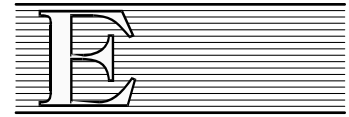




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**Proposed Follow-up Strategy for Implementation of the  
*Outcome and Way Forward* of the Decade Review of the Beijing  
Platform for Action and of the *Solemn Declaration on  
Gender Equality in Africa***

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AGDI</b>	African Gender and Development Index
<b>ACGD</b>	African Centre for Gender and Development
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AWPS</b>	African Women's Progress Scoreboard
<b>BPFA</b>	Beijing Platform for Action
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>ECCAS</b>	Economic Community of Central African States
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>GFP</b>	Gender focal points
<b>ICPD-PoA</b>	International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>M&amp; E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>NEPAD</b>	New Partnership for Africa's Development
<b>PRSP</b>	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>UNECA</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

## 1. Introduction

The documents that emerged from the Decade Review of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) include the country reports, reports of the Subregional Decade Review meetings, the *Outcome and Way Forward* of the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women, declarations and agreements at the end of the Decade Review process and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* adopted by African Heads of States and Governments. These provide incisive information that can be used to design further strategies for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa beyond the first decade of the BPFA. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU), as the regional organizations responsible for monitoring the implementation of the BPFA in Africa, have agreed to develop a strategy to guide the continent's follow-up on the outcomes of the Decade Review processes. This document proposes the Follow-up Strategy.

The Follow-up Strategy also takes into account what the continent has achieved in the last decade, analyses the gaps and limitations that were identified in the Decade Review process and synthesizes the strategic interventions that were recommended in country reports, subregional reports of both governments and NGOs, the *Outcome and the Way Forward* of the Seventh African Regional Conference, and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* adopted by Africa's Heads of States and Governments in July 2004. The Strategy also outlines the roles that key players should play in order to accelerate implementation of the BPFA and to tackle issues and challenges that have emerged in the last decade.

## 2. Justification for the Follow-up Strategy

The BPFA emphasizes action and focuses on taking concrete measures to achieve the strategic objectives of the twelve critical areas of concern. All subsequent reviews emphasized the need for concrete action to accelerate implementation of the BPFA, focusing on the gaps, limitations and obstacles and addressing challenges that have led to limited delivery on the key Beijing commitments.

When Africa, along with other regions of the world, undertook the Decade Review of implementation of the BPFA, one of the significant outcomes of the regional and global reviews was reaffirmation by governments of their commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. In a Declaration adopted at the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March 2005, governments “*welcomed progress made towards achieving gender equality and stressed that challenges and obstacles in the implementation remained, ... emphasized that the full implementation of the BPFA was essential to achieving the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Declaration, ... recognized the mutually reinforcing nature of BPFA and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and called upon all the stakeholders to fully commit themselves to the implementation of the BPFA and the outcome of the Twenty Third Special Session of the General Assembly*”.

The Declaration is therefore an “*unqualified and unconditional reaffirmation of the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action and a pledge for further action for full and accelerated implementation of Beijing*”<sup>1</sup>. It also calls for the integration of a gender perspective in the high-level plenary review meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2005.

The Declaration was a culmination of review processes that had taken place in all regions of the world. In Africa, the review process culminated in the *Outcome and the Way Forward* of the Seventh African Regional Conference. This document acknowledged the achievements and strengths of the 10 years of implementation of the BPFA. It noted the areas where the strategic objectives of the BPFA had not been achieved (gaps), the obstacles and challenges that hindered the achievement of key strategic objectives on some critical areas of concern (limitations) and the emerging issues that continue to slow down progress towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The *Outcome and Way Forward* that emanated from the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women held in October 2004 was endorsed by the African Heads of States and Governments as Africa’s common position in the post-Beijing era, in January 2005. When put together, the *Outcome and Way Forward* and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* adopted by Africa’s Heads of States and Governments in July 2004 outline insightful measures that need to be taken to accelerate implementation of the BPFA and promote gender equality in Africa.

In order to implement the recommendations of these documents and to accelerate the implementation of the BPFA, UNECA and the AU decided to develop a clear and perceptive Follow-up Strategy that would focus on the necessary strategic interventions, the roles of key players at national, subregional and regional levels, and on monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategic interventions and the levels of implementation at the national level.

### **3. Objectives of the Follow-up Strategy**

The Follow-up Strategy for the *Outcome and Way Forward* and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* aims at responding to the concerns raised in the Decade Review process, facilitating the acceleration of the implementation of the BPFA, tackling the obstacles and challenges that have resulted in the limited accomplishments on the strategic objectives of the 12 critical areas of concern of the BPFA and strengthening the capacity to monitor the impact of implementation. It also aims at giving impetus to priority-setting, identification of concrete measures to be taken, and the setting of specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound targets for the next five years to address areas of weakness that were identified in the Decade Review process. Implementation of the strategy will require partnerships of the key players to strategise on how to effectively implement, monitor implementation, evaluate achievements and ensure accountability on the Beijing commitments.

### **4. Achievements, Strengths, Limitations and Gaps**

Effective implementation of the BPFA at national, subregional, regional and global levels has remained the main strategy for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the last decade. Countries of Africa have registered some

milestone achievements in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women over the last decade, at national, subregional and regional levels. Some policies and structures that have been set up at various levels to promote gender equality and women's empowerment include the commitment to gender equality in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the institutionalization of gender parity in the AU Commission, and the adoption of the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*, all showing some level of political commitment to gender equality and constitute major milestones in this institutionalization process.

