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Abbreviations

AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discriminations against Women
COSDEC:	Community Skills Development Centres
FES:	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FOBs:	Faith based organisations
GBV:	Gender based violence
GFPs:	Gender focal persons/points
GMBS:	Gender and Media Baseline Study
HIV:	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
ICT:	Information Communication Technology
KAP:	Knowledge Attitude and Practices
KRA:	Key Result Areas
LAC:	Legal Assistance Centre
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MGECW:	Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare
MHSS:	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MISA:	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MTI:	Ministry of Trade and Industry
NDP:	National Development Plan
NGOs:	Non-governmental Organisations
NGP:	National Gender Policy
NGPA:	National Gender Plan of Action
PEP:	Post-exposure Prophylaxis
PMTCT:	Prevention Mother-to-Child Transmission
SADC:	Southern Africa Development Community

SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises
SRH: Sex and Reproductive Health
UN: United Nations
UNAM: University of Namibia
WACPU: Women and Child Protection Units
WAD: Women's Action Development
WSN: Women's Solidarity Namibia

PART ONE

Major achievements and Obstacles in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

- a) **National Gender Policy (1997):** During the period under review, Namibia made significant progress in the formulation of laws and policies. The National Gender Policy (1997) is currently under review. The aim of revision is to close gaps which were identified during its implementation. These issues include worsening situation of HIV and AIDS, international economic development issues, globalization, climate change and human trafficking. The old policy had 10 areas of concern, but the new policy has now 12 priority areas of focus, which are: Poverty and Rural Development; Education and Training; Health, Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS; Gender Based Violence; Trade and Economic Empowerment; Governance and Decision Making; Media, Information and Communication; Environment; and Issues of the Girl Child. All of these have a disproportional impact on women and girls.
- i. The National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA) will be developed once the National Gender Policy (2009-2019) is adopted to outline specific activities required to achieve the Policy's objectives, define the roles of all stakeholders, the time frames, and resources required. The NGPA will spell out indicators and targets which will help in the monitoring of the Policy implementation.
 - ii. The new Policy has also included a chapter on Monitoring and Evaluation that will assess the long-term impact of the NPG in respect with its objectives. It spelt out also that the lead agency be the MGECW coordinates with the National Planning Commission (NPC) and sector ministries to ensure that submissions to NPC by sector/implementing institutions are gender responsive.
- b) **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** Namibia has so far, submitted her 1st, joint 2nd and 3rd country reports on CEDAW in terms of its obligations under Article 18 of CEDAW, now is busy compiling her 4th reports. The Committee commended Namibia on the previous reports and noted that the report was prepared in a participatory manner with involvement of government bodies and non-governmental organisations. The Committee further commended Namibia on the ratification of the Optional Protocol on CEDAW and the legal reforms and policies that had been implemented during that period. It also noted and further commended Namibia on the fact that the Department of Women Affairs was now a fully fledged Ministry (MGECW, 2000). However, the Committee also expressed its concerns, and recommendations were made to improve the situation of women and their enjoyment of human rights in Namibia on several issues. These issues are being addressed in the CEDAW current report.
- c) **Main legislative and policy-making achievements:** Namibia, apart from the National Gender Policy, has put in place relevant legal framework that promotes gender equality as follow:
- i. **The Namibia's Constitution** is the supreme law of the land and in its Article 23 (3) acknowledges that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and that they need to be encouraged and enabled to play a full, equal and effective role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation. Article 10 of the Constitution speaks

about equality and freedom from discrimination. It states that all persons shall be equal before the law; and that no persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status. Apart from the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia (Act No. 1 of 1990), many laws were enacted that outlaw discriminatory practices and abuse against women as follow:

