decrees protect women's dignity, civil and political rights in principle. However, the cultural-social heritage and traditions clearly influence women's reality and subject them to many forms of violations, physical, sexual and psychological violence, such as:

- Beating, and humiliation by the husband and relatives, forced and early marriage, ill-treatment by the husband, forced delivery, deprivation of

participation in family decision making. These forms of discrimination were highlighted in the field survey conducted by the WNC in 2002.

- Deprivation of education and of health services, sexual molestation and rape by relatives, exaggerating dowries which leads to spinsterhood, favouring of males to females in the family and society environments, and violations of women's rights when prosecution, custody and imprisonment. As well as deprivation of inheritance, and of resources wealth assets opportunities, unpaid labour, to carry cruel heavy reproductive-productive roles in addition to harassment by male employers in work and deprivation of political participation.

2. Talk on Violence Against Women (VAW) no longer provokes social influential personalities as it was in the beginning. Government bodies and NGOs concerned with VAW during the last five years have increasingly worked in this field and conducted various awareness activities and programs highlighting this phenomenon, its dimensions and negative implications on women and the society as a whole. Of the most important organisations working in eliminating violence against women (EVAW) is the SHIMA network established in May 2003 through the support of Oxfam-GB and which included in its membership 12 NGOs in addition to the WNC. The network accomplished significant activities crowned by the First National Conference on EVAW in March 2004. The conference dealt with the various dimensions and aspects of the phenomenon including political violence against women. And issued a declaration that emphasised that the quota system for women in political decision making positions would form as one of the most important methods to fight segregation and political marginalized of women. Of the forms of violence understudy currently is the early marriage and female gentile mutilation and which are being fought today through awareness campaigns.

3. The challenges in EVAW remain complicated and multi-angled. They require deep investigation, accurate data and fact gathering and statistics on the reasons and forms of violence against women. Violence eliminating measures and procedures must be implemented so as to change the social and cultural behaviour styles and the typical thinking moulds that are biased against women, in addition to the implementation of punishment measures and procedures against those who commit violence women.

E. WOMEN AND ECONOMY

1. Yemen is committed to a number of international labour agreements relating to women's work and economic rights. This commitment has reflected on many of the related legislations and in the policies, and stances of government that is tentatively committed to increasing women's participation in the political life. However, this does not mean that the practical implementation in reality goes with the same smoothness.

2. According to the latest workforce surveys in 1999, female labour and their economic activities were as follows:

- Percentage of women in the total workforce reached 49.9% (the working force in the rural areas reach 71.2%)
- Percentage of women in the economically non-active population has reached 72.1%
- The percentage of women in the total working force is 24.6% only (the percentage of labour in the total working force 88.5%, and those who work in paid jobs are only 41.8% of the total workforce.)
- Women working in paid jobs are only 8.2% against 91.8% for men
- Women represent 28.3% percent of the work force in private sector and NGOs while only 9.3% work in the government and public sector.
- The ratio of women working in agriculture, fishery and second-hand is about 94.7% of the total women working in private sector and NGOs.
- About 92.7% of total working women work in the non-governmental sector
- Of the workingwomen, 4.3% work in education, while 2.6% work in transformation industries.
- Ratio of unemployed women has reached 8.2% verses 12.5% for men.

3. The above indicators show clear injustice as a high percentage of women work without being paid and without collective recognition of her efforts and contribution in economy whether in the no-governmental sector or through varying the double burden of reproductive and productive roles as well as in many cases the social roles. 1998 estimations indicate that invisible contribution of house wives and women unpaid labour yield 58% of the total national production and increases to 64% when considering visible contribution of working women.

There are many obstacles in the path of women empowerment and women's economic work, mainly:

- The continuous oppressive economic segregation, and the limitation or absence of women's participation in the economic decision making and in formatting the monitory, commercial and financial policies among others
- The limited number of supporting projects to women's economic independence, and that facilitate their access to resources such as land, capital money, insurance, technology, education, training and information or knowledge, especially for the rural women and those in remote areas.
- The absence of measures that would ensure acceptance of women on a wider scale in the labour market without being discriminated against. The absence of investments in the fields, that are most suitable to women's employment and the absence of sufficient protection from the harassment by the males who are triggered by a discriminating extreme culture towards women's mixing with men and working.

- The continuous absenteeism of national and international efforts required to create statistics that proves women's contribution in the national economy, including the appreciation of women's unpaid labour in both the domestic and unsystematic sectors.

F. WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

1. There are no bases in the Islamic jurisprudence, the republic's constitution, and the internal legislations of the main political parties that stand against women's participation in authority and decision making positions. In fact, it is the equality between men and women that is confirmed and emphasised by various laws and rules in this field. However, practices in reality remain remote from the principle of equality and is quite conflicting with the legislations, therefore, women's representation in those positions is very minimal and likely to be symbolic in the various domains.

2. The representation of women in the parliament decreased from two females in the 1993, 1997 elections to only one in the 2003 elections against 300 male counterparts. Moreover, the number of women who have been nominated to compete on the parliamentary seats have decreased from 41 candidates in 1993, to 19 in 1997 and finally to only 11 in the 2003 elections, whereas the number of female voters has increased simultaneously to reach 42% of the registered voters in the latest elections in 2003.

In the local councils the women who won seats in the providences and districts councils have reached only 0.6% of the total local councils' membership as the number of women reached 37 verses 6000 man. The situation in the "Showra" (consultative) council – in which the members are appointed not elected - is not any better where only two women were appointment in the total of 111 members.

3. Although women's representation in the supreme bodies of the main political parties seems relatively encouraging due to the slow progress of women's ratios in the structures of those bodies (the percentages range between 4% and 14% approximately), women's actual participation in the supreme bodies work and decisions remains symbolic in most of the cases. The 2003 parliamentary experience has come to confirm this fact through the observation of the negligible number of political parties' candidates.

4. Women's situation in the governmental various executive bodies, is not any different. One woman was appointed in the two ministerial structures (a minister of state in 2001, and a minister of human rights in 2003), against the appointment of more than 30 male ministers. Also, earlier one woman was appointed as an ambassador and a number of women held deputy minister in more than one ministry as well as a general director of some of the important departments in a number of ministries. However, these appointments remain symbolic more than appreciation of women's abilities or a democratic progress.

5. The above examples of women's participation in authority and decision making positions reflect the hesitant and conflicting political will of politicians in the political parties and government. An issue that strengthened the conceptions of gender concerned parties and emphasised on the need to demand the implementation of a quota system as one of the efficient solutions for this situation. The quota system aims to enable women to overcome the obstacles that stand against their reach of decision making positions, and efforts are currently ongoing for a supporting campaign of this system.

6. Participation in the judiciary system:

The Yemeni constitution does not contain any statements that prevent women from joining the judiciary line, however, the implementation continues to be inefficient. The number of women who have availed positions in the system in early stages is only 32 female judge versus 1200 male judge. Recently there has been some progress when it was decreed in the juvenile courts regulations that at least one of the Judges assistances should be a female, more so a female judge was appointed in this position in the juvenile court in one of the proveniences.

F. WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS

1. During years 2000-2002, the WNC in coordination with a number of civil society organisations revised the legislative structure of the Republic of Yemen and defined the most important articles that discriminate against women in a number of laws, and then followed up the amendment of these laws in the related legislative and executive authorities. Among twenty demanded amendments only five found their way to ratification and those are:

Nationality law, Personal Status Law, Employment Law, Civil Status Law and the Civil Record. Similar efforts form the WNC and with direct interference from the President of Republic through using his authorities another discriminatory law was cancelled and that is "Bait al-Ta'a" (House of obeisance) in the pleading law.

2. The WNC currently is following the necessarily procedures to continue the demand of amending the remaining discriminative laws. Simultaneously another review of the national laws is taking place in order to eliminate arguments and articles that discriminate against women in these laws.

H. WOMEN AND MEDIA

1. Efforts to integrate gender in the media policies and in the national strategy for population awareness have witnessed progress during the last three years. A women's general department in the ministry of information had been established and the number of females working in the various technical and administrative positions at the ministry has increased. However, a great gender gap remains between men and

women, including employees in TV and radio broadcast stations, in addition to the fact that what is implemented practically is remotely related to the policies adopted.

2. There is an obvious shortcoming in the media materials' essence of the official media as it consolidates the typical image of the Yemeni women and her typical roles in stead of integrating the gender prospective and promoting quality and role balance between man and woman in the family and society.

3. The Yemeni woman continues to be unqualified to make use of the information and knowledge resources due to a number of material, social and cultural barriers. Around 67.5% of women do not make use of the written media because of illiteracy, and the majority of rural women do not have access to newspapers. The limitation of the electricity services deprives many women and men of the visual media, and although the radio broadcast remains the most outreaching media tool, not all rural women can avail this resource because of their engagement in domestic, agriculture and livestock labour.

