

## **Regional NGO Consultative Meeting on Beijing+10**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**July 22-23, 2004**

### **1. Background/Context**

*Josephine Ouedraogo, African Centre on Gender and Development (ACGD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)*

At the global level, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) is responsible for the review of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). A questionnaire was developed for this purpose, with the participation of the regional commissions, that then was sent to member states and made available on the Internet. Member states were asked to involve non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in filling out the questionnaires to provide national reports for submission to the UNECA. The UNECA is compiling the regional synthesis for submission to the DAW. The DAW is compiling the global synthesis for submission to the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The CSW will examine the global synthesis and submit outcomes to a special session of the UN's General Assembly in 2005. The review process is to be linked to other regional and international processes, such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD and the five-year review process of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

At the regional level, 40 of Africa's 53 member states have submitted their national reports and these are being synthesized. Five sub-regional experts' group meetings (EGMs) were convened from April-June this year. And a regional conference is being planned at the ministerial level to assess outcomes.

The UNECA has imprecise information on what NGOs have been doing, but has been instructed by its Committee on Gender and Development (CGD) to involve NGOs in all activities around the review process. The UNECA therefore asked sub-regional NGOs to organize parallel meetings to the sub-regional EGMs. The purpose of the regional NGO consultative meeting is to enable NGOs to take leadership now. Partners are present, such as the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA), who supported this meeting, to assure NGOs of their support.

### **2. Election of the Bureau**

*Hannah Tiagha, ACGD, UNECA*

Gladys Mutukwa of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) was elected Chair of the Bureau, with Aicha Tamboura Diaware of the Association of African Women in Research and Development (AAWORD) as her Co-Chair. L Muthoni Wanyeki of the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) was elected Rapporteur, with Fatoumata Sire Diakite of the Coalition contre le trafic des femmes, enfants, Bercas Fernando Mateus of Women's Legal Rights and Mina Tafount of Collectif 95 as her Assistant Rapporteurs.

### **3. Presentation and Adoption of the Agenda and Work Programme**

*Gladys Mutukwa, WiLDAF*

The purpose of this meeting is to plan an effective NGO forum in October, prior to the pre-Ministerial and Ministerial conferences, that will ensure representation of the African women's movement. Those present are a sample of that movement, representing many voices.

With that in mind, the agenda and work programme were adopted with minor changes.

## Contributions

- partners will be included for discussion within the working groups. AWDF and OSISA will present as grant-making partners, not as NGOs;
- communication needs regarding the planning of the NGO forum will be included for discussion within the working groups. The communications team of the UNECA will be taken into account.

## **4. Framework for Participation**

*Josephine Ouedraogo, ACGD, UNECA*

There has been a renaissance of the African women's movement at all levels. However, mechanisms for regular consultation do not yet exist.

From the 1950s on, African women's NGOs contributed to the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements. In 1960, they created the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO), the oldest pan-African women's network. The World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975 led to the evolution of the global women's movement. The Regional Conference on Women in Senegal in 1994 was the biggest meeting ever of the African women's network, ensuring that issues around girls were brought to the fore of the global women's movement.

Achievements since then include:

- the ratification of the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by 51 of 53 African member states;
- the elaboration and adoption of the Protocol on the Rights of African Women to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;
- the ascension of more women into national parliaments, with Rwanda's parliament now being composed of 48 per cent women;
- the revision of family codes, for example, in Algeria and Morocco;
- the adoption of laws against harmful traditional practices;
- the adoption of sub-regional declarations on gender equality, for example, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Declaration on Gender Equality and the Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA) Declaration on Gender Equality;
- women's contributions to peace processes, for example, in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Mano River; and
- assuring gender parity within the African Union (AU).

However, challenges include the persistent absence of a united voice in central, north and west Africa, which during the Beijing+5 review process, made it difficult to galvanise a systematic assessment of progress. This has affected the ability to mainstream gender in the NEPAD, a fact which was noted at the pre-AU summit meetings in Mozambique in 2003 and in Ethiopia in 2004. There is need for a regional coordination mechanism.

Many questions remain. Have priorities changed? Have strategies changed? If so, what are new priorities and strategies? What leadership exists to address them? How can the African women's movement assume accountability for the status of African women at the local level? Are governments alone accountable for the low status accorded to gender in development?

## **5. Outcomes of the Five Sub-Regional EGMs**

*Hannah Tiagha, ACGD, UNECA*

The objectives of the sub-regional EGMs were to review progress made, review challenges, build sub-regional consensus on priorities and constraints and propose measures to address these constraints. For the first time, sectoral ministries were included in the process (health, agriculture, finance, planning and trade and industry) together with national gender machineries.

Progress noted included:

- the elaboration of national gender/women's policies and establishment of gender machineries;
- the review of legislation in favour of women's human rights, particularly around violence against women (VAW), land, family and the economy, for example, through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes;
- having more political participation;
- having secured more access to micro-credit;
- having ensured that more girls are in schools;
- the contributions of NGOs.

