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**Fifteen-Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for  
Action in Africa (BPfA) +15**

**Synthesis Report  
1995 - 2009**



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## ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Charter on the Human and Peoples' Rights
ADF VI	Sixth Africa Development Forum
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
AU	African Union
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM	Female genital mutilation
HIPC	Highly indebted poor countries
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICTs	Information and communications technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NGP	National gender policy
PoA	Programme of Action
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
VAW	Violence against women

## I. Introduction

1. In March 2010, Governments will assemble in New York to review progress made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), fifteen (15) years after its adoption. In this context, Africa, supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is reviewing its performance in delivering the outcomes agreed upon in 2004 in Addis Ababa at the Seventh Africa Regional Conference on Women (Beijing +10). During that review meeting, member States “renewed their commitment to gender equality, equity and empowerment of women and suggested concrete steps to address the gaps between commitment and implementation”.<sup>1</sup> The African ministers in charge of gender and women’s affairs together with other world Governments further reconfirmed and recognized the importance of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in 2005. They emphasized the need for effective implementation of the BPfA.<sup>2</sup>

2. The Beijing Plus 15 review takes place against a backdrop of frameworks put in place to accelerate the implementation of the commitments to gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, which are central to the BPfA. At the global level, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolutions 1820 and 1888 in 2009 to strengthen the implementation of its resolution 1325 (2000), which calls on Member States to address the issues of gender, peace and security. At the regional level, the African Union (AU) has a gender policy designed to strengthen national gender policies and to ensure a harmonized delivery framework in order to accelerate the implementation of gender equality commitments. The African Union Summit of January 2009 declared that the decade commencing in 2010 will be the African Decade on Gender. At the subregional level, the regional economic communities (RECs) have complemented the global and regional frameworks by integrating various resolutions and commitments into their policies and programmes of action. For instance, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has adopted a protocol on gender equality, while the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has put in place a gender policy to guide its member States in accelerating delivery.

## II. Background

### Beijing Plus 5 (1999)

3. In 1999, emerging out of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), African national progress reports showed Governments’ preoccupation with putting in place national action plans reflecting their intentions to redress gender imbalances as per the BPfA. At the time, many countries also placed emphasis on the fight against poverty, at a time when more than half of the population (mostly women) in Africa was living below the poverty line. However, this did not yield concrete results, as the number of people affected by poverty continued to increase.

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<sup>1</sup> Seventh Africa Regional Conference on Women *Outcome and Way Forward* (2004)

<sup>2</sup> Forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, United Nations, 2005

## **Beijing Plus 10 (2004)**

4. The regional review noted that significant steps had been taken to establish policies and enact legislation to achieve gender equality. In particular, they focused on defining legal and policy frameworks for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women. The AU adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa in 2004, which brought to the fore such harmful traditional practices as female genital mutilation (FGM). Improvements were also noted in the provision of basic education in many countries, with gross and net enrolment ratios for both boys and girls increasing, and reaching almost 100 per cent in some cases. Public awareness of Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV and AIDS in Africa grew as a result of advocacy by Governments, parliaments, the public sector, development partners and civil society organizations (CSOs). Several countries had significantly increased the level of women's representation in parliament, with one country (Rwanda) reaching an impressive 49 per cent and others (e.g. South Africa and Mozambique) exceeding 30 per cent. However, it was noted overall that commitments had not translated into significant change in the lives of women.

## **Beijing Plus 15 – regional review**

5. The present review of the region's performance is based on responses from member States to two sets of questionnaires administered by ECA to collect qualitative and quantitative data and information. A highly representational number of 45 out of 53 (85 per cent of member States) responded to the questionnaire.

6. The review covers the extent to which countries have met their commitments to implement the BPfA and have addressed its twelve critical areas of concern, within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA). It also identifies the major challenges being faced in this regard.

## **III. Implementation by critical areas of concern**

### ***3.1 Women and poverty***

7. In Africa, it is widely acknowledged that poverty has a female face, affecting almost all aspects of women's lives and their basic human rights. Poverty reduction continues to represent an urgent and persistent challenge for Africa. The BPfA calls for economic and social policies and programmes to include a gender perspective, specifically in respect to their impact on women. The Beijing +10 review outcome and way forward document reinforces the need for gender-sensitive, participatory and inclusive poverty reduction strategies.

8. Over 70 per cent of the countries that responded to the questionnaire reported having formulated and/or implemented national development strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). The dispensing of microcredit and the formulation and implementation of social

protection programmes appear to be the main strategies being adopted by countries to address poverty among women.

9. For example, Burkina Faso has set up a number of funds to support income-generating activities for women<sup>3</sup>. In 2008, Chad has reviewed its national strategy document on growth, poverty reduction and microfinance in order to mainstream gender. Ghana has allocated funds to national gender mainstreaming from its Highly indebted poor countries funds. Zambia has created the Citizen's Economic Empowerment Fund, 40 per cent of which is reserved for designated groups, including women and people with disabilities. In Uganda, organizations seeking funding through the Local Government Development Programme, which is the main funding modality for the development budget, have to meet the basic criteria of gender mainstreaming. Gabon has put in place a small credit facility for women since 2006. To a large extent, women's credit is funded by CSOs, as few countries have reallocated public spending in favour of programmes and projects aimed at supporting women.

10. While social protection interventions do not address women's long-term needs, they serve as a proxy measurement of what Governments are doing to address poverty among the vulnerable. Malawi reports improved food security at both household and national levels since 2005 due to its agricultural input subsidy; Botswana provides food rations; and the Tanzanian Women Development Fund is a safety net set up in favour of women. Zambia has established the Public Welfare Assistance Fund, under which it reserves specific funds for women and children. Namibia issues social grants to children, elderly women and men, as well as those living with disabilities, while in Eritrea, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare supports female-headed households, and Mauritius has an empowerment fund for unemployed women.

## Challenges

11. Responses from member States, however, show that while recognizing poverty as a feminized development challenge, Governments need to sharpen their approaches to poverty reduction and elimination by taking account of its gendered impacts and dimensions. So far, there is no evidence to show that existing policies and strategies have curbed the feminization of poverty in Africa.

12. Poverty remains a scourge in Africa, regardless of efforts reported by member States. According to the joint Economic Commission for Africa, African Union and African Development Bank report entitled "Assessing Progress in Africa toward the Millennium Development Goals" (ECA 2009), in 2008, the geography of poverty in Africa remained unchanged. Poverty, as measured by the one United States Dollar per day metric, remains endemic in all regions of the continent, except North Africa, and continues to be concentrated in rural areas. Despite the positive economic growth of the past few years, wealth redistribution has not taken place, limiting the possible impact of such growth on poverty reduction, especially among women.