4. The mentioned difficulties explain that the main challenges in women's development media wise are educating, training and employing women, as well as providing a balanced untypical image of women in the media through which facilitating women's access and use of media tools would be maximized.

I. WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENT

1. Yemen as a country suffers from scarcity of water resources and deforestation of land while the plantation cover continues to reseed. These environmental problems among others form as an opening for increasing the number of poor and deprived people, especially women because of the loss of production resources that leads to using consumable resources. Moreover, it is women who carry the greater burden due to deterioration of natural resources as 75.5% of the people responsible for brining drinking water and 92% of wood gatherers for cooking are women.

2. Under the outline of efforts governed by the Environment Protection Authority, a women's department has been established in the administrative structure of the authority. Currently a strategy concerned with women and the environment is being prepared, and would create a significant turning point towards integrating gender in the environmental activities and empowering women in achieving sustainable development through limiting pollution and protecting natural resources in the best ways possible.

3. Therefore, the future challenges relating to women are closely related to implementing effective development policies that are able to:

- Face the harms and consequences of environment and natural resources' deterioration especially water.

- Eradicating poverty causes and stopping the declination in life styles of poor communities especially rural women.
- Providing technical and informative assistance to women and developing their skills in project planning.
- Ensuring woman's participation in decision making in relation to her surrounding environment, including planning and implementing environmental projects.

J. THE FEMALE CHILD

1. The Yemeni constitution included clear arguments on the states' protection of motherhood and childhood, youth and child's right to life, existence, growth and education. The child's right law issued in 2002 included more specific statements regarding the state's responsibility in caring for children and providing suitable growing circumstances in a healthy environment, while respecting their dignity, humanity and freedom. The government also adopted a number of policies and programs that are concerned with the life and rights of a child in the various growing phases.

2. From the previously mentioned indicators in poverty, education and health, it is clear that there are many challenges that stand against the female child enjoying many of her rights:

About 48% of the population are children between 5-15 years old and approximately half of those are females. This fact indicates that many of those children will suffer greatly because of the difficulty of guaranteeing their needs of the various basic social services.

The typical family upbringing and the biased social and cultural stance against females makes the female child more susceptible to suffering and violations:

- She is more deprived of education and health services
- Represents the majority of child labourers because of their families' poverty
- She becomes an easy prey to early marriage and its harmful consequences. Field surveys show that 25% of girls who married early, were below 16 years when they were married
- The female child is subjected to various forms of violence and deprivation based on gender such as female genital mutilation in some areas, and deprivation of inheritance.

III. PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

A. SUPREME NATIONAL MECHANISMS CONCERNED WITH WOMEN'S ISSUES

1. The Supreme Council for Women's Affairs

It is the highest government establishment that is concerned with women's issues. The Council was restructured in 2003 and is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes seven ministers and one deputy minister, private sector representatives six female personalities among which is the chairperson of the Women's National Committee (WNC), her deputy and coordinators of the WNC in all the proveniences. The Council's objective is to integrate women's issues in the general policies national wide and to enhance women's status in the economic, social, cultural and political domains.

The first meeting of the council was conducted in March 2004, and resulted significant decisions: Authentication of the regulating board of the WNC, instructing the various ministries to establish general departments for women and to approve the appointing of WNC's coordinators in the governorates through a prime minister's decree.

2. Women's National Committee

(a) It is national tool concerned with gender issues. It is also the consultative, executive and administrative body of the Supreme Council for Women's Affairs. Among its member and according to the restructuring decree in 2003:

- Focal points representing the administrative body and representing the civil society organisations and the private sector.
- WNC's coordinators in the capital secretariat and the various governorates
- Administrative staff in the Committee

(b) Main duties and authorities:

- Follow-up of the implementation of strategies, policies, plans and programs approved by the Supreme Council for Women's Affairs
- Preparing the women's strategy plans
- Enhance awareness regarding women's issues.

(c) Dedicated resources:

- Human Resources: The WNC has an administrative staff of 47 persons, seven are males and 30 females in addition to 10 leadership personalities
- Financial Resources: The dedicated budget for the Committee has witnessed clear increments since its establishments and until now. Since 2003 establishing budgets have been allocated for the five branches of the Committee. However, the size of the budget remains modest compared to the activities and nature of the WNC's responsibilities. In 2003 the general budget of the Committee was estimated to be 0.004% of the total budget. Although there are donor organisations that support certain activities of the Committee such as Oxfam-GB the supporting organisation to the EVAW projects, UN Population Fund, UN Women Development Fund, Fredrich Ebert Stiftung, UNICEF, World Bank, British Embassy, American Embassy, and the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands.