Progress specific to the sub-regions include the adoption of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development in southern Africa and the passing of laws in favour of women's human rights in northern Africa.

Emerging issues noted included HIV/AIDS particularly as it impacts upon teenaged girls and women, poverty, conflict and trafficking.

Constraints noted included the lack of political will, as evident from the weakness of existing gender machineries, gap between policy and practice, the absence of gender from budgeting processes (partly as a result of the persistent lack of gender-desaggregated data), the ad hoc budget allocations made towards gender, the failure to address women's unpaid work, sexual VAW in conflict situations and the absence of women from peace processes.

Recommendations made included:

- adopting the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa;
- harmonizing international and national laws on women;
- strengthening the financing and mandate of gender machineries;
- assuring the availability of gender-desaggregated data for planners;
- institutionalising gender mainstreaming in sectoral ministries;
- systematizing gender budgeting, particularly in the sectoral ministries;
- including women substantively in peace processes; and
- entering into partnerships with NGOs.

### Contributions

- A publication on the history of the African women's movement would be good;
- The extent to which NGOs participated in the drafting of national reports is questionable and there is need to involve more technical NGOs and to harmonise NGO inputs. There is also need for NGOs to take up coordination and leadership;
- Member states which have not submitted their national reports include Benin, Cape Verde, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Libya, Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe;
- Priorities and strategies have changed as the world has changed, for example, as a result of the so-called War on Terror. The changes in the global economy and global geo-politics means that our priorities and strategies must be re-visited, particularly as Africa's youth is increasingly anti-feminist;
- Ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa is a priority;

- Peace is a pre-condition for the achievement of all other priorities. This is critical given that most conflicts are in Africa;
- The erosion of governance is a priority, for example in Zimbabwe. Constitutional reform processes are flawed. NGOs are increasingly seen as enemies of the state or as aligned to the opposition and the overdeveloped world. And women's demands are increasingly seen as outrageous, particularly as the African women's movement has moved from welfare to rights in terms of its approach. Collaboration with governments is therefore difficult on the ground;
- The poverty of urban poor women is a priority, together with that of rural women;
- Maternal health is a priority as Africa has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality. This rate has increased over the past decade even though one of the MDGs is specifically about reducing maternal mortality rates. The need to address our reproductive and sexual health and rights is critical, particularly in the context of HIV/AIDS.

## **6. Information on African Women's NGOs since Dakar and Beijing**

### Southern Africa

*Pamela Mhlanga, Southern African Resource and Documentation Centre (SARDC)*

NGO focal points exist in most SADC countries, for example, Forum Mulher in Mozambique and the Women's Coalition in Zimbabwe. The approach taken was to combine national positions for presentation to the EGM. The 12 critical areas were examined.

Findings were that there have been gender and women's empowerment policy developments across the sub-region, except in Mozambique and Swaziland but implementation of these policies has been weak. Poverty and HIV/AIDS remain priorities.

Recommendations included:

- gender-responsive implementation of laws and policies;
- strategic positioning of gender machineries, preferably by making them statutory bodies with the power to implement their mandates;
- problematising gender mainstreaming so as to address its distortion and non-operationalisation;
- strengthening monitoring and evaluation;
- addressing the needs for NGO coordination, internal governance and improved resource base.

### Eastern Africa

*Marren Akatsa Buakchi, Eastern African Sub-Regional Strategic Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI)*

Eastern Africa includes eight countries. National focal points were identified and asked to facilitate participatory processes to name two areas of most progress and one area of least progress. National level research was carried out on these areas on the basis of the DAW questionnaire, affirmed at a national validation session. The outcomes of these sessions were combined into a synthesized report.

Globalisation, governance, neo-liberalism and social services, the environment and HIV/AIDS emerged as priorities, as did conflict as conflict is present in almost all of the eight countries. Problems noted included the lack of a regional approach to militarism and the lack of affirmative action regarding peace processes.

Recommendations were made to governments, funders and NGOs. These addressed aging women, reproductive and sexual health and rights, particularly around female genital mutilation (FGM), HIV/AIDS and VAW, conflict and peace education, civic education and resource plundering, gender budgeting and food security. The need for a monitoring and evaluation mechanism was also noted, together with the need to better engage with sub-regional institutions as a means of influencing governments.

## Western Africa

*Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson, WiLDAF-West Africa*

The DAW questionnaire has been circulated and shadow reports are being sought as the preparatory process for the national reports was not participatory although NGOs were invited to validate national reports. WiLDAF has obtained support from the Open Society Institute of Western Africa (OSIWA) to enable the preparation and discussion of shadow reports at the sub-regional level.