- ii. **Agricultural (Commercial) Reform Act (Act No. 6 of 1995):** This Act provides for the acquisition of agricultural land by government for the purposes of land reform and redistribution to Namibian citizens. The land reform and redistribution process focuses on those who do not own or have the use of agricultural land or adequate agricultural land, and foremost to those Namibians who have been socially, economically or educationally disadvantaged by past discriminatory laws or practices. The introduction of the Married Persons Equality Act (Act No. 1 of 1996) entitles women farmers to equal as well as independent land ownership under the Agricultural (Commercial) Act. (MGECW, 2006).
- iii. **Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996)** – This Act was instrumental in abolishing the unconstitutional marital powers of the husband and placing husbands and wives in Namibia on an equal footing. Men and women who are married in civil marriages and in community of property must now consult each other on all important financial transactions as equal partners and the Act stipulates that immovable property should be registered in both spouses' names.
- iv. **Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (No. 29 of 1998)** – identifies affirmative action as a set of measures to ensure that all Namibians have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce, focusing on previously disadvantaged groups such as women and people living with disability.
- v. **Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000)** – This Act is one of the most progressive laws on rape as it has broadened the definition of rape. The Act gives greater protection to young girls and boys against rape, provides for stiffer minimum sentences for rapists and defines marital rape as an offence in the eyes of the law.
- vi. **Communal Land Reform Act (No. 5 of 2002)** – gives widows the right to remain on land allocated to their deceased husbands in rural areas and rules that the right to remain on the land is not affected by re-marriage.
- vii. **Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003)** – makes domestic violence a specific crime and has a broad definition of domestic violence that includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, harassment and serious emotional, verbal or psychological abuse.
- viii. **Maintenance Act (No. 9 of 2003)** – provides that both parents have a legal duty to maintain their children who are unable to support themselves, regardless of whether the children were born inside or outside of a marriage and whether or not parents are subject to any other system of customary law which may not recognise one or both parents' liability to the child.

- ix. **Children's Status Act (Act No. 6 of 2006)** – This law came as a result that; children born outside marriage had no right to inherit especially their fathers. This law made it possible that children regardless of their parents marital status, they have the right to inherit their parents. It also takes a gender neutral approach to custody and guardianship of a child that both parents have equal custody and guardianship to the child. In the case of a child born of a rape, a children's court must decide whether the father has a parental rights over the child.
- x. **Labour Act (No. 11 of 2007)** – provides for maternity leave (with the addition of maternity benefits under the Social Security Act (Act No. 34 of 1994) and prohibits discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, as well as providing stronger protection against sexual harassment in the workplace.
- xi. These above laws have far reaching effects on gender relations. They have created a legal basis for gender equality and provided formal recourse for justice. However, inconsistent implementation and ineffective enforcement efforts continue to undermine the ability of these laws to achieve gender equality.
- xii. Apart from the above laws, there are national programmes in place that are also contributing to the achievement of gender equality like:
 - d) **National Budgets:** Gender responsive budgeting is still a new concept in the country and may not be fully understood and applied in all the sectors. However the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is yearly allocated with a budget to cater for gender equality and women's empowerment programmes. In efforts to increase and track budgetary allocations to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women; the MGECW with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) initiated a programme on Gender Responsive Budgeting for Parliamentarians and Local Authority Councillors. They were sensitised on gender budgeting. The MGECW with the support of UN Agencies also implements an advocacy programme aimed at sensitising managers in line ministries on gender concepts and equip them with skills on gender budgeting and to advocate for increased allocation of resources for services that benefit women and children such as protection, SRH, HIV and AIDS and education. In addition gender budget analysis is planned to be undertaken in line ministries as well as the advocacy training for elected women's forum.
 - e) **Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs):** Progress has been made toward women empowerment in the area of decision making, though a lot still need to be done. SADC Declaration on Gender and Development called for a minimum target of 30% by 2005 of women representation, Namibia **has already reached the target** with 31%. SADC Protocol on Gender and Development signed by SADC member States and Governments in August 2008, Namibia included, has raised the minimum target from 30% to 50% by 2015 of women presentation. Now that Namibia had achieved SADC target of 30% target, the country is now aiming at achieving 50% target.

Namibia has achieved 30% of women representation in Parliament. In Local Authority there is 45% female and 55% male councillors representation. The latter makes Local Government the only area in Namibia which has gone far beyond the SADC minimum target of 30% women representation by 2005. Besides the above, a closer analysis shows that out of 78 parliamentarians in the National Assembly only 26 are female. The National Council has 26 parliamentarians only 7 are female. Cabinet has 24 Ministers only 5 are female Ministers. There are 20 Deputy Ministers

out of this only 5 female Deputy Ministers. At regional levels there are 13 governors, only 3 are female governors.

2nd Millennium Development Goals Report Namibia 2008 launched recently revealed the following information: In education, there were 98 females for every 100 males in primary school, and 117 females for every 100 males in secondary school. Furthermore, female literacy is higher than male literacy. The targets for the ratio of females to males in secondary education and the female to male literacy rate have thus been achieved. It also indicates that Namibia's primary school enrolment from 2000 to 2006 shows a slight increase in the net primary school enrolment rate from 91% to 92%. In the same period the MDGs report reported that the youth (15-24 years) literacy rate has increased from 91% to 94%, while survival rate to grade 8 also increased from 75% to 81%.