(d) Main achievements during the last three years:

- Preparation and commencing the implementation of the National Women Development / Gender Strategy which was approved by the council of ministers in September 2003 and which reflected the critical themes of the Beijing Approach and a serious stand regarding gender issues and empowering women. The procedures that are planned to take place in 2003-2005 make this strategy the most significant working plan adopted in this field until now, and it includes four strategic issues:
 - Executing Yemen's commitments to the CEDAW and Beijing Approach
 - Dealing with poverty gender issues
 - Limited political representation and participation of women
 - Supporting the WNC capabilities and other national mechanisms
 - Active participation in national strategy preparation in the fields of: women's work, poverty reduction, basic education and others
- Implementing tens of training programs for capacity building for employees, members and coordinators of the WNC and civil society organisations in strategic planning and integrating gender in development
- Managing the gender working group for supervising the poverty reduction strategy paper and the women's development strategy and many of various activities such as supporting the female candidates during the local parliamentary elections
- Formulating of a working group to suggest the amendments on the laws that include discriminating statements and follow-up their ratification
- Adopting and implementing many studies on: female prisoners' conditions, girls ambitions, rural women's status, political participation of

Yemeni women, violence against women, the quota as a mechanism to activate women's political participation

- Conducting many meetings with ministry leaders and discussing women's issues in the respective ministry and devising permanent follow-up methodologies
- Conducting consultative-coordinative meetings with the Showra (consultative) and parliament councils that yielded important recommendations supporting women's enhancement and expanding women's participation in public life
- Participating in the donors meeting in Paris where the Yemeni women for the first time highlighted women and gender issues, and was applauded enthusiastically.

3. Supreme Council for motherhood and childhood

(a) The council was established in 1999 and chaired by the prime minister and includes 9 ministries in its membership, the population council's general secretary, four NGOs and 3 women concerned with women's affairs and finally a general secretary of the council. There are four specialised departments affiliated to the council and it also includes a group of highly qualified staff, and branches in the various governorates.

(b) Specialisations and duties:

- Recommendation and preparing of laws, regulations, and conventions projects related to motherhood and childhood
- Information gathering and conducting surveys, studies and related statistics

(c) Resources:

The annual budget is about 28 million Yemeni Riyals, and national and international organisations contribute in funding and implementing some of the specific activities in awareness, training and capacity building.

B. NATIONAL MECHANISMS CONCERNED WITH WOMEN'S ISSUES

1. On the central / government level

Ministries and central bodies have established women's department responsible for follow-up of women and gender issues, and participate in decision making, and integrating women/gender issues in the plans of those bodies. The number of women's departments increased from 9 in 2000 to 30 in 2003 and all of which undergo

coordination and communication mechanisms with the WNC through a department there called the partners' department.

2. *On the local /government level*

Departments concerned with women's affairs have been established in the various governorates and its duties have been devised in a way that contributes in decision making on the local authorities level and in integrating the gender prospective in the planning and implementation of local development programs and projects

- In addition to the establishment of departments in the governorate level concerned with women's development related to the ministry of local administration, illiteracy eradication body and social care fund

3. *WNC branches and coordinates in the governorates*

Fifteen government and non-government parties participate in the membership pf the WNC branches in the governorates in order to execute the WNC's duties in the various governorates on the local level

Heads of the WNC branches (coordinates) participate in the membership of the PRSP monitoring and follow-up units.

4. *Primary partners (civil society organisation)*

The WNC ensures the participation of political parties and influential NGOs in the working themes through which the follow-up of the strategic responsibilities implementation. The WNC also tries to organise common activities through the modern methods of partnership and networking.

The Yemeni Women's Union is considered one of the most distinguished civil society organisations working in the women's affairs and it has 29 centres and 15 thousand members. The working mechanism of the Union was rephrased in the 2003 election round.

5. *Basic challenges and measures taken*

- (a) Of the existing challenges relating to women's poverty is to transform the partial integration of the gender prospective in poverty related policies and programs into total integration. Also to complement the partial and symbolic participation of women in the preparation and implementation of these policies and transforming it to an actual and effective participation that would yield:

- Direct targeting of women in the general programs and projects and to dedicate programs and projects for women that cater to their special development needs and their productive, reproductive roles in the society.
- Dedicating a predefined percentage of the resources in the budgets and donor support, and especially dedicate them for providing economic loans to poor women as well as to ensure women in the poorest regions' equal access to productive resources.
- Applying the gender analysis methodologies and activating mechanisms to monitor the poverty reduction programs so as to provide accurate data and indicators classified according to gender and to provide more specific evaluations of the poverty reasons, dimensions and ways of eradicating it.
- Among the challenges also is the state's efforts to increase the percentage of the poor who are included in the social security network to reach 80% in 2005, in addition to double the average monthly support to the beneficiaries of the Social Care Fund to reach 3000 YR by 2005.