## Central Africa

*Marie Louise Dambendzet, Réseau pour les femmes de l'Afrique centrale (RESEFAC)*

The sub-region includes five countries, all of which have national networks, which met in April. Economic and political development were noted as priorities during that meeting. Challenges noted included the lack of national policies and programmes for action on gender and the need for capacity-building within governments on gender mainstreaming. Recommendations therefore included:

- the establishment of two focal points for gender in all ministries;
- capacity-building on gender analysis and mainstreaming for all ministries;
- technical assistance for all ministries with respect to gender mainstreaming.

## Northern Africa

*Mina Tafount, Collectif 95*

In Morocco, there is a coordinating coalition which prepared a separate (shadow) report. The report did not cover all 12 areas, but instead focused on cross-cutting issues such as the gender machinery, conflict and girls.

At the sub-regional level, cooperation is possible with Algeria and Tunisia.

## Contributions

- southern Africa also noted the need to refuse to re-open negotiations on the Beijing PFA;
- eastern Africa also noted the need for ratification of the Protocol on the Rights of African Women;
- in Senegal, the national coordinating committee is housed by [...] (FDEA);
- the difficulties of coordination in central, northern and western Africa is as a result of weak leadership and the lack of resources, particularly in the face of changing international financing priorities. There is competition between governments and NGOs for funding and governments often fail to facilitate the work of NGOs and involve them in such processes.

### **7. African Women's NGO Forum on Beijing+10**

Three groups were formed to discuss the organizing committee for the NGO forum; the format and content of the NGO forum and resources required for the NGO forum respectively. Their reports are attached, including contributions made following their presentations.

### **8. Commitments by Partners**

African Development Bank (ADB)

*Lalla Fatouma Maiga*

The ADB's objective is poverty reduction. It achieves this objective through providing project loans to countries. It has no means of financing NGOs directly yet. But it will share the recommendations of this meeting internally and assist by asking bilaterals to support the fundraising of the organizing committee.

### Ipas

*Dr Eunice Brookman-Amisshah, Vice President for Africa, Ipas*

Ipas works in ten African countries around the issue of maternal mortality associated with unsafe abortions. It also has a small grants programme. Ipas will sponsor and host the workshops on reproductive and sexual health and rights. It will also support the participation of some delegates.

### UN-Habitat

*Angela Hakizimana*

UN-Habitat works on women's access to land and property. It is the lead agency for one of the MDGs regarding the urban poor. It will provide the list of participants from this meeting to its partners' section to examine the possibility of fundraising to support the participation of some delegates. It will also explore the possibility of sponsoring and hosting the workshops on sustainable livelihoods in the context of the themes poverty and globalisation.

### AWDF

*Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, AWDF*

The AWDF is an Africa-wide fundraising and grant-making foundation which supports the work of African women. It will work with the organizing committee on fundraising, support and host workshops on NGO capacity-building, particularly on sustaining African women's leadership and support the participation of some delegates. It will also explore the possibility of supporting the western African preparatory process.

### OSISA

*Leya Chatta Chipepa, OSISA*

OSISA works in the nine countries of the SADC region. It is a grant-making and operational foundation. It will support the NGO forum and will engage with the organizing committee on involving its sister foundations, OSIWA and the African Regional Office in New York.

### Equality Now

*Caroline Osero Agengo*

Equality Now works on women's human rights and manages a small grants fund for work around FGM in Africa. It is not a grant-making foundation, but will assist the organizing committee in whatever ways may be required.

### UN Fund for Population (UNFPA)

*Etta Tadesse*

The UNFPA will discuss the outcomes of this meeting internally to explore possibilities for support to the NGO Forum, particularly regarding the young women's forum.

### UNECA

*Hannah Tiagha, ACGD, UNECA*

The UNECA is a convening organization. It will assist by facilitating the NGO Forum, particularly through the securing of conference rooms, the provision of interpretation and translation for the NGO Forum (in English and French) and the provision of coffee and refreshments during the breaks. It will also liaise with the AU regarding interpretation and translation (in Portuguese).

## **9. Election of the Organising Committee**

Following sub-regional consultations, the members of the organizing committee were elected as follows:

- Eastern: EASSI (Uganda)
- Southern: Rede Mulher (Angola) with Forum Mulher (Mozambique) as an alternate
- Central: RESEFAC (Congo) with COFEM (Gabon) as an alternate
- Western: Association internationale des femmes francophones (Mali); WiLDAF-West Africa (Togo)
- Northern: Collectif 95
- Regional: Association of Women in Research and Development (AAWORD); FEMNET; PAWO; WiLDAF (Zimbabwe)
- Ethiopian (host country): Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (ELWA); Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices (IAC-HTP)
- Ex-officio: AWDF

### Contributions

The list of participants for the NGO Forum has to be in to the ACGD of the UNECA by mid-September for security reasons. A letter to all UN agencies has already gone out, asking them to support requests for support for participation made at the national and sub-regional levels. Depending on the dates of the proposed exhibition and the amount of space required, there may be a need to request space outside of the UN Conference Centre (UN CC).

*(end/bureau/femnet/lmw/230704)*