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**FOLLOW-UP ON PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT IN THE ESCWA REGION****PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT****Summary**

The present report discusses participatory social development considered as one of the main areas of social development. It examines the characteristics of participatory development policies, their patterns, determinants and favourable conditions for their implementation. It also exposes the fundamentals of the participatory development intervention, the obstacles hindering its implementation and the favourable conditions for such implementation. The report includes a chapter on the approach adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) with regard to the participatory development intervention; highlights relevant documents and guides published by ESCWA; and reviews its basis, development factors and implementation outcome. It also covers the primary areas of the approach, namely participation, capacity-building, poverty control, gender empowerment and environment protection. ESCWA hopes that this report would help motivate concerned parties to benefit from institutional and individual capacity-building programmes and technical advisory services in the various fields of participatory development.

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I. PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

1. The Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by General Assembly resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986, proclaims that “States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom”(Article 2, paragraph 3).
2. General Assembly resolution 62/131 of 18 December 2007 “recognizes the need to formulate social development policies in an integral, articulated and participative manner, recognizing poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon, calls for interlinked public policies on this matter, and underlines the need for public policies to be included in a comprehensive development and well-being strategy” (Paragraph 21).

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

3. The meaning of participatory development is elaborated through the characteristics of its policies, its patterns of implementation and factors affecting its operations. Participatory development presents, inter alia, the following characteristics:
 - (a) It has complementary goals, clearly coordinated levels and is comprehensive across all areas of development;
 - (b) It is fair, seeking equal opportunities for all social groups and individuals;
 - (c) It motivates efficient performance and coordination among all groups and institutions;
 - (d) It is flexible, transparent, controllable and accountable;
 - (e) It aims to tackle problems faced by society and to meet its developmental needs by empowering institutions, communities and individuals in terms of knowledge, skills and trends that enhance the understanding of the prevailing conditions of society, identifying its problems and capabilities, setting goals and determining intervention approaches, allocating resources and implementing programmes and projects and evaluating their performance;
 - (f) It aims to ensure sustainable development through institutional and individual capacity-building and enhancement of the regulations, values and standards that foster real participation in its operations and outcomes;
 - (g) It is based on a clear vision of an integrated national project, constitutes a framework for the organization of the development process according to financed plans, serves objectives and goals accepted by development partners, can be implemented from available resources, bears the promise of tangible success and is potentially sustainable.

C. APPROACHES TOWARD ACHIEVING PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

4. Approaches toward achieving participatory development involve a number of issues that vary between countries as well as between population groups in different areas of the same country. These issues relate to historical progress; the impact of values and ideologies on political community thinking; the modernization brought about partly by globalization and its effect on social interaction mechanisms; the nature of policies governing the administration of society; the role, impact and capacity for participation of all social actors

(Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and the media); and the availability and accessibility of information and data. Primary issues related to the capacity for participation are as follows:

(a) Raising awareness and knowledge of development issues that are of interest to society and its components, namely institutions, communities and individuals. This approach brings about a positive development culture that can be strengthened through various ways of communication, media, mobilization, volunteerism and participation, and the various types and ways of social dialogue and interaction;

(b) Strengthening development-related capacity of governmental and non-governmental institutions. This approach leads to enhanced capacity, ensures proper performance of social functions and creates positive trends for service beneficiaries. This can be achieved through redesigning public service delivery processes and strengthening standards of efficiency, integrity, transparency, control and accountability;

(c) Developing legislation, regulations and services. This is done according to clear development visions, integrated policies, comprehensive strategies, flexible plans and popular programmes and projects, bearing in mind the two above-mentioned approaches as well as international covenants and treaties.

D. DETERMINANTS OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

5. Participatory development processes are affected by a number of structural issues and interrelated enabling conditions that pose great challenges related to their identification and discussion. These issues relate mainly to the following:

(a) The type of development needed by society as identified on the basis of its problems and capabilities;

(b) The approach that can ensure sustainability for development and provide guidance for its operations;

(c) The policies and tools needed to launch the development process based on the individual capabilities to ensure development sustainability;

(d) The ways and means of encouraging local initiatives in terms of thinking, participation and innovation to serve development goals;

(e) The patterns and methods of accepting or rejecting change and modernization of society;

(f) The ability of society to achieve political development in terms of the pattern of institutional governance, public administration efficiency and the role of civil society organizations;

(g) The levels of poverty and inequality and the various cross-cutting issues related to them;

(h) The ability of institutions to assume their social functions;

(i) The volume and adequacy of financial and human resources;

(j) The availability of political stability and basic social security elements;

(k) The shortcomings related to respect for human rights and safeguarding fundamental freedoms;

(l) The level of the development culture and the efficiency of exchange mechanisms.