However, there are still some major limitations, gaps and challenges in implementing the BPFAs. This section of the strategy document analyses some of these achievements, limitations and gaps. The analysis leads to a synthesis of the areas where further strategic interventions are necessary for accelerating the implementation, ensuring delivery of the Beijing commitments and promoting gender equality in Africa.

A review of the twelve critical areas of concern of the BPFAs reveals that although there have been some progress made in some areas, there are still gaps in the implementation of the strategic objectives of the Platform, limitations especially on the institutional and financial arrangements and further challenges to the achievement of gender equality.

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

The persistent and increasing burden of poverty among women is a major area of concern in the BPFAs. During the Decade Review in Africa in October 2004, over 80% of African countries reported having prioritized poverty reduction in their plans for implementing the Platform. Poverty reduction, however, continues to present a major challenge and halving the number of people living in poverty by 2015 is one MDG that could prove very difficult to achieve in sub-Saharan Africa.

During the decade, only a few countries performed well economically. In the Decade Review process, very little substantive progress was reported on reducing the burden of poverty on women. The proportion of people living in poverty, the majority of whom are women, has continued to rise. Subregional Decade Review reports pointed out that women constitute the vast majority (up to 80%) of the poor. A UNDP/UNICEF report on progress towards achieving the MDGs noted that sub-Saharan Africa is unlikely to meet the goal of halving the number of people living in poverty even by the year 2050.

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

A critical area of concern of the BPFAs where some visible progress has been made is that of women's education. Gender parity in school enrolment has been prioritized in many countries and disparities, especially in primary school enrolment, have been reduced in the last ten years. In sub-Saharan Africa, gross primary school enrolment increased by more than 40% while the enrolment rate for girls increased by up to 50% more than that for boys.<sup>2</sup> Some countries such as Uganda and Malawi successfully implemented affirmative action programmes aimed at increasing girls' access to basic education through social mobilization campaigns. Some countries have instituted incentives such as reduced fees, provision of meals at schools, uniforms and books for girls who continue with their education. Some gender-biased educational materials have been removed from the curricula, dispensation has been given to adolescent mothers to continue with their education and quota systems and

affirmative action programmes are being implemented to allow more women into tertiary education.

However, major gaps, limitations and challenges still exist in the area of education and training for women and girls. Of the estimated 104 million children of school-going age that are out of school world-wide, 75% are in Africa and 57% of them are girls.<sup>3</sup> Girls continue to drop out of school in larger numbers than boys especially as a result of teenage pregnancies, gender discrimination in schools and negative social attitudes towards girls' education. Furthermore, gender disparities continue in accessing secondary and tertiary education and in employment opportunities for women, especially in science and technology.

### ***Women's health***

The area of women's health, especially issues of reproductive health and rights, has been given prominence mainly as a result of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD-PoA) and its subsequent reviews. A significant number of African countries prioritised women's health as a critical concern in their National Development Plans, leading to the provision of subsidised reproductive health services and the training of grassroots health service providers.

However, the main challenges to women's health in Africa arise from inadequate health care services, especially in poor urban and rural areas where the majority of Africa's women live. Recent studies by WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF indicate that maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa is the highest in the world, with women in the region having a 1 in 16 chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth. The main cause of such high maternal mortality rates is the lack of basic obstetric care and reproductive health services.

### ***Women's human rights***

Some progress has been made in the area of women's human rights. Fifty-one out of the 53 countries of Africa have ratified CEDAW. The adoption of the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in July 2004 was a milestone in promoting women's rights on the continent. By March 2005, 10 countries had ratified the protocol. Five more ratifications were required before the Protocol enters into force. Many countries have also enacted or amended laws and set up structures that promote the rights of women and girls and their equality before the law.

The main challenges in this area include the ratification of CEDAW by some countries with reservations that hit at the core of the Convention, the lagging of implementation far behind ratification, and widespread gender discrimination in cultural and traditional attitudes. Where legislative provisions have been made to ensure non-discrimination and gender equality before law, there are disparities between enactment and enforcement of gender-sensitive legislation due to insensitivity and bias among law enforcement agents. Identification of the gaps has also been made difficult by the absence of gender-disaggregated data for use in advocacy and planning.

### ***Violence against women***

Gender-based violence in both the public and private spheres remains a major challenge to the promotion of women's rights. More extreme forms of gender-based violence such as ritual rapes and murders, defilement and forced early marriages, military sexual slavery,

rape as a weapon of war, trafficking in women and girls, and ill treatment of widows have become more widespread, especially in conflict situations. Women in Africa continue to be vulnerable to harmful traditional practices despite the passing of legislation against most such practices. Enforcement of laws lags far behind their enactment and most services for survivors are provided by civil society groups. Furthermore, there is limited capacity to monitor the impact of measures taken due to unavailability of gender-disaggregated data. Gender-based violence also continues to increase exposure of women and girls to the risk of HIV infection.

### ***Women in conflict situations***

Despite several initiatives and good practices of women's involvement in conflict resolution and peace building, gross gender disparities continue to exist in decision-making on conflict resolution and peace-building, peace-keeping, and post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction. Vulnerability of women as a result of gender-based violence in conflict situations continues to over-shadow the contributions that women make to peace-building and conflict resolution. Civil society groups initiate most of the gender-sensitive measures in conflict resolution with little support from decision-makers.