(b) Basic challenges in female education and training:

- Eliminating female illiteracy by 2020 through an effective adult education system
- Increase the rate of females enrolled in basic education to 70% by 2010 and to 90% by 2015
- Encouraging and facilitating female vocational training through increasing the number and spread of such centres.
- Reforming and developing the education system and syllabus in a way that would qualify women to accommodate the technical advancements and the era's technical and scientific demands. This approach would also liberate women from discriminatory procedures or behaviours that stand against women's access to educational, technical and vocational skills. And perhaps the most challenging objective is the improving of the syllabus and freeing it from any typical roles of women and cultural dominated beliefs and concepts.

(c) According to the aspirations reflected in the National Population Strategy the main challenges in accommodating the health requirements of women are:

- Providing the emergency obstetric services in order to decrease mother's mortality to 75 case in every 100,000 live childbirth by 2015
- To decrease mother's morbidity and mortality rates by one forth of what it was in 2000 by 2005
- Facilitating access of health services to 60% of pregnant women and postnatal services to 40% of the mothers
- Increase the usage of family planning techniques through condensed awareness campaigns

- Providing mobile health services in all proveniences

(d) To ensure the implementation of EVAW working approach commitments, the procedures and initiatives include:

- Concern and interest in the educational and mobilising approaches to eliminating violence and to focus on planting an alternative culture that is non-discriminating and that overcome the typical roles and attitudes towards women and women's issues
- Conducting a large early marriage campaign during 2004
- Continuing pressure and demand for the quota system in order to fight segregation of women in the decision making positions which is a form of violence against women in addition to decreasing the inequality gap between men and women in the following fields:
 - Equal employment bonuses and promotions opportunities
 - Equal internal and external training opportunities
 - Participating in official delegates abroad
 - Continuing efforts against female genital mutilation
 - Continuous demand to amend discriminating laws
- Encourage research and fact gathering of information and data that inform about violence against women and the factors causing and limiting it
- Expanding the Shima network membership and activating it to fight violence against women

(e) In order to support economic independence of women through endorsing women's economic rights, work opportunities and access to resources the following must be achieved:

- Dedicating sufficient resources to support women's capabilities, especially that of rural women so as to enhance income and integrating her actively in economic and social development
- Broadening women's participation in economic decision making, planning projects and following their execution
- Attending to the gender dimension in employment and promotion and to stand against discriminating policies in the labour market
- Facilitating and easing procedures that enable women's access to resources and services in order to empower them economically
- Taking more practical and committing steps to integrate the gender perspective in economic analysis through which objective evaluations could be reached regarding the roles and economic contribution and to measure and calculate women's unpaid labour and their contribution in social re-productivity
- Gradual transformation of women from the unsystematic sector to the systematic sector

(f) To expand women's political participation and her access to authority structures focus will be on the following issues:

- Continuing to support the Quota System initiative campaign adopted by the WNC and to demand the political parties to reach an honouring agreement regarding this
- To support female candidate campaigns in the coming parliamentary and local councils elections
- To support the legislative amendments so as to facilitate their access to decision making positions and all levels of executive, legislative and judiciary authority structures
- Adopting research, awareness and mobilising activities that promote equality in political decisions between men and women

(g) In organisational development the following procedures will be targeted:

(h) Endorsing the WNC status through completing the legal and administrative infrastructure and to activate the Committee's advisory and monitoring role and to enhance its representation to a ministry for women

- To build the capacities of female leaderships in administration and strategic planning
- To oblige the related authorities to activate the gender departments in the ministries and the governorate offices and to activate the department's participation in drawing the general policies and preparation and follow-up of monitoring of development projects and their impact on women
- Support networks and communication bridges between government and non-government organisations to work together in order to enhance women's status and empowering women in all fields of life

(i) In media the focus will be on:

- Participating in setting media strategies and media programs that support and endorse women's active integration in development and to fully benefit from its outcomes
- To present a positive image of women in the media and to adopt women's issues and problems
- To spread supporting cultural heritage to women integration in public life and to eliminate those traditions that hurdle this integration
- To publish international agreements and legal statements relating to women's rights
- Publishing national reports on the level of progress in enhancing women's status

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