**E. FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES**

6. Effective participation requires a combination of major interrelated enabling conditions which include the following:

- (a) Reinforcing and protecting human rights and safeguarding fundamental freedoms;
- (b) Promoting development culture and upholding the values of equality, social justice and the rule of law;
- (c) Respecting the right to be different and to diversity and accepting the opinions of others;
- (d) Ensuring equal access to public services and productive resources;
- (e) Committing to democracy and reinforcing administrative and developmental decentralization;
- (f) Providing support and favourable external conditions;
- (g) Providing institutional frameworks to ensure the continuity of participation;
- (h) On the one hand, the lack of political stability and increasingly tense conflicts hinder participation and limit the scope of its implementation. On the other hand, participation and social inclusion are preventive measures against crises and social security deficiency;
- (i) The dialogue between civil society organizations and private and public sector institutions helps to better define targets for social, economic, political and cultural development. It is therefore important to organize the participation of civil society and private sector organizations in order to enhance their institutional capacity and to build consensus over policy formulation, follow-up and performance assessment;
- (j) Organizations in most Arab countries have worked on institutionalizing certain development tasks and activities, collecting contributions, building alliances and mobilizing resources and volunteers for social issues. Their experiences and the obstacles they faced could serve as a reference for strengthening participation areas and levels as well as enabling institutions concerned with their development and improvement.

II. APPROACHES TO PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

7. It is widely believed that most development actors adopt a bureaucratic approach to the formulation of the most important reference points for participation, i.e. public policies and consequent plans, programmes and projects.* Hence, participation-based intervention requires reconsideration of the way in which such policies are made, particularly that their makers tend to be overly ambitious or belong to elites that do not take into consideration the social, economic, political, cultural and technical problems, circumstances and capabilities of society.

8. Participation requires complementary efforts by both central and local authorities, as well as the development of policies based on participation by the community itself, in the light of its problems, experiences and acquired expertise. This is, indeed, a difficult task, for public policies are often devised by central Government without participation by the community concerned; hence the need for developing new approaches and mechanisms based on extensive consultations among the various actors and institutions involved in development.

* Victoria Michener, The Participatory Approach: Contradiction and Co-option in Burkina Faso. *World Development*. 1998 26 (12): 2105-2118.

A. OBSTACLES TO PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

9. Elaboration of the participatory development approach requires examining the obstacles involved at the levels of society, community and the individual. Experience in the field shows that certain general obstacles are common to all three levels. However, these obstacles may vary from one community to another, and may intermesh or interact with other fields. The most prominent examples of common obstacles include:

- (a) Vision and goals of public policies, and extent of ability of public institutions to implement such policies;
- (b) Structure of community and mechanisms of Government and governance;
- (c) Performance of public administration in delivery of primary services;
- (d) Availability of and access to information and data;
- (e) Availability and capabilities of human resources;
- (f) Prevalent cultural values and norms in the life of the community and the individual;
- (g) Maintenance of liberties, rule of law and spread of values of equity and social justice;
- (h) Mechanisms of participation, collaboration and coordination;
- (i) Capabilities and initiative of civil society organizations;
- (j) Levels of education, knowledge and skills.

B. ENVIRONMENT FAVOURABLE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

10. The comprehensive nature of participatory development requires fostering by an institution. The intervention could start with a review of existing institutional regulations and measures that may support and encourage such an approach. In most cases, implementation begins with forming a group, body or council to work with the intervening agency on developing a partnership with the stakeholders, who could offer advice, support and follow-up.

11. The participatory development approach relies on planned practices appropriate to the conditions and development culture of the targeted community; especially, for provision of resources and support, in relation to the comprehensive, integrated vision of development and public policy issues and concomitant institutional capabilities and partnerships based on open dialogue and public responsibility.

12. The participatory development approach requires indicators to measure the progress made, through monitoring and evaluation systems. It also focuses on a broad range of interrelated issues, the most prominent of which are:

- (a) Strengthening institutional and individual capacity for participation in development and benefiting from its achievements equitably;
- (b) Giving priority to local initiatives and supporting decentralized administrative and developmental systems;
- (c) Contribution by the development process to equity and social justice;
- (d) Benefiting by the marginalized groups from equal opportunities for social inclusion;
- (e) Launching dynamics of interaction among the various development stages at all levels in both directions;

(f) Measuring achievements of development in such priority areas (discussed later in this report) as development of the participation itself, capacity-building, combat of poverty, improvement of the status of women, and environmental protection.