### ***Women and HIV/AIDS***

Many countries in Africa have established programmes and structures to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but the gendered impact of the pandemic has received less attention. Women continue to bear the brunt of the negative impact of the pandemic through the increased burden of care for the infected and affected minors. The effects of HIV and AIDS on women in Africa have touched all aspects of their lives, including their livelihoods and economic activities, education, reproductive roles and their human rights. Infection rates among women are growing much faster than among men, with women and girls accounting for 57% of persons living with HIV and over 60% of infected young people.<sup>4</sup> The lack of female-controlled protection against AIDS is a cause of women and girls' greater vulnerability to the pandemic. The efficacy of vaginal microbicides is still being tested while their utilization will require male consent. Therefore, male condoms remain the sole mean of preventing HIV transmission during sexual intercourse, giving men decision and power over protection and reproduction. Childbearing is another obstacle for the use of condoms, thus putting women at a higher risk.

### ***Women's participation in the economy***

Some measures have been taken to increase the participation of women in economies of Africa. These include mobilization and gender-sensitive distribution of resources for small- and medium-scale enterprises, capacity building and empowerment of women in management and entrepreneurship as well as enactment of gender-sensitive labour legislation. Some progress has also been made in the area of women's access to and ownership of agricultural land.

The main challenges in the area of women's economic empowerment include the gender insensitivity of macro-economic policies, lack of recognition of the contribution of women in the household and in informal and rural subsistence economies, gender discrimination in employment practices, the skewed distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work and the highly inequitable access to and control over productive resources.

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

The area of the participation of women in power and decision-making has witnessed some progress, especially in the proportions of women in representative bodies. However, gender disparities continue to exist in most structures of decision-making and policy-makers have not prioritised gender equality in development plans and programmes. Decision-making positions, where women need to be adequately represented, include positions as members of parliament, cabinet ministers, higher court judges, members of local councils and in higher positions in the civil service.

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

In the last decade, networks of women working in the media have advocated very strongly against the negative depiction of women in the media. Improved access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) has enabled an increasing number of women to contribute to and share knowledge through the media. National policies on ICTs have made resources available for the promotion gender issues in the media.

However, several challenges still remain. Women continue to have less access to and control over media resources. Poorly developed communication infrastructure and illiteracy, especially in rural areas, continue to limit the number of women who influence opinions through the media. Negative cultural attitudes that subordinate women continue to be depicted and sexual harassment in work places present major challenges to gender equality in the media.

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

In the last decade, there has been increased recognition of the link between gender equality, environmental protection, poverty reduction and sustainable development. In the Decade Review process, governments reported that environmental protection programmes were generating much needed resources and meeting both the practical and strategic needs of rural women.

Some challenges that remain include the limited participation of women in decision-making on environmental issues, their limited access to technical skills and resources, and the persistence of gender-insensitive environmental policies. Women's indigenous knowledge of the environment has not been adequately utilized for sustainable environmental management.

### ***Institutional mechanisms for promoting gender mainstreaming***

The establishment of an effective political support to institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming is one of the measures most critical for accelerating implementation of the BPFAs and achieving gender equality. In the last decade, considerable progress has been made in establishing institutional mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Africa. In the Decade Review process, all countries of Africa reported that they had set up various types of national machineries for the advancement of women, ranging from ministries, commissions, divisions, departments within ministries, to councils and forums. Most countries reported the existence of gender focal points (GFPs) in sector ministries and at district level, to

ensure incorporation of gender issues at the local level. GFPs are said to provide a valuable link between Ministries of Women's/Gender Affairs and other line ministries.

Parliamentary portfolio committees on gender are reported to have strengthened the national machineries for gender equality in many countries. National institutional mechanisms have also been supported by gender policies and national plans for implementing the BPFA. Decade Review reports from the five subregions indicate that over 80% of countries have gender policies, some of which are integrated into national development plans. A study conducted by ECA/ACGD as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation of the programme on Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Mainstreaming in 18 countries revealed that 88.8% of the countries had gender policies, which, in some countries, had been passed as Acts of Parliament. Civil society organizations have also formed themselves into gender networks, coalitions, women's forums and lobby groups to strengthen monitoring of implementation of gender policies and of the BPFA areas of concern.

Country reports indicate that national machineries have different functions depending on the respective government's priorities concerning women. Most functions include mainstreaming gender into policy formulation, monitoring the implementation of the BPFA and CEDAW, and advising government on gender issues. Particular attention has been given to the formulation of national gender policies and many countries have developed implementation plans for such policies. Capacity building for gender mainstreaming has also been undertaken at national and regional levels.

National machineries have a wide variety of mandates that include:

- Running affirmative action programmes intended to raise the skills levels of women so that they can participate equally with men;
- Coordinating gender training and capacity building in gender analysis for all structures of government;
- Developing gender policies;
- Monitoring and evaluating implementation of the gender policies by line ministries, monitoring mainstreaming processes and promoting institutionalization and integration of gender concerns in all programmes; and
- Advocacy and awareness raising on cultural practices that are disadvantageous to women and assisting women to claim their rights.

In some countries (such as South Africa), the above responsibilities are spread among various institutions that together form the national machinery for gender equality. In most countries, however, the questions of clarity of the mandates, political clout to be able to perform the mandates, human and financial resources, and skills and capacity to perform the tasks are major challenges to national machineries. At the pre-ministerial meeting held at the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women held in Addis Ababa in October 2004, the thematic session on institutional mechanisms for gender equality heard many testimonies of inexplicit mandates, lack of capacity in national gender machineries to implement their mandates, inadequate resource allocation and lack of gender-disaggregated data to enable gender-sensitive planning and monitoring of achievements.