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<sup>3</sup> Fonds d'appui aux activités rémunératrices des femmes (FAARF).

13. The global economic downturn will have a significant impact on women as more of them lose their jobs and are forced to manage shrinking household incomes. The global economic crisis is likely to hit African women on two fronts. First, it arrests capital accumulation by women; second, it is drastically reducing African women's individual incomes as well as the budgets they manage on behalf of their households, with particularly damaging consequences for the girl-child.

14. While microfinance credit is useful for addressing immediate household needs, it does not lead to transformative women's economic empowerment. Furthermore, small-scale women businesses are focused on traditional jobs such as embroidery, sewing and the sale of food items, with limited capacity for new avenues or expanded opportunities.

15. Data on the extent and depth of poverty in the region are largely estimates, and while they may be useful for understanding overall poverty, they do not provide much insight into the gendered nature of the underlying causes and incidence of poverty. They tend to be based primarily on consumption and income information collected at the household level. They are not, however, disaggregated by sex and therefore are unable to reflect gender-based inequities within households.

### ***3.2 Education and training of women***

16. The BPFA recognizes that education is the route through which most of its goals can be attained. At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, Governments made a commitment to provide universal access to basic education; close the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by 2005; provide universal primary education in all countries before 2015; and eliminate gender disparities in access to all areas of tertiary education by adopting positive action when appropriate.

17. One of the areas where Africa has succeeded is in education. The Africa Economic Outlook (2009) notes that 67.9 per cent of countries have already reached the gender parity target. According to the 2009 MDG report, net enrolment ratios increased from 58 per cent in 2000 to 74 per cent in 2007 in sub-Saharan Africa. Tunisia and Zambia reported that they have attained parity at primary level.

18. Governments have made attempts to eliminate barriers that hinder boys' and girls' access to education. These range from free and compulsory primary education (Algeria, Angola, Chad, Egypt, Gabon, Lesotho, Malawi, Liberia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritius, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria and Tunisia) and strategic plans for girls' education (Côte d'Ivoire), to campaigns that helped reduce girls' school dropout rate, and an increase in the education budget (Equatorial Guinea). Liberia has passed the Free and Compulsory Primary Education Act, aimed at providing equal access to education for boys and girls. It has also instituted school feeding programmes to enhance retention rates. Burundi, the Comoros and the Republic of the Congo (2007) have abolished school fees at the primary level. Nigeria and Tunisia have put mechanisms in place to enforce the obligation of free and compulsory education, specifically the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Education for All (EFA) programmes in Nigeria. In Ghana, efforts have been made to create girl-friendly school environments by improving toilet facilities, among

other things. In Malawi, civil society supports efforts of enrolling girls in non-traditional educational sectors and to address the dropout rate among girls.

19. A review of education policies demonstrates some positive inroads. Guinea, Liberia, Mauritius, Namibia and Nigeria have adopted gender-sensitive policies and strategies devoted to girls' education. To improve education materials to address gender issues, Namibia has undertaken a gender analysis of its education materials. Namibia also has an education-for-all policy as well as a teenage pregnancy education policy. These have resulted in higher enrolment of girls than boys, with 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively in 2005-2006. The review of Botswana's education policy in 1996 resulted in schools being built closer to communities and more girls enrolled in science and technology at the tertiary level. Average distance to school was reduced by 5km for primary and 10km for junior secondary schools in this regard.

20. On reporting on measures to increase tertiary enrolment and retention of women and girls, especially in sciences, mathematics and technology-related disciplines, countries such as Burkina Faso, Eritrea and Mauritania have adopted affirmative action measures, with Mauritania having set aside special quotas for girls. In Algeria, girls are given preferential treatment for placement in university residences. Countries such as Angola, Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Zimbabwe encourage practical courses for girls in computer sciences, carpentry, etc. Zimbabwe reports having a math and science camp for girls as an innovative way of attracting girls to scientific studies. Tunisia has reported an increment in registration by girls for disciplines that were traditionally male dominated (e.g. 65 per cent in agronomy, 46.6 per cent in chemistry, 40.7 per cent in engineering).

21. On the elimination of the gender gap in basic functional literacy, all reporting countries indicate that they have deployed efforts to reduce gender illiteracy disparities. Algeria has adopted a national strategy (2007-2015) which targets women aged 15-49. Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Tunisia, Zambia report that more women than men are enrolled in functional literacy classes, with Eritrea citing 90 per cent of the beneficiaries of such classes as women. Chad established a State secretariat in charge of literacy in 2005, while the Comoros cites involvement of village associations in these literacy efforts. Liberia has established adult literacy programmes to encourage women to enrol and become functionally literate. Côte d'Ivoire has developed a handbook on training modules on topics related to gender equality for non-formal education.

22. Several countries have put measures in place to support and develop gender studies and research. Algeria and Angola have national research centres and Egypt has a number of institutions focusing on gender research. Universities in Algeria, Botswana, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Zambia and Zimbabwe offer degrees in women and gender studies. On the strengthening of research on gender issues, Burundi, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Malawi, Eritrea, Mali, Namibia and Zambia have conducted studies that have revealed persistent gender disparities against girls. The studies looked at different areas such as women entrepreneurs, women and elections, women's access to decision-making, the media, women and children's rights, human trafficking and the banking sector.

23. On the elimination of gender disparities in all areas of tertiary education, Burkina Faso and the Republic of the Congo have sensitized their populations to the need to eliminate gender in

tertiary education. Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe have put in place affirmative action measures to increase women's enrolment. In Cape Verde, Namibia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Tunisia, women's tertiary enrolment exceeds that of men.

24. On seeking measures to eliminate barriers to schooling for pregnant adolescents, the Governments of Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire allow pregnant girls to continue their education.

### **Challenges**

25. Various reports on Africa's performance on the MDGs indicate that while the continent is on track to meet the primary education enrolment targets, the main challenge lies with primary school completion and progression to higher levels of education. Countries are also faced with the burden of ensuring that education content remains relevant to the job market and that alternative forms of education, such as technical education, are made accessible to males and females alike.

26. The deteriorating quality of education is threatening the long-term viability of gains achieved in the area of access. Schools throughout Africa are under-funded, have few trained teachers, and lack basic infrastructure, all of which affects the quality of education. Without basic reforms, school systems in Africa will be unable to deliver quality education to more people.