13. Methods of participation suggested by the participatory development approach offer to international cooperation two advantages. The first relates to the type of support provided to local initiatives, through creating equal partnerships between institutional bodies/associations and other agents. The second is that such methods provide mechanisms for integrating the efforts of donors and those of other sources of cooperation, thereby creating better forms of partnership.

III. ESCWA'S PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

14. ESCWA's participatory development approach provides a framework for understanding and analysing societal development. Essentially, it is an approach that puts people at the centre of development, positioning the participation process as, at one and the same time, the means and the target of development. It is also a practical approach to building institutional and individual capacities for practicing participation, fighting poverty, raising the status of women, and protecting the environment. Furthermore, by providing a reference framework for the knowledge needed to embark upon dialogue on devising public policies, implementing public-policy programmes and projects, and evaluating their performance, it is an approach for enriching the culture of development. This approach has come about as a result of a long process of consultations, begun in 1998, among United Nations organizations; regional, international and governmental bodies; civil society organizations; the private sector; bilateral and multilateral donors; academic researchers; and local leaderships.

15. The approach was developed, taught, applied and its efficiency enhanced, through providing a set of manuals, training programmes, field researches, evaluation reports and case studies, as well as through building networks and databases on institutions and cadres and pursuing fruitful cooperative relationships with a number of development partners. The main training manuals are:

(a) Manual on Community Development (E/ESCWA/SD/1998/8): focuses on providing knowledge of and expertise on the following: concepts of participatory development; processes of identification of social problems and intervention priorities and available capabilities and opportunities; and design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of development plans; all in relation to the main constituents of a community: location, institutions, values, and systems, in addition to outcomes of social interaction and participatory work;

(b) Manual on Training Local Development Trainers (E/ESCWA/SD/2002/3): focuses on two main ideas: the first, which is of a general nature, concerns accumulation of awareness of development at the various levels; the second, which is of a special nature, deals with intended or planned social change, where social actors participate, at the institutional or individual level, in development activities. Application of these two ideas depends on development of institutional capacities and improvement of competence of human resources, since training plays an increasingly important role in providing knowledge, information, skills and capabilities, as well as in fostering positive attitudes towards enhancing participation in development processes;

(c) Participatory Research for Societal Development in ESCWA Member Countries (E/ESCWA/SD/2007/WP.3): was issued in light of the strong linkages between social development and participatory research evaluation. Evaluation processes were developed and issued as a tool for learning the views of social actors, whether institutions or individuals, on social problems and on availability of opportunities and capabilities for tackling them. This guide provides a comprehensive, integrated knowledge base, designed to help decision makers choose appropriate development policies in light of sufficient information and reliable data, in addition to clearly articulated development paths;

(d) Manual on Enhancing Government-Civil Society Participation in Public Policy Processes (E/ESCWA/SDD/2009/Technical Paper.4): poses the participation process within the framework of a comprehensive approach to change and modernization in structures and capabilities of institutions, as well as the systems and standards they use to perform their functions and promote their values. The guide builds on the main conclusions drawn from ESCWA literature and its field experience of community development.

A. PREMISES OF ESCWA PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

16. The ESCWA approach to participatory development ensues from a new vision of societal development emphasizing the role of social actors, whether organizations or individuals, in planning development programmes and providing the conditions for their implementation. The programmes and projects would then tackle social problems, “with the aim of solving problems agreed upon by the community”, rather than programmes and projects “governed by a pre-defined epistemological method”.

17. Ever since ESCWA launched, in the late nineties, the first phase of its community development work programme, designed to build the capacities of employers in Government institutions and civil society organizations, the motive has been to tackle the difficulties of developmental intervention through participation. The main obstacles are: divergence and ambiguity of concepts of social intervention approaches, lack of comprehensive Arabic language literature and sources, poverty of institutional and individual capacities, and absence of coordination and participation mechanisms. The preliminary programme focused on the importance of identifying social problems and the available capacities to tackle them in priority sectors or areas, while emphasizing institutional and individual capacity-building for participation in programmes and projects that serve to strengthen public services, develop the management and systems of development processes and improve living standards.