Inadequacy of both financial and human resources is one of the major limitations to the functioning of institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. All 42 country reports that were submitted to ECA as part of the

Beijing + 10 review expressed concern about inadequate budgets for implementing gender programmes. In the M&E programme conducted by ACGD between 2002 and 2004, all 18 countries that participated indicated that national machineries receive grossly inadequate funds, and that most funding for gender programmes did not come from the government resources but from extrabudgetary sources that were not guaranteed. Issues of inadequate resources for implementing gender policies and the BPFA also emerged in all the 12 countries where the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) was piloted.

Country reports also indicated that national machineries have limited access to decision-making. Because of lack of clarity of their mandates and lack of political clout, they are unable to influence decision-making. In most cases, national machineries are not regularly involved in policy-making except in developing gender policies. They are also hardly involved in negotiations for balancing gender concerns in the allocation of foreign aid.

Although GFPs have been established in almost all line ministries in over 80% of countries, there is a mismatch between their skills and their responsibilities. Many of them do not have the requisite skills in gender analysis, and are not positioned in posts where they can influence programme design and planning decisions. Their roles as GFPs are in addition to the substantive functions of their posts. In many cases, the gender-mainstreaming tasks of GFPs are not included in their job descriptions and are, therefore, not used in their job evaluation. There are no clear performance indicators to show that they are performing their roles as GFPs. Although the national machineries are supposed to support GFPs, even they sometimes do not have the requisite skills and lack the resources to hire the expertise from outside the civil service. GFPs have the potential to be effective if they can deal with the challenges outlined above.

As part of their oversight functions, some parliaments have created portfolio committees to monitor the various functions of governments. Portfolio committees on gender, which function as accountability mechanisms, have been established in only a few parliaments. The ACGD M&E programme found that less than 15% of the participating countries had parliamentary committees for enforcing accountability on gender mainstreaming and implementing gender policies. The main challenge to these committees is their inadequate capacity to raise and advise on gender issues.

In some countries, inter-relationships have been developed among the key development actors and national machineries for gender and development. Good practices for strengthening national machineries have been experienced in some countries and examples include establishment of multi-layered national mechanisms for promoting gender mainstreaming and gender equality as in South Africa, the placement of national machineries in the highest political office as in Zambia, and the training of all key government employees on gender awareness and gender analysis, as in Zimbabwe.

Initiatives taken at subregional level to deal with the challenges of achieving gender equality in Africa are good examples of inter-governmental efforts to promote gender-sensitive development. Several collective decisions and actions taken by subregional groupings such as ECOWAS, SADC, EAC and ECCAS have indicated the desire to move towards gender-balanced development. An example of policies aimed at promoting gender equality in the Southern Africa sub-region is the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. The sub-region also set up an institutional framework for monitoring the implementation of the Declaration in the region in the form of the SADC Council of Ministers responsible for

gender or women's affairs. ECOWAS, with assistance from UNECA and UNIFEM reorganised its regional gender policy, revamping the Gender Directorate and profiling gender perspectives in the current Strategic Plan.<sup>5</sup> In July 2004 the ministers responsible for gender and women's affairs in the ECOWAS region set up a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the ECOWAS Gender policy.

The formation of the African Union has given impetus to the drive towards gender equality in the region. The emphasis on gender-balanced development and human rights in the Constitutive Act of the Union has created an enabling environment for advocacy for gender equality in the Unions' policies and programmes. The decision by the AU on gender parity among Commissioners and the adoption of the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality* with a reporting requirement and procedures for monitoring its implementation by all Member States of African Union, are major milestones in promoting gender equality in Africa.

The main challenges to gender mainstreaming include:

- Policies and programmes that continue to treat gender concerns as separate project interventions. While this is necessary to address specific women's issues, the concept of mainstreaming is cosmetic and continues to face resistance. For instance, the mere mention of the word gender in plans is seen as adequate without specifying concrete actions to be taken to achieve gender equality.
- Gender Policies are not integrated into sectoral plans, and gender issues are not mainstreamed in sector budgets.
- Gender ministries and directorates are not adequately resourced to assume their coordination, monitoring and evaluation, social mobilization and advocacy roles effectively.
- There are conflicting interests between legislation in favour of women and girls, and traditional practices and customary laws that reinforce the subordination of women.
- The absence of gendered statistics, sex disaggregated data, and gender sensitive indicators to monitor and evaluate progress towards gender mainstreaming inhibit its effective implementation.
- GFP roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and given due attention.

## **5. Strategic Interventions**

As contained in the Mission statement of the Beijing Platform for Action, the success of the implementation of the Platform of Action requires *“strong commitment on the part of governments, international organizations and institutions at all levels, ... adequate mobilization of resources at national and international levels, ...new and additional resources to developing countries from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources for the advancement of women; financial resources to strengthen the capacity of national, subregional, regional and international institutions; a commitment to equal rights, equal responsibilities and equal opportunities and to the equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy-making processes; and the establishment or strengthening of mechanisms at all levels of accountability to the world's women”*<sup>6</sup>

The analysis of the gaps, limitations and challenges in implementing the strategic objectives of the critical areas of concern of the BPFPA has shown areas where targeted strategic interventions are necessary to enable the achievement of gender equality. Above all, for the

gaps and limitations to be addressed and for gender equality and women's empowerment to be achieved, there must be demonstrated political will and commitment at the highest political levels to translate gender declarations and policies into action. This requires the leadership of committed people (women and men) in the highest echelons of power and decision-making.