### **3.3 Women and health**

27. The BPfA recognizes women's "unequal access to and use of basic health resources, including primary health services." It also recognizes the importance of implementing the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA) and the Copenhagen Declaration, as is the case in Swaziland, Zambia and Uganda. Also in line with this commitment, countries such as Algeria, Botswana, Chad, and Namibia have formulated health or population policies. Uganda, like Mauritius in 2007, revised its population policy in 2005, and instituted a road map for accelerating the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality in 2008, a step which was also taken by Côte d'Ivoire in 2008. Such efforts have resulted in a reduction of maternal mortality in many countries.

28. Additional measures towards reducing maternal morbidity and mortality include reducing the impacts of unsafe abortions; ensuring that girls have continuing access to necessary health and nutrition information and services; and addressing harmful traditional practices on women's and girls' health, including female genital mutilation.

29. In all countries, programmes have been designed to include sexual and reproductive health issues, such as maternal health and safe motherhood, pre- and post-natal care. Governments have designed, implemented and are monitoring gender-sensitive health programmes. Botswana involves males in sexual and reproductive health interventions. Malawi has recorded a downward trend in maternal, infant and child mortality rates. The United Republic of Tanzania provides pregnant women and children under five with treated mosquito nets, in addition to free

maternal and child health services, as Mauritius does. Namibia provides adolescent-friendly health services and also conducts gender and reproductive health workshops. Côte d'Ivoire has rehabilitated its structures offering emergency obstetric care, and equipped 135 medical structures with reproductive health facilities.

30. In some countries, budgets allocated to the health sector are increasing from year to year, whilst others are witnessing only a small increase, which is jeopardizing the realization of expected results and rights.

### **Challenge**

31. Despite the commitment to health and specific targeted action on reproductive health, maternal mortality in Africa remains the highest in the world. Although all countries report that they have established programmes of action, this has not yet translated into substantial gains in fighting maternal mortality and other women's reproductive rights and health challenges. This is caused primarily by the inadequacy of medical personnel and limited access to emergency obstetric care.

32. ECA in its assessment of progress in achieving the MDGs, notes that, "health goals present a serious challenge for Africa,"<sup>4</sup> particularly in relation to child and maternal mortality indicators. The ICPD review<sup>5</sup> notes the fluctuating trends in maternal mortality rates. Examples are given of "Namibia where the ratio seems to be rising, from 227 in 1992 to 271 in 2000 and to 449 in 2006. Ghana's maternal mortality declined from 250 in 1999 to 186 in 2006 but picked up again to 230 in 2007."

33. Sub-Saharan Africa's epidemics vary significantly from country to country in both scale and scope. Adult national HIV prevalence is below 2 per cent in several countries of West and Central Africa, as well as in the Horn of Africa, but in 2007 it exceeded 15 per cent in seven Southern African countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe), and was above 5 per cent in seven other countries, mostly in Central and East Africa (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Gabon, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania).

34. For the region as a whole, women are disproportionately affected in comparison with men, with especially stark differences between the sexes in HIV prevalence among young people<sup>6</sup>. This assertion is echoed in the 2009 MDGs report, which states that women and girls aged 15-49 account for 60 per cent of prevalence and new infections, reflecting the gender dimension of HIV and AIDS with its social and economic impacts<sup>7</sup>. In Southern Africa, girls are 2 to 4.5 times more likely to become infected with HIV than boys, compounding other vulnerabilities such as poverty, humanitarian and food crises and the increased economic and care needs of AIDS-affected households. [UNAIDS Framework for Action on women, girls gender equality and HIV, August 2009]

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Fifteen year review of the implementation of the ICPD PoA in Africa.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Regions/SubSaharanAfrica.asp>

<sup>7</sup> Millennium Development Goals Report 2009

### ***3.4 Gender implications of HIV and AIDS***

35. The BPfA indicates that Governments need to “review and amend laws and combat practices, as appropriate, that may contribute to women's susceptibility to HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, including enacting legislation against those socio-cultural practices that contribute to it, and implement legislation, policies and practices to protect women, adolescents and young girls from discrimination related to HIV and AIDS.”

36. Most Governments have put in place policy frameworks and/or adopted strategies and measures to address HIV and AIDS, including changes in legislation to include a gender perspective. According to 2008 country progress reports released following the special session of the General Assembly on HIV and AIDS (where 41 countries reported), more than 95 per cent of reporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa indicated having women included as a specific “sector” in their multi-sectoral strategic framework; yet just over 60 per cent of sub-Saharan countries report having a budget attached to programmes which address women’s issues. [ Source NCPI data, 2008]. Angola, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Gabon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Mauritius are some of the countries which reported that national strategies and plans have been put in place; 82 per cent of the responding countries reported that they have established, enforced and/or monitored strict legal frameworks to address the vulnerability of girls and women. Ethiopia, Namibia and Sierra Leone have reviewed their national laws and policies.

37. The survey revealed that only a few countries reported on the human rights and gender aspects of HIV and AIDS. For instance, Guinea said it has developed a national strategic plan for the feminization of the HIV and AIDS which is awaiting implementation. Nigeria and Uganda highlighted their respective efforts to ensure HIV and AIDS gender responsiveness. The majority of countries surveyed admitted that they had not yet fulfil the objectives of their national strategic plans.

38. On addressing the vulnerability of girls and women, Botswana enacted the Domestic Violence Act in 2008; Burkina Faso, the Niger and Côte d’Ivoire have adopted laws that seek to fight HIV and AIDS and protect people living with HIV and AIDS, taking into consideration the vulnerability of women and girls.

39. While the free provision of male condoms is cited by many countries, only a few countries like Botswana, Uganda and Zimbabwe provide female condoms free of charge. Zambia reports that the female condom is inaccessible to poor women as they cannot afford it. It is also unclear whether the free provision of male condoms is sufficient to reach all sectors of the population in countries that provide this service.

40. African countries cooperate with international institutions and development partners in the fight against HIV and AIDS. They actively engage in raising awareness to lessen the stigma and discrimination associated with the disease, sensitizing the population to the enhanced use of male and female condoms, and making antiretroviral therapy (ARVs) for HIV and AIDS accessible to HIV patients.

41. On reporting on targeted interventions in favour of women and other vulnerable groups, countries report programmes targeted at orphans (Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire and Malawi), and food provision (Sierra Leone). Almost all countries claim to sensitize the population.

42. Governments widely recognize the need to prevent mother-to-child transmission. Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe are some of the countries that have established programmes to that effect, with Botswana, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, and the Republic of the Congo providing free antiretroviral therapy. Burundi, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Lesotho, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe report that they provide antiretroviral therapy, but do not indicate whether it is free of charge. Côte d'Ivoire indicates that it provides subsidized ARVs. ARV coverage has increased to 70 per cent in Botswana and 58 per cent in Cape Verde.