The level of data to effectively monitor the achievement of the targets under MDG3 is not comprehensive and in most cases data is not disaggregated. There is a lot that needs to be improved when it comes to data collection in Namibia.

Gender perspectives being cross cutting are being considered in all MDGs, however capacity and understanding of gender issues is hampering the implementation.

- f) **Major Government Policy Discussions and/or Parliamentary debates:** Major Government Policy are Vision 2030 (2004) and NDPs. The Third National Development Plan (NDP3) is the first systematic attempt to translate Vision 2030 objectives into concrete policies and actions. NDP3 identified core areas which are to be mainstreamed through sector programmes and programming processes. These are Gender, HIV and AIDS, Poverty, Environment and ICT. They are also included in the revised National Gender Policy in an effort to strive to create an enabling environment for sectors to mainstream gender. Many consultative meetings took place on the revision of the National Gender Policy and issues of concern were discussed in depth. As Namibia is busy compiling her CEDAW report a lot of consultations are currently going on in the country.

Namibian Parliament has established a Parliamentary Gender Caucus that plays an important role in promoting women's human rights through lobbying and advocacy, spearhead and facilitate discussions on National Gender Policy enabling law(s), scrutinise any bill or propose legislation which may affect gender issues and make recommendations accordingly, solicit view and disseminate information on gender issues in various constituencies.

There is also Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social and Community Development of the National Assembly and Gender and Youth of the National Council (House of Review). This Standing Committee has a mandate to consider any matter it deems relevant with regard to the offices, agencies and all state owned enterprises and parastatals dealing with education, training, sport and culture, employment creation, health and social services, housing and women's affairs and child welfare. The Committee has the duty to investigate, examine, monitor, consider, advice and make recommendations and report to the National Assembly and National Council on important issues such as addressing gender issues across party lines and promoting gender equality to improve the status of women in Namibia, to ensure that there is gender balance

in all legislation being considered, scrutinise and reviewing the implications of Bills and Acts that discriminate and negatively impact on the lives of women and children.

- g) **Armed Conflict:** Namibia is signatory to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Namibia has enjoyed peace and security since independence and has not involved in any conflicts. However Namibia has participated in international peace-keeping missions to various countries and women formed part of troops that were sent. Resolution 1325 is now mainstreamed in the revised National Gender Policy.

- h) **Globalization and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** This area is new in the revised National Gender Policy. However, it is noted that ICT has great potential to promote women's empowerment through breaking barriers to knowledge, and opening new opportunities in education, political participation, health-care and income generation. In addition, Namibia's ICT sector has significantly developed during the reporting period into a modern infrastructure that includes a wide range of fixed and mobile telephones services, as well as internet access throughout the country but with a limitation on rural community services. The ICT sector has the potential to become a principal source of new jobs, especially for women and young people, mostly in smaller and medium size firms. Telecommunications backbone system in Namibia is now 100% digital. In the area of mobile communications, 48% of Namibia's huge land mass is now covered. This translates into 88% of our population being covered by the cellular telephone footprint. (GRN, 2007).

- i) **Partnership with NGOs:** Civil Society encompasses Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). Members of civil society play an important role in developing and sensitise grassroots on gender programmes. They translate the National Gender Policy into organizational programmes and activities; collaborate with MGECCW on matters of gender mainstreaming; disaggregate data and information by sex where applicable; monitor and evaluate sector programmes for their impact on gender equality. Following are some civil society organisations and their projects promoting gender equality in Namibia, but not limited to these ones:
 - i. **Legal Assistance Centre (LAC)** has a Gender Research & Advocacy Project that promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women through legal research, law reform and related advocacy work. LAC is a law centre that strives to make the law accessible to those with least access, through education, law reform, research, litigation, legal advice, representation and lobbying, with the ultimate aim of creating and maintaining a human rights culture in Namibia.

 - ii. **Women's Solidarity Namibia (WSN)** is a Non-Governmental Organization which provides legal advocacy and emotional support to women and children who are subjected to gender related violence. Opportunities Center is a new project of WSN which seeks to empower individuals through economic opportunities, through the production of hand-made crafts. The Opportunities Center assists local women, men and children to work for themselves by providing vocational skills courses to them.