18. Since 2003, the second phase has been aimed at making use of the practical expertise resulting from implementation of principles and approaches of community development to expand the frameworks and mechanisms of participation by the parties concerned (Governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector). By the end of 2004, this programme adopted for managing the participatory development process an approach that is more reliant on participatory research for identifying problems, methodology and general directions. This approach focuses on the primary interrelated areas affecting the development process, namely organization and institutionalization of participation, institutional and individual capacity-building, combat of poverty and inequity, enhancement of the status of women, and protection of the environment.

19. In the twenty-first ministerial session of ESCWA, held in 2001, member countries recognized the importance of enhancing and developing training programmes to include ways for disseminating expertise in community development. In addition, in its twenty-fourth session held in 2004, the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs resolved to coordinate and jointly implement local development projects with ESCWA. Exploiting the outcomes of this programme and the expertise gained through its implementation, ESCWA prepared a draft manual entitled Strengthening Participation among Governments and Civil Society Organizations in Public Policy Processes. The draft was submitted to an expert group meeting held in Beirut on 29-30 April 2009, for discussion and formulation of proposals for promoting the manual among development partners and social actors.

B. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO ESCWA PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

20. In addition to the experience gained from and the support provided to the capacity-building programmes of ESCWA, a number of other factors contributed to motivating interest in tangibly developing the ESCWA approach. The most important such factors are:

(a) Better understanding of the dimensions of social problems, as well as of the interrelated nature of determinants of the design of public policies and the implementation of programmes and projects designed to

tackle such problems. This resulted not from mere consideration of such issues as poverty and development or women and development, but, rather, from collective work in numerous knowledge domains; coordination and partnership with governmental and non-governmental parties, at various levels; and field work aimed at collecting views on linkages and interactions of citizens and institutional organizations with development processes, programmes and projects;

(b) Identification of the risks involved in community development and empowerment of participation therein without coordination and agreement with Government authorities, which included recognition of the importance of not limiting coordination and agreement to local authorities, but instead involving national authorities as well, through committees and other forums in which Government institutions are represented;

(c) Identification of the risks of limiting participation to pro forma consultation, information exchange and membership of representative bodies. These are, in fact, examples of the risks that, in the first place, called for participatory development based on the structure and development culture of the community, so that both design and implementation target social problems and seek to achieve the development goals desired by various social sectors;

(d) Ensuring sustainability of the development initiatives launched within the framework of participatory development, and guarding against erosion of interest and support with time, through focusing on such basic elements as empowerment, consensus, participation, financing, monitoring, control, and evaluation, as well as on developing the future role of local authorities and civil society;

(e) Recognition of the drawbacks of sectoral or particularistic approaches to development policies, programmes and projects and their limited impact on social problems and on strengthening the role of social actors, whether organizations or individuals. Intervention approaches had, in most cases, focused on economic factors, according little attention to other factors, including participation. Government administrations and donors had grown accustomed to providing the means for intervention, rather than focusing on integrated approaches addressing institutional capacities, development culture and participation;

(f) Investment in the wide skills base of those qualified for taking part in participatory development, which requires reconsideration of and active dialogue on interdependence of community development issues and levels, obstacles to the achievement of goals of societal development, and content of public policies, programmes and projects targeting these goals.

C. RESULTS OF IMPLEMENTING ESCWA PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

21. The participatory development approach has adopted a comprehensive concept for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which constituted a framework for organizing institutional capacity-building and strengthening mechanisms of international and regional participation and cooperation, thereby contributing to empower communities, to support systems of administrative and developmental decentralization, and to enhance local Government administration.

22. This approach was implemented through a comprehensive model of participatory development, which included a set of overlapping phases. The most prominent are: familiarization with the targeted community, its development issues and problems, and available capabilities and opportunities; devising a development plan covering priorities, alternatives, projects, responsibilities and schedules; implementation of the plan, choice of alternatives and distribution of organizational and technical roles and responsibilities, and mobilization of capacities and resources; and, finally, monitoring progress of implementation, and evaluation of performance and the extent to which goals are achieved.