43. All reporting countries have upscaled their communications to encourage a behaviour change, while some are providing better medical, psychological and social care, ranging from food baskets for orphans in Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire and the Republic of the Congo, to counselling and treatment for people suffering from STIs. For example, Namibia reports that approximately 62 per cent of women and 61 per cent of men seek counselling and treatment for STIs at private clinics and public hospitals. Other countries like Uganda are drafting communication strategies, while Gabon and other countries are providing psychological services.

44. The Governments of Botswana, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Zimbabwe support home-based care with resources. In Burundi, home visits are made by NGOs and in countries like Uganda, the Government supports CSO efforts.

45. Countries have employed other measures to combat the spread of HIV. In Lesotho, the "Flying Doctors - Partners in Health" render services in rural areas for different target groups, including herd boys. Namibia has trained youth as peer educators and condom use promoters, such that about 64 per cent of youths in the age group 15-19 uses condoms during their first sexual intercourse, compared to 53 per cent of adult men. The United Republic of Tanzania has focused its efforts on the workplace and has established 26 focal centres in all government offices.

## **Challenges**

46. Although in some countries in Africa, HIV and AIDS prevalence trends indicate a decrease in infection rates, the reality is that women continue to have higher infection rates compared to men in most African countries. Southern African countries account for just over 40 per cent of the world's HIV-positive women, and the proportion of women and young girls living with the virus in those countries is growing. [UNAIDS Framework]. The gaps between policy and practice remain significant. The institutional frameworks that have been set up are continuously being challenged by the magnitude of the pandemic.

47. HIV is a crosscutting issue which overlaps with and is affected by other issues, including violence against women, women's education and health, education, economic insecurity and human rights. This poses a challenge for countries to put in place cross-sectional programmes that include HIV.

### **3.5 Violence against women**

48. The BPfA defines specific measures to be undertaken by various development actors, including Governments, NGOs and international organizations, including the "enactment and/or reinforcement of penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs done to women and girls who are subjected to any form of violence, whether in the home, the workplace, the community or society." The BPfA also calls on the United Nations Secretary-General to provide the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on the Human Rights on violence against women with all necessary assistance.

49. The Beijing +10 synthesis report noted that violence against women (VAW) is a serious problem in many African countries. The issue has received special attention thanks to the United Nations Secretary General's campaign on end VAW. That campaign was echoed at the 6th African Development Forum (ADF), where African stakeholders recommended a three-year regional campaign to end VAW.

50. Countries report various measures taken to eliminate VAW, including legal sanctions. Benin, Botswana, Gabon, the Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia and Sierra Leone, among others, have put in place laws and strategies to protect women from violence, including amending their penal codes. Côte d'Ivoire is training justice officers and other key stakeholders to enforce the country's laws. In most cases, female genital mutilation is specifically addressed in enacted laws, as in the case in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. Algeria, Comoros, the Congo, the Gambia, Morocco and Tunisia have prepared national strategies to combat VAW. Angola, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Lesotho and Sierra Leone integrate a gender perspective into their laws and policies.

51. Governments have also enacted or strengthened their legislation to punish offenders and support women subjected to violence. Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, the Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, the Gambia, Ghana, Malawi, Mauritius, the Niger and Sierra Leone have adopted laws favouring punishment of VAW offenders. While in general violence is criminalized by all penal codes, VAW and especially within the family and domestic violence are not specified in laws. Botswana and Zambia are among the countries that have started amending their penal codes and enacting laws to combat domestic violence. Angola, Chad and the Republic of the Congo are considering more comprehensive legislation on VAW. Other countries such as Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger have started addressing forced marriages and female genital mutilation where applicable.

52. Measures against VAW continue to focus more on the victim and less on the perpetrator. For example, the number of counselling and legal assistance centres in various countries is on the rise. In addition, the needs of vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities are often overlooked in policy formulation.

53. Governments are expected to provide well-funded shelters and relief support for girls and women. Algeria, Botswana, the Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Zimbabwe are acting jointly with NGOs to open shelters and allocate functioning budgets to them. Lesotho and Uganda have recently started to work in this area. The United Republic of Tanzania and Namibia have reported an increase in the number of their shelters. However, these shelters are limited mainly to cities, leaving many rural population without protection.

54. On the promotion of research and data collection on domestic violence, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Cape Verde, the Congo, the Gambia, Egypt, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Morocco, the Niger and Tunisia have, for example, conducted studies to provide information and data to reinforce advocacy efforts and policymaking and planning. Specialized centres of studies on gender-based violence have been created in Angola and Egypt.

55. Human trafficking is becoming a scourge on the continent. However, this is an area which a large number of countries are not tackling. Algeria and Namibia have signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Human Trafficking. Equatorial Guinea reports has a law that makes trafficking of emigrants and trade in persons illegal. The country has also conducted information and awareness workshops on trade in persons targeting the youth, national security forces and government officials.

56. The media plays a critical role of informing the society in the struggle to combat VAW. Women in the media are forming professional syndicates, as exemplified by the Women Journalists' Nucleus against Gender-Based Violence established in Angola. In Botswana, gender focal persons have been put in place in some media houses. Training of media professionals to promote gender equality is carried out in Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia and Swaziland, while Djibouti and the Gambia are developing communication strategies to fight VAW, including FGM.

### **Challenges**

57. Although a large number of reporting countries indicate a commitment to combat VAW, the culture of silence surrounding violence, the inadequacies of enforcement, the limited multi-sectoral coordination, comprehensive data collection and monitoring mechanisms, and the limited involvement of boys and men need to be addressed.

### ***3.6 Women and armed conflict***

58. The BPfA specifically calls on Governments to “increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.” The Beijing+10 outcome document recommended the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325, which affirms the rights of women during peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution calls for advocacy against impunity and for reinforced mechanisms for the protection of women, refugees and internally displaced peoples. In spite of the resolution, only a limited number of countries have responded to this critical area of concern, the majority of them facing or have faced conflicts in direct or indirect forms.

59. The assessment undertaken by ECA and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women on the national implementation of resolution 1325, showed that the level of awareness of the resolution is still relatively low in Africa; at a practical level, many women are still not involved in issues related to peace and security, because the structures are skewed to exclude them. Although the resolution calls for all sides in armed conflicts to take special care to protect women and girls, they remain vulnerable targets in conflict situations. The chaos and anarchy of open conflict means that women and girls continue to be vulnerable to attacks, especially sexual-based violence. Côte d'Ivoire reports that 52 per cent of women have been displaced by war and 21 per cent among the displaced are women heads of households.