This section summarizes the strategic interventions proposed by critical area:

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

Measures taken to improve the impact of poverty-reduction strategies should include the collection of intra-household data that capture the dynamics within the household, which underpin power and resource allocation. This will expose how gender inequalities reinforce poverty. The *Outcome Document* of the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women also emphasizes the need to incorporate gender equality principles into budgeting and ensuring resource allocation in areas where poverty is concentrated. The Document also stresses the need to use gender-sensitive monitoring indicators of the impact of poverty reduction policies, strategies and programmes.

### ***Women's economic empowerment***

Strategic interventions in the area of women's economic empowerment include:

- Strengthening the gender analytic capacity of macro-economists at all levels;
- Involving gender analysts in redefining economic concepts, approaches and methodologies of collecting data on economic activities to include women's unpaid work;
- Mainstreaming gender into macro-economic policies so that they recognize and support women's activities in the informal and subsistence sectors; and
- Strengthening the GFP role in the Ministries of Economic Planning and Finance.

Other strategic interventions include:

- Gender analysis of resource allocation, and instituting measures to achieve more equitable and gender sensitive distribution;
- Actions to increase the access of women to business opportunities and decision-making in economic activities such as trade and investment, and to decent employment; and
- Gender analysis of the impact of macro-economic policies, programmes and measures aimed at removing gender disparities in the distribution of remunerated and unremunerated work

All this analysis should lead to detection of the differential impact of macro-economic policies on women and men, the recognition of women's valuable contribution to the economy, the development of gender-sensitive policies that support the economic activities of both men and women and affirmative action in order to promote gender-balanced participation in the economy. Such activities will assist policymakers in the distribution of resources.

### ***Gender and HIV/AIDS***

Strategic interventions in the area of HIV/AIDS include:

- Gender analysis of the impact of the skewed gender power relations that lead to gender-based violence and the inability of women to negotiate safe sex;
- Enforcement of legal frameworks that address the vulnerability of women and girls;
- Strengthening the lobby and advocacy to increase women's access to methods of prevention and to treatment, especially ARVs;
- Recognition and acknowledgement of the value of women's unpaid work and its contribution to wealth creation; and
- Strengthening the role of GFPs who will assist in the above within the relevant ministries.

Such analysis should lead to monitoring of delivery of services so as to ensure more equitable access and protection of vulnerable groups. There is need to build the capacity of planners and policymakers to conduct effective gender analysis of policies and programme outputs so as to expose and correct gender disparities.

### ***Women's health – maternal mortality***

Strategic interventions in the area of women's health include:

- Collaboration between governments, civil society groups and the private sector to prioritize action on maternal and child mortality such as the provision of basic obstetric care;
- Provision of accessible and affordable reproductive health care services and education for women and girls; and
- Preventive interventions to curb diseases that mainly afflict women such as HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, cardio-vascular diseases and cancer and improved access to treatment.

Targeted service provision should be accompanied by a clear gender analysis of the failures of current service provision. This should lead to gender-sensitive health policies and programmes.

### ***Gender in conflict resolution***

Strategic interventions in the area of women in conflict situation include:

- Gender analysis of the impact of conflicts and wars, close monitoring and evaluation of the gender sensitivity of peace building, peace keeping, conflict resolution, demobilization and reconstruction programmes;
- Mainstreaming gender into all the above processes and ensuring gender sensitivity in resource allocation and gender-balanced participation in decision-making;
- Governments should establish action plans for coordinated implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and report to the Security Council on progress made;
- The international community should also support innovative approaches and good practices by civil society groups; and
- Greater participation of Gender/Women's National Machineries in peace building and conflict resolution.

### ***Women's human rights***

Strategic intervention in the area of women's human rights should include:

- Familiarizing planners and implementers of development programmes with the gender sensitive human rights-based approach to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes;
- Monitoring implementation of CEDAW and reviewing the measures taken every two years. Governments are urged to domesticate all international and regional instruments on women's rights that they have ratified;
- Tackling gender discrimination and inequality, and promoting equity and justice in development;
- Advocacy for the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa should be prioritised;
- Setting accountability mechanisms for the enforcement of enacted legislation on women's human rights; and
- Strengthening the role of GFPs within the Ministries of Justice and in the Judiciary.

### ***Violence against women***

Measures to eradicate violence against women should include:

- Public condemnation by the highest authorities of all forms of gender-based violence, punishment of perpetrators and strictly outlawing invoking custom, tradition or religious beliefs to justify violence against women and girls;
- Enactment of legislation to deal with all forms of gender-based violence, especially domestic violence, all forms of sexual violence, trafficking in women and girls, and harmful traditional practices;
- Running public campaigns and programmes to eradicate the culture of tolerance and silence towards gender-based violence;
- Train law-enforcement agents to treat cases of gender-based violence as serious crimes and violations of women's human rights; and
- Strengthen the capacity of GFPs in law enforcements agencies to monitor and report on the gender-insensitive treatment of perpetrators and survivors.

### ***Governance, power and decision-making***

Strategic interventions in the area of governance, power and decision-making should include:

- The replication of the gender parity principles that were adopted by the AU and implemented by the AU Commission at all levels of national and regional governance. The political leadership for such action should be provided by the highest echelons of power at national, subregional and regional levels. Governments should be encouraged to include actions that they have taken in this regard in their annual reports to the AU on the Solemn Declaration;
- Political parties should be mobilized to take the lead in implementing the gender parity principle, especially in the selection of candidates for elections and political office; and
- Leadership training programmes for women should be developed and supported.