23. The following are the principal results of the implementation of the ESCWA participatory development approach:

(a) Encouraging a move towards a more comprehensive and integrated vision of development issues; hence considering a wider set of indicators of and public policies for tackling social problems;

(b) Contributing to clarifying the desired development and the required intervention courses within the scope of public policies and options open to Government;

(c) Testing the importance of participation in planning and implementation of community development programmes and projects, and monitoring its impact on social, economic, political, cultural and technical conditions;

(d) Identifying linkages among the primary areas of development and the impact of changes in these areas on societal development policies;

(e) Supporting change in and modernization of methods of design and implementation of development programmes and projects, and broad dissemination of results;

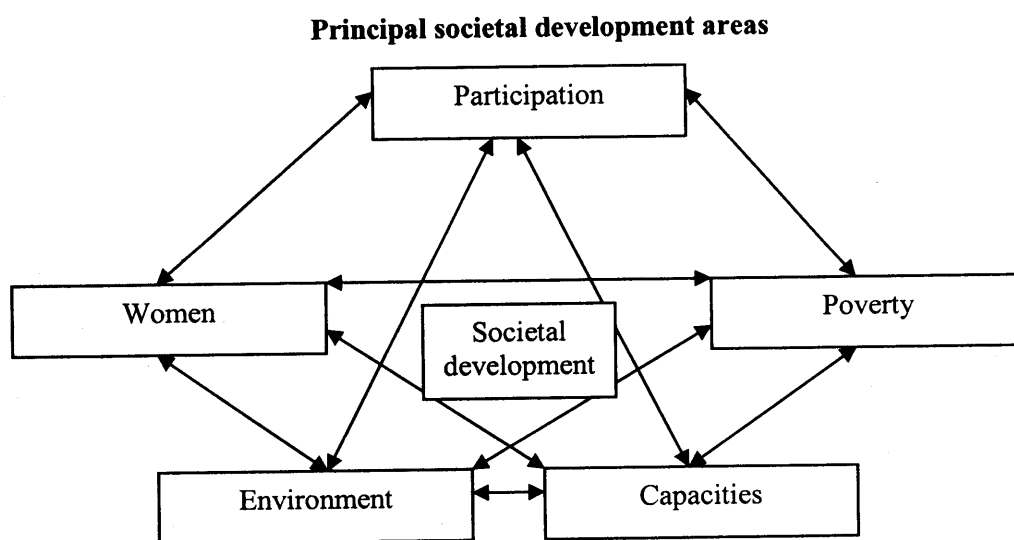
(f) Testing the importance and criticality of the phase of identifying the components and the culture of the community for its impact on the planning of participatory development, as well as on the planning of public policies and their success;

(g) Identifying obstacles to expansion of participatory development. The most important such obstacle is that the growth of local institutional capacity, with sufficient knowledge for and experience in designing and implementing development programmes from an all-inclusive, integrated perspective, may be in contradiction with the orientation and regulations of partner institutions (such as Government ministries) that operate on a sectoral basis. This raises difficult questions about compatibility between the outputs of development programmes based on an all-inclusive, integrated approach and the institutions in charge.

D. PRINCIPAL AREAS OF ESCWA PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

24. Notwithstanding the wide, all-inclusive nature of ESCWA participatory development approach, five principal areas of societal development may be identified, namely, participation, capacity-building, combat of poverty, enhancement of status of women, and environmental protection. Given the interrelatedness of these areas, any intervention, whether in health, education, social care, economic development, or infrastructure, should contribute to one of these five principal areas.

25. The conclusions derived from participatory development practice are categorized hereafter by principal areas of societal development.



1. *Participation of social actors: organizations and individuals*

26. In practice, participation has been shown to affect and be impacted by all areas of societal development. However, it has also been shown that the concepts, mechanisms, levels and outcomes of participation are still unclear. Nevertheless, the following are the main conclusions derived from fieldwork:

(a) Participation is a contractual formulation concerning a societal act directed towards making societal changes, to which the individual contributes in conjunction with other individuals, and institutions, forces or groups contribute in conjunction with others, in order to play social, economic, political and cultural roles affecting their existence and life;

(b) Participation covers all dimensions and aspects of development, as well as all phases of development policies, programmes and projects, from conception, to planning, financing, management, control, distribution of returns and evaluation of outcomes;

(c) Participation is accompanied by modernization of intervention and work approaches, ensuing from identification of the needs, problems and capabilities of the targeted society, expansion of opportunities for selecting alternatives and solutions, on appropriate democratic bases, and acquisition of capacities to deal with identified needs and problems;

(d) Participation necessitates proceeding from local institutions and authorities, establishment of committees and institutional frameworks capable of providing conditions conducive to activation of the dynamics of participation as a spiral process, bottom up and vice versa;

(e) The participation process should take into account and interact with prevalent values, through working and apportioning roles and social functions with the religious and tribal organizations and institutions that constitute a reference framework for cultural values and social behaviours, since, in relation to some development issues, the roles of these organizations and institutions overlap with those of governmental institutions.