60. The assessment further showed that there are countries where women have participated in peace processes, e.g. Burkina Faso, Malawi, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Mali. In Uganda, women have been included in negotiation teams aimed at ending the 20-year conflict in Northern Uganda. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has also included women in mediation structures. Zimbabwe has included women in peacekeeping missions in the Sudan. Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Namibia, Uganda and Liberia have all adopted action plans to operationalize resolution 1325, while Namibia integrated it into its revised national gender policy in 2008.

61. Countries also reported on other initiatives they have undertaken in the area of peace and security. In the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire, women are actively participating in sensitization campaigns organized to promote a culture of peace. In Côte d'Ivoire, the defence and security forces have been trained on resolution 1325, while in Chad, a project has been designed to assist displaced and refugee women who are victims of violence.

### **Challenges**

62. Countries in both conflict and post-conflict situations are facing considerable difficulty with the implementation of resolution 1325. This is confirmed in the above-mentioned assessment, which also shows that women are not involved in high-level conflict or peace management and peacekeeping initiatives.

### ***3.7 Women and the economy***

63. The BPfA includes a number of strategic objectives for women's participation in the economy, including to facilitate women's access to resources, employment, markets and trade; provide business services; and eliminate all forms of occupational segregation.

64. As with all areas of concern, countries systematically refer to the principle of equality in their constitutions and case in their labour laws as a guarantee of equal access to employment opportunities and social protection benefits. Some countries have adopted specific acts and policies to enhance women's access to economic opportunities. Others like Cape Verde refer to legal measures undertaken to encourage the economic integration of women, including gender-responsive employment policies and non-discriminatory labour laws such as those prohibiting sexual harassment at work and the employment of children, extending maternity leave from 45 calendar days to 60 working days, and providing for paternity leave.

65. Countries report the more women are participating in the economic realm at all levels, and that both women and men are benefiting from capacity-building programmes and support for business start-up in almost all countries. Some Governments report an increase in the number of working women, from 2 per cent in 1966 to 16.9 per cent in 2007 in Algeria, and up to 38 per cent in Namibia in 2005 as a result of the Affirmative Action Act and the Employment Act.

66. Regarding capacity-building in gender-sensitive economic analysis, innovative measures have been taken recently to better integrate the gender perspective into economic analysis. Reports show that allowances are being made in national budgets to ensure that public resources support and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Almost 40 per cent of reporting countries include a gender perspective in their national budgets. For instance, in Botswana, the Government has commissioned a gender audit of the national monitoring and evaluating system, and Mali is currently conducting a survey on gender budgeting.

67. The Governments of Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania have adopted gender budgeting and auditing initiatives incorporating gender-sensitive economic analysis in their budgetary plans. Gender budget analysis has been conducted in the health sector in Mozambique more particularly on user fees.

68. Meanwhile, the capacities of women and other actors are being reinforced. Training has been organized for gender focal points, ministries, parliaments and other senior management and civil society organizations on gender budgeting in development policies, plans, programmes and projects (the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, etc). Egypt, Namibia, the Niger, Zimbabwe and the Gambia have delivered training on gender mainstreaming in planning and budgeting.

69. As elaborated in the section on human rights of women, most countries have ratified CEDAW and some of them have gone further by ratifying the CEDAW optional protocol. Other international tools, including conventions 100E and 111F of the International Labour Organization have been ratified by Algeria, Cape Verde, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. Countries have also ratified some regional instruments such as the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) Treaty (Burkina Faso and Mali), and the AU protocol on the rights of women (the Gambia, Malawi, Namibia, the Niger, Sierra Leone and Togo).

70. This trend to adhere to and ratify international and regional instruments is quoted as positive but much remains to be done in terms of domesticating and implementing them. Lesotho reported on number of measures such as the Codes of Good Practice Act of 2002, the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006 and the Labour Code Wages Amendment Act of 2008. Mali emphasized efforts to align its legal framework with its international commitments, while countries like the Gambia declared that these ratified instruments are yet to be domesticated.

71. More than 70 per cent of responding countries cited capacity-building, food security and financing for gender equality as cross-cutting or emerging issues.

## **Challenges**

72. In most countries, women are virtually absent from or are poorly represented in economic decision-making, including the formulation of fiscal, commercial and other economic policies. To accelerate poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women, the Beijing +10 outcome document recommended that gender-disaggregated data collection should be enhanced and that gender should be mainstreamed into macroeconomic policy.

73. Women require long-term and sustainable access to training and increased resources for their transformative empowerment. Micro and mid-enterprises seem to be the “window of opportunity” for women.

74. Gender budgeting in development planning has been attempted to ensure that public resources benefit women and men equally, and to promote gender equality. However, it requires the scaling up of technical and analytical expertise, not to mention political commitment to gender equality and equity.

### ***3.8 Women in power and decision-making***

75. The BPFA notes that achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning. In order to achieve this, countries are amending their constitutions and laws to promote women’s political rights and widen their chances of representation in elected councils. Structures are also being established to provide support to women parliamentarians, such as the gender caucus which was set up in 2005 in the national assembly/parliament of Burkina Faso.

76. In recognition of the social and historical injustices as well as the biases against women, some countries have come up with affirmative measures. For example, Ghana has implemented a 40 per cent quota which resulted in an increase of 10 per cent in the number of women at district level. The Governments of Burundi and Burkina Faso have also adopted a 30 per cent minimum quota for government and parliamentary positions.

77. Different plans, programmes and measures have been adopted by countries to encourage and promote the representation of women in decision-making processes. Morocco is providing financial grants to parties to encourage women representation in its electoral lists. The Republic of the Congo is targeting indigenous women, while in the Gambia political parties are being lobbied to nominate more women during the local government elections. Awareness creation and training activities are being used to sensitize societies to the need to vote for women in many African countries, including Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Nigeria, the Niger, Republic of the Congo, Tunisia and Zimbabwe.

78. In the United Republic of Tanzania, training is also being provided to potential female candidates to provide them with the skills necessary for effective leadership. The election of the first female President in Africa in 2006 in Liberia has set a precedent and provided a role model

for women on the continent. In Algeria, a woman has run as a candidate for President and this year in Gabon, a woman in her capacity as President of the Senate, was made interim president of the Republic until the elections. These may be very few examples, but they will go a long way to make people realize that it is possible for a woman to lead a nation.

79. The involvement of universities and specialized centres of government departments as well as civil society organizations in research has led to an understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of the resistance to female participation in decision-making. In some countries, research centres are also addressing the issue of women in decision-making. Examples are the Centre of Information, Training and Operational Research on Women (CIFRAF) in Burkina Faso and the Centre of Information, Documentation and Research in Algeria. To assess the advancement of women in decision-making and identify the remaining challenges, barriers and obstacles, various studies have been carried out to inform policy in countries such as Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Egypt, the Gambia, Mali, Namibia, the Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania.