### ***Education for women and girls***

Strategic interventions to address the imbalances in access to education for women and girls should include:

- Strengthening affirmative action policies and programmes aimed at increasing women's and girls' access to education, enhancing retention and reducing dropping out of school;
- Innovative and aggressive strategies to redress the under-representation of women in science and technology-related disciplines and careers should begin in early education;
- Programmes to tackle the social biases and negative attitudes towards girls' education and the instilled notions that girls are less capable in the sciences should be intensified;
- Specific measures need to be taken to allow pregnant adolescent girls to return to school after delivery; and
- Strengthening the role of GFPs in the Ministries of Education

### ***The girl child***

Strategic actions to protect the girl child include:

- Enactment of laws to protect girl children against harmful traditional practices, sexual abuse, gender-based violence, forced early marriages and trafficking;
- Advocacy and social mobilization against harmful traditional practices and training of law-enforcement agents;
- Social mobilization programmes to reduce exploitation and abuse of girls through excessive domestic work that interferes with their education; and
- Girls' access to technical education should be facilitated through curriculum reform, gender training of teachers and all other workers in the education system, and continuous advocacy with parents, traditional and religious leaders and decision-makers.

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

Strategies for improving women's access and influence in the media should include:

- Development and implementation of gender-aware media policies and support initiatives to improve women's access to the media;
- Improve women's access to the media and to new ICTs by media houses;
- Strengthen the capacity of national gender machineries to monitor and report on the gender sensitivity of the media; and
- Strengthen the capacity of GFPs in Information Ministries to design advocacy programmes that highlight areas that need improvement in media policies to enhance their gender sensitivity.

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

Measures to be taken to enhance the participation of women in environmental management include:

- Adoption of gender-sensitive environmental management policies that recognize and utilize women's indigenous knowledge of the environment;
- Active involvement especially of rural women in the design and implementation of environmental programmes such as those on water, energy, sanitation, land and forestry management;

- Strengthening the capacity of environmental planners to utilize gender analysis tool to improve the gender sensitivity of policies and programmes; and
- Strengthening the capacity of gender machineries and GFPs to monitor the mainstreaming of gender in environmental policies and programmes

### ***Institutional mechanisms for effective gender mainstreaming***

A major outcome of the Decade Review process was recognition of the strategic value of institutional mechanisms for effective gender mainstreaming and acknowledgement that establishing and strengthening the capacity of these mechanisms for effective monitoring and evaluation is an important ingredient for accelerating implementation of the BPFA.

Strategic interventions in this area should deal with the lack of clear and manageable mandates, visibility and political clout of national machineries for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment that are consistent with their cross-cutting role of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating implementation of gender policies. Issues of inadequate financial and human resources, and inadequate requisite knowledge and skills on gender mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation of implementation of gender policies need to be addressed. Accountability structures that are distinct from implementing mechanisms need to be established and capacitated.

The strategic actions recommended in the *Outcome and the Way Forward Document* of the Seventh African Regional Conference include:

### ***Institutional mechanisms***

- Lobbying for gender national machineries and GFPs where they do not exist;
- Strengthening institutionalization of gender mainstreaming through the provision of adequate resources, technical expertise and sufficient authority to national machineries and GFPs in line ministries;
- Implementation of gender policy by all stakeholders, with national machineries, gender units and GFPs providing oversight and facilitation of gender-responsive delivery of development programmes;
- Governments should evaluate on a regular basis the extent to which political will is translated into concrete results, so as to identify and remedy the gaps in existing gender policies and the implementation process by, among others, allocating appropriate human and material resources;
- Governments must utilize gender expertise in designing all policies and programmes; and
- In particular, governments should ensure that gender is included in the job descriptions and key result areas of all officers in the public service in order to enhance gender-responsible development.

### ***Responsibility and accountability***

- Women/Gender Ministries and other line ministries should agree upon a division of tasks for gender mainstreaming in their respective areas of responsibility and expertise;
- The national machineries for gender should evaluate the performance of other line ministries in mainstreaming gender in their sectors and areas of responsibility and expertise;

- The GFP core functions should be institutionalized in all ministries, and gender concerns should be mainstreamed into all policies, programmes and activities, such that all civil servants assume responsibility for gender mainstreaming;
- It is essential that accountability for the achievement of gender equality is the responsibility of the highest authority in all ministries, rather than relegating it only to gender machineries and focal points; and
- Lobbying for the strengthened oversight role of Members of Parliament to monitor gender mainstreaming through portfolio committees on gender.

### ***Capacity building***

- Considering that interventions to address mainstreaming backlogs and achieving equality will require allocation of significant and dedicated additional resources, governments should provide adequate human and financial resources to national structures for strengthening their capacity to deal with gender issues;
- National statistical offices should be supported to strengthen gendered data collection and dissemination in order to ensure that more gender-specific data become available;
- Data users should be trained in the analysis and utilization of these data for planning, monitoring and evaluation;
- National capacity must be built in the civil service, universities, and think tanks in order to undertake gendered research and to evaluate the gender sensitivity of programmes; and
- The capacity of women's national machineries to assess accurately the resource requirements for the implementation of gender mainstreaming objectives need to be strengthened.