(a) *Fundamental principles in implementation of participation*

- (i) Serious belief by Government in the benefits of participation and in the ability of civil society organizations to contribute to making public policies, monitoring their implementation and evaluation of their performance;
- (ii) Alignment of the interests of social actors, whether individuals or organizations, with the goals of public policies;
- (iii) Existence of formulations, with clear goals and targets in terms of rights and duties, for the contracts between the community and public institutions performing social functions;
- (iv) Societal concern for public affairs and awareness of social, economic, political and cultural development, as well as an understanding of the factors and relations resulting from social interactions at all levels;
- (v) The conviction that change is possible by concerted, organized efforts, through efficient mechanisms and institutions capable of performing social functions and satisfying human needs;
- (vi) Existence of such objective conditions as political stability, social security, and administrative and developmental decentralization; as well as such subjective conditions as consensus, consciousness, responsibility, cooperation and tolerance; in particular when social problems are aggravated and indications of schisms and conflicts of interest appear;
- (vii) Existence of systems and mechanisms of inclusion that ensure that no social group is excluded;
- (viii) Existence of systems and standards of efficiency, integrity, transparency, control, and accountability;

- (ix) Spread of the values and culture of democracy, social justice, equity and rule of law;
 - (x) Adoption of dialogue as a means for identifying problems and available capabilities for tackling them, as well as for setting priorities;
 - (xi) Existence of a legal and legislative environment conducive to participation by civil society organizations, the private sector and stakeholders.
- (b) *Outcomes of implementation of the participation process*
- (i) Making positive, quality changes contributing to effectuation of individual and institutional capacities in attitudes, stances, values and standards related to development issues and public affairs;
 - (ii) Developing and institutionalizing mechanisms of dialogue, coordination and participation among Government institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector;
 - (iii) Testing patterns and mechanisms for integration of development sectors, and their pivotal issues and various levels;
 - (iv) Supporting the ways and means of control by society over programmes and projects implemented by Government or civil society organizations;
 - (v) Strengthening the practice of decentralization and promotion of the culture of democracy;
 - (vi) Reinforcing community self-reliance in identification of problems and available capabilities for tackling them, as well as in devising development plans and mobilizing the resources needed to implement and monitor them and evaluate their performance;
 - (vii) Developing frameworks for international and regional coordination and collaboration in support of capacity-building and enhancement of participation mechanisms.
- (c) *Problems impacting participatory development*
- (i) Recency of implementation of the participatory development approach with its comprehensive concept and its coverage of the various development domains;
 - (ii) Weakness of institutional capacities for tackling social problems and satisfying human needs;
 - (iii) Predominance of bureaucratic systems and absence of efficient frameworks and mechanisms for representation and participation;
 - (iv) Weakness of mechanisms for monitoring the participation process and shortcomings in developing the institutional capacities needed to implement it;
 - (v) Weakness of systems of administrative and developmental decentralization and limitedness of their institutional capacities, particularly their human and financial resources;
 - (vi) Weakness of ways and means used in dissemination and interpretation of legislation, decisions, experience and positions that encourage participation in ways compatible with the level of awareness and culture in society community;
 - (vii) Occasional inability of some social groups to participate as a result of such factors as poverty, unemployment, marginalization and low level of culture of development;
 - (viii) Reluctance by the political will to adopt participation;
 - (ix) Widespread belief that development is the sole responsibility of official parties;
 - (x) Lack of consistency between design of programmes and projects, institutional capacities, and ability to implement;

- (xi) Lack of integration among sectors and institutions tasked with societal development;
- (xii) Prevalence of non-participation, dependency and favouritism;
- (xiii) Continued discrimination on the basis of gender; tribal, sectarian or ethnic origin; or social group;
- (xiv) Multiplicity of allegiances and affiliations of the citizens and intensity of mechanisms of polarisation in the relations between individual and community;
- (xv) Predominance of rent-seeking economic patterns and a culture of consumption;
- (xvi) Weakness of the practice of principles of accountability, transparency and rule of law;
- (xvii) Growth of dominance and hegemony and concentration of wealth and power.