### **Challenge**

80. While there are some encouraging signs with the growing number of women in parliament, Africa still faces a stiff challenge to reaching the 50/50 gender parity target set by the AU in its Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. Indeed, leadership and decision-making positions are still closed and would require creative and innovative measures if the number of women is to increase.

### ***3.9 Human rights of women***

81. The BPfA outlines three key strategic objectives for safeguarding the human rights of women: promote and protect the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice; and achieve legal literacy.

82. In the five years since the last review of the BPfA in 2004, Governments have undertaken various actions to achieve these objectives, in particular, the ratification of the Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women as well as the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. All countries, except the Sudan and Somalia, have ratified CEDAW, and in 2009, Morocco withdrew the reservations it made in 2003 upon ratification of the Convention. The reporting status of countries to the CEDAW Committee is fairly on schedule. Since 2004, the CEDAW Committee has received reports from thirty African countries, seventeen African countries have ratified the CEDAW Protocol<sup>8</sup>; and, the Protocol to the ACHPR on Women's Rights has been ratified by 27 countries<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Status as at 17/10/2009 (<http://treaties.un.org/>)

<sup>9</sup> Status as at 12/02/2009 (<http://www.Africa-union.org>)

83. The analysis of country responses shows achievements in legal reforms to promote gender equality and address women's rights. Member States have revised existing laws or enacted new laws and regulations to enhance the status protection of women.

84. Several countries like Botswana, Burkina Faso, Namibia and the Niger have translated and popularized regional and international instruments (CEDAW, AU protocol) into local languages with the support of national NGOs and other regional and international organizations. Other countries like Algeria, Angola, Benin, the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea Lesotho, Malawi and Tunisia have disseminated these international and regional instruments through workshops, lectures, leaflets, posters, television, radio, newspapers, the Internet, and school curriculums.

85. The principle of equality between, men and women is enshrined in national constitutions and legislative reforms as exemplified by those of Morocco, Algeria and Egypt. Efforts have been made to address the unequal relations between men and women within national gender frameworks and strategies to fight violence against women (e.g. Algeria, Botswana, Cameroon, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, and Tunisia).

### **Challenges**

86. Legislative reviews are ongoing throughout the region to eliminate discriminatory laws. However, enforcement remains the most serious problem facing Africa. Another challenge that undermines women's rights is the contradictions in customary, religious and codified laws.

#### ***3.10 Women and the media***

87. In its strategic objective J.1, the BPfA specifically calls for an increase in the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication. The regional review of Beijing+ 10 recommends that the region should adopt and implement gender-aware media policies and encourage the use of the media and information and communications technology (ICTs) to promote women's activities.

88. The overall assessment of national reports shows that the media is still dominated by men, which adversely affects the way in which women are portrayed. Even though women's presence in the media has increased, their occupation of key decision-making positions is reported to be very low in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Lesotho reported that women's views and voices are grossly under-represented in the media, with only 21 per cent of news coming from women sources. The Republic of the Congo also reported that women's activities are not considered newsworthy and therefore are not widely covered in the media. However, Botswana, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania reported that some media houses widely cover the issue of VAW, and Chad has introduced a ban on media production that undermines the rights of women.

89. In Ghana, Lesotho, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, recent policies encourage gender balance in the recruitment of media staff. To strengthen women's active participation in the media, associations of women journalists are flourishing in many countries, such as the Women Journalists Nucleus in Angola, the Women's Media Association in Uganda, and the Gender and Media Southern Africa Network.

90. In Mauritius, the Non-Sexist Advertisement Award has been established to sensitize the advertising industry and students against stereotyping and to project a more positive image of women. Two sexist advertisements have been banned by the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

91. National women's machineries are contributing to the promotion of research on women and media (e.g. Algeria, Mali, Namibia). Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda are also conducting gender-sensitive research and working on gender-friendly policies for the media.

92. In response to the recommendation of the World Summit on the Information Society that men and women should have equitable access to ICTs, Algeria set up its 2005-2010 programme of "one computer for each family". Since then, more and more women have been accessing ICT resources and using them to promote their activities.

### **Challenge**

93. The limited number of activities reported by the countries demonstrates that much more is needed to ensure that more women have greater access to ICT and the media. This is especially so for women in rural areas and in the informal sector who stand to gain economically if given a chance to access ITC.

### ***3.11 Women and the environment***

94. The critical role that women must play in environmental management for sustainable development is emphasized in the BPfA. The Beijing+ 10 outcome document recommended that African countries should adopt gender-responsive policies, strategies and programmes, and that women should play a prominent role in the design and implementation of interventions on water, energy, sanitation and land.

95. Many Governments indicated that they have established plans and policies on environmental issues. For example, Burkina Faso said it has set up an action plan for the promotion of women activities in the environment sector in 2008. Malawi, Namibia, Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Tunisia are integrating gender into their environmental policies. In Liberia, the Environmental Protection Agency has been mandated to take measures to reduce environmental impacts on women. To strengthen the capacity of women in various productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, small enterprises, trade and industry, 80 per cent of countries have been providing technical assistance to women.

96. Countries have improved the provision of services in sanitation, water and health. In Algeria, the Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Namibia, Tunisia and Togo, gender is taken into account in policies, plans, programmes and projects related to the protection of the environment and the prevention of pollution.

## Challenges

97. Very few countries make any reference to climate change and its impact on women. The paucity of policies and strategies to address the gender-specific impacts of climate change, and the inability to design gender-equitable policies steer international climate change processes towards a more gender-equitable approach are causes for concern in Africa.

### *3.12 The girl-child*

98. The BPfA extensively echoes the Convention on the Rights of the Child by emphasizing the role of States and Governments in protecting the rights of the child without any bias. The Beijing+10 outcome document recommends that countries should take specific measures to protect the rights of the girl-child, including her right to health and education and to be free from all forms of violence, including early marriage and FGM.

99. The rights of girls are increasingly taken into consideration by national institutions. Research centres and observatories carry out research and studies focusing on the girl-child to provide evidence for policy and advocacy. About 89 per cent of the countries that responded to the questionnaire have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and 67 per cent have domesticated its relevant provisions and protocols. As a result, mechanisms, programmes and practices have been designed and implemented to protect women and to allow them to enjoy their rights. As case in point, Benin, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Lesotho, Mali, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zimbabwe guarantee equal sharing of inheritance between girls and boys.