### ***Co-ordination***

The *Outcome Document* noted that lack of effective coordination mechanisms within gender structures, and between these structures and all levels of other institutions, impedes gender mainstreaming. Therefore, institutions must:

- Develop effective coordination mechanisms with clear lines of communication, roles, responsibilities, accountability and levels of authority; and
- Coordination frameworks must define specific terms for collaboration and partnership between the public sector, development partners, the private sector, civil society groups including NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations for effective coordination of gender mainstreaming at all levels.

### ***Civil society***

The *Outcome Document* recognized the contribution of civil society in advocating for gender equality and women's human rights and empowerment in the last decade. It further recommended that in the coming decade, governments and regional institutions must build on and strengthen civil society advocacy, and develop partnership with civil society organizations in conducting education and information campaigns aimed at mainstreaming gender concerns. Governments should also strengthen the civil society organizations' advocacy programmes. This advocacy work should be linked to national policies and to programmes so as to enhance collective responsibility for mainstreaming and accountability.

### ***Monitoring and evaluation***

- Instruments of accountability of the NEPAD Peer Review Mechanism, the AU Commissions, and regional economic commissions should be adapted for use at national levels;
- The capacity of accountability mechanisms to monitor national planning, budgeting and gender policy implementation processes should be strengthened to assess the adequacy of inputs and outputs, and remaining challenges to achieving gender equality and equity in all sectors;
- The MDG review and reporting processes should integrate issues raised in the BPPA;
- The capacity of the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Tool for Institutional Mechanisms to provide a framework for priority-setting, tracking progress and accountability, should be acknowledged and their use by member States recommended; and
- The AU should be encouraged to convene a meeting of Ministers for Women's Affairs to agree on monitoring priorities for tracking delivery against the commitments of the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*, adopted in 2004.

### **6. Roles of key players**

The strategic interventions for accelerating the implementation of the BPPA outlined above indicate that building the gender analytic and gender mainstreaming capacity of key actors in the priority sectors and strengthening structures for monitoring and evaluation is the key to exposing gender disparities and reorienting development practitioners towards gender-sensitive planning and implementation of programmes. The *Outcome and Way Forward* document and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* identify the key actors at national, subregional and national levels who should play their roles effectively to ensure that the recommendations of these documents are implemented.

#### ***National level***

- The presence of strategically placed and well-resourced institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming is key. Under the leadership of the national gender machineries, countries are encouraged to select their priority sectors for follow-up, identify the gaps in and limitations to the implementation of the strategic objectives of the BPPA in these areas, re-set national goals and expected outputs, identify key actors and resource requirements of the selected sectors; and
- The selected sector ministries should analyse their national plans to expose the gender gaps, limitations and emerging issues that should be tackled in the context of other existing national plans such as PRSPs, NEPAD and MDGs.

Since the *Outcome and the Way Forward* of the Seventh African Regional Conference identifies the lack of capacity of institutional mechanisms as one of the main limitations to the accelerated implementation of the BPPA:

- National machineries and selected sector ministries should conduct introspective analyses of their mandates, skills needs and the political support necessary to enable them to effectively monitor and evaluate implementation, and to demand accountability from the priority sectors; and
- This process of introspective analysis should include all key players who are responsible for implementing and reporting on issues raised in the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*.

### ***National, subregional and regional levels***

Civil society organizations, coalitions and networks should:

- Coordinate themselves to take the responsibility for continued advocacy in support of gender mainstreaming and effective implementation of the BPFAs;
- NGOs should vigorously continue to pilot innovative strategies for participatory and gender sensitive development planning, programme implementation and service provision;
- Governments are urged to involve civil society groups in gender-sensitive decision-making; and
- Civil society groups should also be strengthened to demand accountability for implementation of the ratified international and regional women's rights instruments, the regional and subregional declarations, and national gender policies and legislative provisions.

UN agencies, and bilateral and multilateral assistance should partner with key national players as appropriate, to provide the necessary technical and financial resources for accelerated implementation of the BPFAs and the Follow-up Strategy.

### ***Regional level***

UNECA, together with its subregional offices, and in partnership with other UN Agencies and bilateral partners should take the lead in:

- Familiarizing countries with the follow-up strategy;
- Back-stopping capacity building of national machineries and key sector ministries in identifying the key issues, gaps and limitations in the implementation of the BPFAs;
- Providing M & E tools to track down progress in the implementation;
- Reviewing national policies and plans and assessing resource requirements; and
- Reporting periodically on the progress made and challenges encountered and
- Conduct a series of subregional workshops to involve all the countries by subregion between late 2005 and end of 2006.

The overall goal of these workshops should be to develop consensus among the countries on how to operationalize and implement the Follow-up Strategy. The workshops will also assist the countries to develop and operationalize their own national implementation strategies in line with the *Outcome and the Way Forward*, the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* and their selected national priorities and existing National Action Plans.

The specific objectives would be:

- To develop consensus among key stakeholders around the Follow-up Strategy on the *Outcome and Way Forward* and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*;
- To develop consensus among the key implementers on how to operationalize the key issues and strategic interventions in the *Outcome and the Way Forward* and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*;
- To familiarize participants with the key issues and strategic interventions in their selected national priority sectors;
- To set targets of delivery;

- To familiarize participants with monitoring tools to measure change over time in the course of implementation of national strategies; and
- To develop consensus on the reporting procedures and requirements.