2. Building institutional and individual capacity

27. Building and developing the capacities of social actors, both organizations and individuals, is an important means for creating social, economic, political, cultural and legal conditions, at both national and local levels, conducive to enabling society to develop and progress. The most important measures for strengthening institutional capacities are: adopting long-term development strategies; evaluating institutional capacity at both national and local levels; passing appropriate legislation for providing an enabling environment; building partnerships with civil society organizations; ensuring participation of people in managing their local affairs; taking account of gender equality in policies and programmes; improving efficiency, transparency and accountability in governance; and enhancing efficiency, quality, and evaluation of the design, implementation and monitoring of policies, programmes and projects. Governments are no longer the sole party providing social services. Nonetheless, their role in creating a general environment favourable to development remains essential, and their responsibility for ensuring the provision of good social services and maintaining equal access to them has increased; hence the increased need for building public institutions endowed with organizational and human capacities and financial resources sufficient for ensuring the provision of basic social services to all. Moreover, having efficient, effective, transparent and accountable local bodies has become vital for ensuring the delivery of social services.

28. According to the participatory development approach, capacity-building activities are classified into the following three categories:

(a) Empowerment of organizations working in development: Strengthening capacities of bodies, councils, or committees in charge of managing development projects for taking and implementing decisions; for adopting standards of efficiency, integrity, transparency and accountability in managing the development process; and for identifying development needs and adopting appropriate programmes to satisfy them. Capacity-building measures under this category are particularly important for dissemination of good practice that has proven its effectiveness in devising and implementing development policies, programmes and projects;

(b) Prototypical activities: These are targeted towards social actors, both individuals and groups, at both the preliminary and advanced development phases, in accord with the specific needs of the population groups. In addition to improving activities and services related to development projects and programmes, capacity-building under this category is important for consolidating the values, systems and standards of popular participation, strengthening cooperation and encouraging dialogue among the various social parties and groups concerned. All society actors, whether citizens, bodies or organizations, are encouraged and mobilized to meet their obligations and responsibilities, which renders them more sensitive to change, more inclined to accepting it, and better aware of the measures needed for implementing its requirements;

(c) Improving performance of institutions by acquiring knowledge and skills, and consolidating values, systems, standards and positions necessary for implementing development in the best possible way in

the shortest possible time. This category of capacity-building also helps recognize the strong links among the activities, responsibilities and roles of institutions and those of individuals.

29. The strategic goal of building and developing institutional capacities is to reach a stage where people working in development, at all levels of responsibility, go beyond realizing the importance of their roles to internalizing the necessity of change, thereby committing themselves professionally and morally to development, which, in turn, lays down the basis for transition from bureaucratic to developmental management.

30. Participation of local authorities in the development process requires the following:

(a) Adopting a strategic perspective for consolidation of administrative capacities, with the aim of providing an all-inclusive vision and comprehensive medium- and long-term planning, while responding to changing requirements;

(b) Consolidating capacities for building relations and partnerships with civil society organizations and the private sector, at both local and national levels, and reinforcing sources and mechanisms of cooperation with donors;

(c) Developing such systems as civil service, financial administration, and planning; and such standards as control, integrity, transparency, efficiency and accountability;

(d) Building capacities and developing programmes and projects in compliance with advanced public administration systems and standards;

(e) Strengthening documentation and information technology capacities needed for the development process, including efficient, trouble-free flow of information from databases, researches and documentation;

(f) Satisfying the increasing need for enhancement of such personal skills as communication, team building, roles distribution and motivation.

3. Combat of poverty

31. The participatory development approach stresses combat of poverty through such varied complementary activities as developing the infrastructure; building institutional capacities; supporting income-generating activities; supporting basic services (health, education, housing); diversifying and developing productivity; improving living standards; enhancing social safety nets; encouraging cooperation initiatives; and coordinating participatory efforts among the organizations and institutions working in combating poverty.

32. Poverty is aggravated under programmes of structural adjustment and other similar projects aimed at reinstating macroeconomic stability and strengthening the capacity of the economy for increasing productivity. Wide-ranging economic stability, competitive markets, and public investments in physical and social infrastructure are among the important requirements for sustainable economic growth and alleviation of poverty. Nonetheless, unevenness of relations between the population and the economy has constituted an obstacle to poverty reduction; hence the emphasis by the participatory development approach on such issues as providing productive assets and credit to the poor, and enabling them to benefit from education, healthcare and support services, and acquire rights, through well-designed social safety programmes and other mechanisms.

33. Reduction of acute poverty has proved possible if at least two economic growth conditions are met: sustainable economic growth, or consistent increase of per capita income; and more equitable distribution of income, or reduction in income disparities.