100. Several countries - Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tunisia and Morocco - have taken measures in the areas of education, health, violence, HIV and AIDS, reproductive and sexual rights, inheritance and labour. These countries are also carrying out studies and have adopted, training, sensitization, advocacy and lobbying strategies that are targeted at a wide range of stakeholders and decision makers to ensure that policies adopted take into account the rights of the girl-child.

101. Encouraging results have been noted in 77 per cent of the countries in school curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks that improve the self-image, lives and work opportunities of girls. Algeria and Namibia have undertaken a gender analysis of educational materials which has resulted in a complete revision of the method of preparation of textbooks. Lesotho and Guinea have integrated life skills education into the school system to help build the self-esteem and confidence of girls and boys in classrooms and promote gender equality.

102. The girl-child is the most vulnerable segment of society and the most affected by gender-based violence, including harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, FGM and sexual violation. In Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Egypt, Gabon, Guinea, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Mali, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe, all forms of violence against girls are forbidden. However, school-based violence is also reported to be a big problem. The countries note that the cause and consequences of the persistent challenge of girls dropping out of school need to be adequately studied and then addressed.

103. An estimated 57 per cent of countries have ensured equal provision of services to disabled girls. Specialized schools and vocational training centres are being constructed (e.g. Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, the Niger and Tunisia) to include girls' classrooms and take into account girls' special needs. The National Council for Children in Egypt has launched a help line for children with disabilities, while Mali is implementing a community-based national rehabilitation programme and setting up specialized structures for children with disabilities.

### **Challenges**

104. The girl-child is a critical area that was brought to the BPfA by Africa. Whilst Africa has policies in place to address the plight of the girl-child, the challenge is to improve girls' access to education, protect them against violence and abuse, and prepare them to assume leadership positions in critical numbers.

105. Discriminatory religious, cultural and traditional practices that do not favour and negatively affect the girl-child persist on the continent. Active community involvement in the implementation of the different laws and legislations enacted for the advancement of the girl-child and the protection of children's rights remains a challenge.

### **IV. Conclusions and recommendations: the way forward**

106. From the 45 responses of the questionnaire administered by ECA, it is evident that Governments still face challenges in meeting the targets set in the BPfA. However, an objective assessment of the countries' performances is, in some instances, misleading because some responses included information outside the stipulated time frame. It is debatable whether Governments are reporting on efforts expended, or are merely trying to demonstrate that something had been done. Lack of statistics, particularly sex-disaggregated data, prevents Governments from reporting increased gender differentials in several critical areas of concern. Where statistics are available, they are not disaggregated by gender.

107. The national responses show that the twelve critical areas of concern are still relevant as the targets set in the BPfA have still not been reached. The MDGs assessments also show that the key indicators of MDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, which are critical for the BPfA, will hardly be met by Africa in 2015. Notable progress has been in legal reforms and policies for gender equality and women's empowerment. Performance for all the goals is varied. Some show much significant success, such as primary school enrolment, whilst others present a serious challenge, such as maternal mortality.

108. Resources for gender equality and women's empowerment remain limited. There is a need for increase financial and human resources in order to support the implementation of the BPfA and translate national political will into concrete actions.

109. Whilst commitment at the highest levels is imperative for the BPfA to be successfully implemented, specific actions on each critical area of concern need to be taken by Governments if they are to deliver in the five years left before the end of the second decade.

110. The following actions are imperative:

### **Women and poverty**

- (a) Assess gender-aware policies and strategies for curbing the feminization of poverty. The fight against women's poverty needs a comprehensive approach beyond microfinance schemes. There is a need to explore new avenues and expand opportunities for women's economic empowerment;
- (b) Increase public sector funding to increase women's participation in business programmes and initiatives; and
- (c) Put in place wealth redistribution mechanisms that reach out to the poor, especially women, so that they benefit from economic growth.

### **Education and training for women**

- (a) Ensure the progression of girls and boys from primary to secondary school levels by further subsidizing secondary and technical education;
- (b) Ensure that education matches and is more relevant to the employment conditions of African countries, with the objective that the dividends of education will be realized within shorter periods;
- (c) Take action to maximize retention levels and reverse the high rate of dropouts among both girls and boys. This should include the design of girl-friendly initiatives such as the construction of separate toilet facilities, the availability of water in schools, the institution of school feeding programmes, cash transfer programmes (social protection) for poor parents, and the training of more female teachers;
- (d) Reform education to better serve poverty eradication goals, especially as education systems are gatekeepers of privilege and opportunity, and therefore need to respond to societal needs;
- (e) Strengthen the participation of civil society organizations in making and implementing policies to build the broad-based support needed for success, and to hold officials and elected representatives responsible for delivering on policy commitments; and
- (f) Develop and implement accessible community-based adult literacy programmes in response to the high illiteracy levels among adult women.

### **Women and Health**

- (a) Develop strategies to address the current high levels of maternal mortality through improved *equity in access and service delivery*, especially with respect to emergency obstetric care;
- (b) In line with the Maputo Plan of Action, compile and disseminate data on the magnitude and consequences of unsafe abortions; enact and disseminate policies and laws to protect women and adolescents; and provide clear instructions, guidelines and appropriate training to service providers in the delivery of comprehensive abortion care services;

- (c) Address *health financing* as an important catalyst of the short, -medium -and long-term implementation of the MDGs within the context of the Maputo Plan of Action and the ICPD +15 outcomes; and
- (d) Address the impact that the shortage of medical staff is having on African health delivery systems, especially at the rural level.

### **HIV and AIDS and their gender implications**

- (a) Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to capture the diversity of women and girls by developing gender-sensitive indicators and collecting sex -and age-disaggregated data in order to better understand the differential impact of HIV on women, girls, men and boys, and take appropriate action;
- (b) Engage men and boys in efforts to promote gender equality and challenge harmful gender-based norms associated with HIV transmission;
- (c) Enhance prevention methods and access to post-exposure prophylaxis drugs;
- (d) Translate national programmes and policy frameworks on HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases into reality, in order to bridge the gaps between policy and practice; ensure that national HIV and development strategies, operational plans and associated budgets address the needs of women and girls;
- (e) Strengthen the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and AIDS within the framework of maternal and child health care programmes;
- (f) Integrate HIV and AIDS concerns into all reproductive health programmes, to taking account of the gender dimensions of the pandemic, such as the need to increase the use of contraceptives among both sexes;
- (g) Support the mobilization and participation of women's organizations, including organizations of women living with HIV and AIDS, in the shaping of national AIDS strategies, priorities and programmes;
- (h) Support reforms to strengthen laws and policies that promote gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV;
- (i) Allocate adequate human and financial resources and ensure oversight bodies are established to address issues of accountability so that proper utilization of resources earmarked for HIV and AIDS programmes; and
- (j) Address the gender dimension of HIV and AIDS and ensure free access of female condoms and campaign vigorously for awareness creation and mitigation of discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS.