The workshops will review existing national plans of action in the selected priority areas in relation to the strategic measures suggested in the *Outcome and the Way Forward* document and in the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*. The challenges encountered in the last decade and strategic actions to tackle them will also be discussed. The appropriate monitoring processes and methodologies will be agreed on.

The reporting systems and the frequency of submission of monitoring reports will be agreed on, taking into account the requirements of the *Outcome Document* and the *Solemn Declaration*. At the end of these workshops, participants will be:

- Familiar with specific measures to be taken in the selected priority sectors of their countries;
- Understand who is responsible for carrying out the actions and for monitoring and reporting; and
- Be clear about the periodicity of the reports and where they will be submitted.

UNECA will also provide continued support to implementation of the Follow-up Strategy, especially the use of monitoring and evaluation tools and the production of periodic reports.

**AU should:**

- Take responsibility for promoting and monitoring the key political interventions necessary for the implementation and reporting on the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*. In the Declaration, African Heads of States and Governments require annual reports on the implementation;
- Take the lead in appealing for the necessary political support and resource allocation for monitoring and reporting on implementation of the follow-up strategy;
- Provide guidance on the format and content of the annual reports on the *Solemn Declaration*; and
- Provide political coordination for the periodic reviews.

***Subregional level***

The strategy suggests that:

- Regional Economic Communities (RECs) provide support to countries, especially in relation to building synergies between the implementation of the BPFA and other gender equality initiatives and plans such as those relating to subregional economic policies, trade, mobilization and distribution of subregional resources for investment, and entrepreneurship capacity building.

**7. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting**

The responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of progress in implementing the national, subregional and regional strategies needs to be clearly allocated.

### ***National level***

It is recommended that the selected sectors conduct their own continuous monitoring. This will give these sectors responsibility for selecting indicators for progress and for reporting on the progress made in implementing the selected measures. Monitoring will, however, require the support of other national actors such as national statistical bureaus that provide data on selected indicators of progress, and national gender equality mechanisms that will advocate for gender mainstreaming as well as evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken. In countries where the AGDI has been piloted, the research institutions that gathered data for the Index could also assist in the identification of credible sources of data. Some of the information collected for AGDI could also be used to assess progress made in the implementation of the *Outcome and the Way Forward document* and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*

National machineries should take responsibility for coordinating the evaluation of the overall progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the *Outcome and the Way Forward document* and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*. They should provide support to gender policy formulation in the selected sectors, build the capacity of implementers to engender the implementation and monitoring processes and utilize the national accountability institutions to advocate for the fulfilment of national and sectoral commitments.

The capacity of national machineries to carry out their monitoring and evaluation roles will need to be strengthened in some countries. The UNECA M&E programme would need to continue to strengthen the capacity of national machineries to identify their capacity building needs.

### ***Regional level***

The development of monitoring tools and the selection of indicators of successful implementation should take advantage of existing instruments such as the UNECA M&E tools and AGDI. For example, as outlined in the African Women's Progress Scoreboard (AWPS), the main indicators of government commitment to effective implementation of ratified international and regional women's rights conventions and gender declarations and national gender policies include the:

- Availability of plans of action with time-bound targets;
- Establishment of effective institutional mechanisms for implementation;
- Availability of financial and skilled human resources;
- Gathering of gendered longitudinal data to enable tracking of changes over time;
- Involvement of civil society to enable advocacy and demand accountability;
- Continuous and targeted monitoring and evaluation; and
- Incorporation of the indicators into the monitoring tools and their development into a guide for continuous monitoring.

The use of the AGDI framework has the advantage that the participating research institutions can also provide support to the data gathering and analysis in the monitoring process. UNECA could take the responsibility for developing regional monitoring and evaluation tools that can be adapted for national use.

The periodicity of monitoring reports will be discussed at the subregional workshops to be organized by ECA. The regularity of these reports will be guided by the requirements of the *Outcome and Way Forward document* and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality*. Reports to the ECA Committee on Women and Development that supervises their implementation are submitted biennially, with a major review every 5 years. The AU requires annual reports on the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality* to the Ordinary Sessions of Heads of State and Governments.

## 8. The Way Forward

As a way forward, the strategy document will be submitted to CWD and AU for discussion and possible modification. Implementation of the regional strategy should start off with the subregional strategy workshops under the leadership of the regional organizations. Countries will then be assisted to develop national level strategies based on the agreed Follow-up Strategy. Country strategies have to be based on reviews of the country's performance, achievements, strengths, gaps and limitations in implementing the BPFAs together with other reviews such as the PRSPs and the MDGs. Countries will select their priorities and develop implementation strategies as defined in the Follow-up Strategy.

National monitoring mechanisms should become familiar with the monitoring tools developed at the regional level and where necessary, the capacities of national monitoring mechanisms should be appropriately strengthened. Regional organizations will need to backstop the development of periodic national reports that input into the regional review report to be produced every five years.

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<sup>1</sup> Press Release, UN-DPI, New York, 11 March 2005, “*Governments pledge to accelerate efforts to achieve equality for women and fulfil Beijing commitments as the UN Commission of the Status of Women concluded*”, issued at the end of the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women on Beijing at Ten, 28 February to 11 March 2005.

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, 2004, summary EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004, p6

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO, 2004, Gender and Education for All: Leap to Equality Summary Report, p 6

<sup>4</sup> UNAIDS, 2004, Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic.

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat, November 2003, *Building on Achievements: Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its Update (2000 – 2005)*, p 15.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Department of Public Information, 1996, *The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4 – 15 September 1995, p 18.