4. *Enhancement of status of women*

34. Progress has been achieved in raising the status of women. Nevertheless, discrimination against women remains an obstacle to social inclusion, gender equality and full enjoyment by women of their rights. Discrimination against women in the market place; the gender wage gap; unequal access to productive resources, capital, education and training; and other social and cultural factors all hinder economic empowerment of women and exacerbate female poverty. There is indeed widespread acceptance that gender equality is a condition for development. However, implementation through adoption of a gender equality perspective in all development policies and programmes remains sluggish.

35. Empowerment of women through participatory development has faced a number of problems related to social justice and equality. These are mainly: female illiteracy; low levels of female education; low levels of female participation in economic activities; predominance of social and cultural values imposing stereotypical roles on women; limited access by women to public services, as a result of pressures of traditions or misinterpretation and poor implementation of laws; and poor capacities of women for exercising economic, political and social rights.

36. The following are the principal observations on outcome of participatory development interventions aimed at raising the status of women:

- (a) Achievements in raising the status of women in less than four decades should be duly recognized;
- (b) Continued social injustice and coercion dealt out to women are not on the whole attributable to lack of legislation, but rather to the pressures of prevalent social, economic, political and cultural conditions;
- (c) The price of the diverse roles played by women within households is high, even though they compensate in part for insufficiency of social care systems;
- (d) Women involved in economic activity are subjected to pressures that are wide ranging in both their manifestations and their consequences;
- (e) Provision of ways for balancing the family responsibilities and the economic activities of women has yielded positive results for a large category of women willing to take advantage of them;
- (f) It is essential for social care systems to seek to empower women through provision of maternity grants, payments for the newly born, nurseries, and free or low-cost medical services;
- (g) Concern for raising the status of women in some policies does not necessarily lead to taking measures for abolishing discrimination against women in planning, implementation and evaluation of policies, programmes and projects;
- (h) Confusion, even at the level of policymakers, regarding the widely used gender concepts persists, even though these concepts have gained great currency in literature on raising the status of women.

Necessary measures for raising the status of women

- (i) Putting social equality issues at the centre of development policies, programmes and projects;
- (ii) Involving women in public decision making and consolidating independency of their private life decisions;
- (iii) Correcting the wages of women and covering them by social security and care nets;
- (iv) Implementing the right of women to ownership of such fixed assets as land and real estate;

- (v) Giving women control over credits in terms of project choice and implementation, as well as in dealing with creditors;
- (vi) Raising awareness of women of their rights and passing legislation that contributes to raising their status and enhancing their role.

5. *Protection of the environment*

37. Sustainable development requires adoption of a balanced approach to the environment by participatory development interventions, even though levels of responsibility vary. Integrating environmental protection in social, economic, political and cultural development is an efficient means and a desired target at one and the same time. Hence, efforts made within the framework of the participatory- development approach have included activities addressing environmental problems. These problems include:

- (a) Lack of awareness of importance of protecting environmental resources and rationalizing their use;
- (b) Continued consumption and production practices detrimental to the environment;
- (c) Aggravation of problems of poverty, unemployment and marginalization;
- (d) Insufficiency of infrastructures and deficiency of emphasis on equality and social justice in their use, particularly, for safe water, sanitation, electricity and use of alternative power;
- (e) Deficiency of institutional structures, weakness of environmental legislation, and overlap of the mandates of the parties responsible for them;
- (f) Lack of regulations for many of the environmental laws and the resulting weakness of implementation;
- (g) Weakness of databases and information on environmental issues and priorities;
- (h) Contradiction between urgent or locally specified needs and the requirements of sustainable environment.

38. No development approach can give simple solutions to these challenges. However, the participatory approach allows for consideration and discussion of a wide range of alternatives. Nonetheless, necessary measures should be taken, in collaboration among Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and local authorities, when devising public policies on environment. The most prominent of such measures are:

- (a) Raising environmental awareness and reinforcing environmental protection systems;
- (b) Addressing deficiencies in coordination of environmental policies;
- (c) Adopting flexibility in addressing external pressures and fluctuations;
- (d) Safeguarding productivity of natural resources on the long run;
- (e) Strengthening capacities of civil society organizations, the private sector and local councils for participating in devising, monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of implementation of environmental policies;
- (f) Developing environmental protection legislation and stressing the importance of conducting environmental feasibility studies for projects.