### **Violence against women**

- (a) Institute measures to prevent violence and protect victims;
- (b) *Enhance the capacity* of enforcement agencies responsible for the protection of women and children by providing adequate training on existing laws and policies, and the equipment and mechanisms for effective record keeping;
- (c) Ensure that awareness-raising on women's rights includes messages to reverse the *culture of silence* surrounding violence, its treatment as a private issue, and the *impunity* with which violence is perpetuated;
- (d) Work to successfully prosecute perpetrators and protect victims of trafficking;

- (e) Document and disseminate information about and replicate best practices taking place in some countries in the establishment of *specialized institutions* for the protection and rehabilitation of victims (e.g. police stations, courts and shelters for victims);
- (f) Implement the Africa-Wide campaign on VAW recommended at the Sixth Africa Development Forum (ADF VI ) on Action on Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Ending Violence against Women;
- (g) Work to ensure that regional, subregional and inter-country approaches to trafficking are adopted by advocating for and entering into bilateral and multilateral protocols of cooperation to strengthen enforcement regimes;
- (h) In countries with a high HIV prevalence:
  - (i) Compile, summarize and disseminate evidence on the linkages between HIV and different forms of violence against women and girls in order to inform policies and programmes, especially in conflict and crises situations;
  - (ii) Develop strategies (multi-level and multi-actor) to address social norms around gender and sexual relationships that have the potential to reduce HIV transmission directly and to reduce violence against women; and
  - (iii) Use any opportunities that HIV and AIDS programmes may offer in the short term to highlight and address issues of violence. For example, ensure that HIV prevention campaigns also address violence against women, that condom promotion campaigns do not promote harmful gender norms and sexual violence, and that training for HIV counsellors includes examples of women in violent relationships.

### **Women and armed conflicts**

- (a) Create awareness about resolution 1325 at the national level beyond countries in conflict or those emerging from conflict;
- (b) Put in place plans of action to effectively implement the resolution;
- (c) Place responsibility for implementing the resolution not just in the line ministry responsible for gender, but also in other ministries such as defense, justice and home affairs;
- (d) Provide compensation and psycho-social support to women survivors of sexual crimes;
- (e) Build and reinforce the capacities of women at all levels to effectively participate in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace building/post-conflict reconstruction programmes;
- (f) Ensure that States parties include women in the designing, planning, implementing and monitoring peace and security programmes at local, national and regional levels, and develop mechanisms to hold States accountable for these measures;
- (g) Operationalize all the mechanisms in the African peace and security architecture so that they function effectively and include women in all conflict prevention, management and resolution processes; and
- (h) Lobby for restricted sale and a ban on dumping of arms in African countries by weapon manufacturers as recommended by the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing Plus 10).

**Women and the economy**

- (a) Invest in pro-poor national development planning, the potential of the poor, particularly women, should be recognized; such disadvantaged groups should be regarded as resources and not barriers to economic growth;
- (b) Document and address the monitoring and evaluation of the gender dimensions of all national development strategies; and
- (c) Advocate for the appreciation and valuing of women's non-market work by including a gender perspective in national accounts and budgets.

**Women in power and decision-making**

- (a) Recognize gender equality in political participation as a democratic right and one that is integral to good governance;
- (b) Increase the commitment and actions towards the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (2004) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007), which call for gender balance and equality in governance processes;
- (c) Firm up the commitment to affirmative action (CEDAW, Article 4); the elimination of gender stereotyping in appointment processes, especially as they relate to positions which are traditionally dominated by men at political party, executive, ministerial, judicial and civil society levels; continuous capacity-building programmes for prospective women candidates; and public education and sensitization against stereotyping of women's roles in society;
- (d) Put greater emphasis on supporting an increase in local-level participation for women, given that the majority of women are located in rural areas;
- (e) Develop and implement capacity-building programmes to support potential female candidates; and
- (f) Offer incentives that would encourage countries to implement affirmative action policies.

**Human rights of women**

- (a) Ratify the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and the Protocol to the ACHPR on Women's Rights as a matter of urgent priority for the Governments that have not done so to date;
- (b) Include in policies and plans specific issues affecting African women, as highlighted in CEDAW and its *Optional Protocol*, and the Protocol to the ACHPR on Women's Rights;
- (c) Review and reform customary and religious laws in collaboration with stakeholders, such as traditional and religious authorities, to ensure their progressive conformity and harmony with local legislation and international treaties;
- (d) Give visible attention to the Protocol to the ACHPR on Women's Rights as the reference point for the implementation of the gendered aspects of other regional African initiatives, such as NEPAD, by setting high standards of reporting and monitoring of commitments on its provisions;
- (e) Integrate rights-based approaches in all interventions affecting women and affirm women as holders of rights and equip them with the tools for the enforcement of those rights; and

- (f) Integrate human rights education into school curriculums at the basic level of education and ensure that it is fully mainstreamed into inductions and orientations at higher levels of education.

### **Women and the media**

- (a) Raise awareness of the importance of giving women access to ICT at both rural and urban levels. This should be based on and backed by appropriate policies, laws, and pilot schemes involving the promotion of ICT products such as mobile phones and the Internet for productive activities;
- (b) Put in place policies to address women in the media; and
- (c) Ensure equal representation of women in decision-making positions in all media houses.

### **Women and the environment**

- (a) Ensure the effective participation of women and gender experts in climate change planning and decision-making processes as well as in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes at regional, national and local level;
- (b) Ensure gender-sensitive checklists and tools are used for research and evaluations on environmental issues;
- (c) Ensure the provision of timely and updated information and adequate services and resources to women, to enable them to make timely decisions and take appropriate actions, including effective adaptation measures;
- (d) Provide continuous training on the integration of gender issues into environmental policy formulation;
- (e) Work with traditional and religious authorities and women's groups to conduct a comprehensive review of customary and religious norms which serve as barriers to women's equal rights to land; and
- (f) Move the discourse from the private sphere of family and marriage to the public domain of human rights.

### **The girl-child**

- (a) Fight against discriminatory religious, cultural and traditional practices that disfavour and negatively affect the girl child;
- (b) Strengthen programmes and projects which focus on education, health, children's rights and ending violence against women and girls;
- (c) Strengthen and expand the efforts deployed by different stakeholders to provide support and services to disabled girls; and
- (d) Ensure active community involvement in the implementation of the different laws and legislations enacted for the advancement of the girl-child and the protection of children's rights.