- iii. **Women's Action for Development (WAD)** is a Self-Help Organisation which aims at uplifting the socio-economic and socio-political situation of Namibian rural women and men. The organisation is male-friendly and was established in 1994. It is to date conducted training in 12 regions of the country, with the intention of eventually extending its wings to all 13 regions of the country.
- iv. **Sister Namibia** is a feminist women's rights organisation founded in 1989 on the eve of national independence to give women a voice in the building of a democratic post-colonial society. They now engage in the fields of media, education, research, advocacy and cultural activity in order to promote women's human rights and full equality in a world free from violence, discrimination and oppression.
- v. **Media Organizations:** Media organizations are important links in disseminating gender policy objectives to the broader public. The media has a vital role to play in education and raise awareness during campaigns and in facilitating communication between key stakeholders, particularly in rural areas. The role of the media is to: translate the National Gender Policy into organizational policies, projects and activities; publicize the policy to inform and educate the public about it; promote the positive coverage of women in the media and eliminate gender stereotypes; increase public awareness of the importance of gender equality; build capacity for gender-sensitive research and reporting; expose cases of gender-based violence; and collaborate with MGECW on matters of gender mainstreaming and women's advancement.
- vi. **Men for Change and White Ribbon Campaign** are two male driven initiatives organisations addressing gender issues and support women and children in the fight against gender based violence in Namibia.
- j) **Climate change and Food and energy crises:** Poverty threatens food security in Namibia. Many rural households are vulnerable to chronic or acute food insecurity because of low agricultural production, recurrent drought and floods, low incomes and limited off-farm employment opportunities. Gender challenges are also exacerbated by the low involvement of women in decision making on environmental management, environmental hazards, cultural practices and attitudes towards ownership and control of land, inadequate information and education on sustainable environmental management, and the need for gender-responsive environmental policies and programmes.

Impact of Financial Crisis the Promotion of Gender Equality: Namibia made tremendous effort to enact pieces of legislation that would help in reducing the problem of inequalities in access to resources in the country. These are Married Persons Equality Act (Act No. 1 of 1996), Agricultural (Commercial) Reform Act No. 6 of 1995 and Communal Land Reform Act (Act No. 5. Of 2002). Efforts are being made to empower women; the government through the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), through SME Development Policy with aim to create self-employment opportunity for rural population, provide loans to support women and men involved with SMEs. The MGECW has a programme of income generating activities helping women with seed money to start up projects in all regions. Agribank under Credit Scheme also gives loans to women and

men to start up their businesses. Various NGOs have capacity building development programmes for women.

Despite the efforts being made to promote gender equality, the impact of financial crisis can be felt by women as they have limited access and control of resources like men, especially when it comes to land, credit, livestock, etc. More women than men work in subsistence farming, raising only enough food to meet the family's basic needs, rather than farming to bring in an income. Women do not have same opportunity as men to participate fully in economic activities. Some of the reasons for this are lack of access to productive resources, unequal sharing of family responsibilities and insufficient support services such as child care. Women are more involved in the informal sector and carry out gender stereotyped activities such as brewing local beer, cooking food, making baskets and other handcrafts. They dominate street market selling, while men dominate in manufacturing, shop based selling, etc. Due to women's greater likelihood of having dependent children, they often take advantage of all income generating activities, regardless of risks or low profitability.

PART TWO:

There is greater awareness as well as political will and commitment to achieve gender equality in Namibia and this aspiration is well captured in Vision 2030 as well as in the five year National Development Plan Three (3) i.e., NDP3. Gender not only being one of the NDP3 goals, but is for the first time made one of the cross cutting issues to be mainstreamed in all other Key Result Areas (KRA) of NDP3, along with HIV and AIDS, poverty, ICT and environmental issues. This is the first attempt at ensuring that gender is institutionalized in plans and subsequently have to be budgeted for.

It was realized that there were gaps in terms of capacities in sector ministries to have carried this task comprehensively. The Gender Machinery is therefore on a drive to build the necessary capacity to ensure that all sectors will systematically mainstream gender in their programmes. The stated objectives include advocating for equal representation of women at all power sharing levels, building capacity for women in management and leadership positions, changing negative attitudes towards gender equality and increasing awareness on negative cultural practices that hinders women's participation in power sharing at all levels of society.

Out of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, Namibia concentrated on 10 which were thought to be critical to Namibia. These are: (i) Gender, Poverty and Rural Development; (ii) Gender Balance in Education and Training; (iii) Gender and Reproductive Health; (iv) Violence Against Women and Children; (v) Gender and Economic Empowerment; (vi) Gender Balance in Power and Decision Making; (vii) Information Education and Communication; (viii) Gender and The Management of the Environment; (ix) The Girl Child and (x) Gender and Legal Affairs. The National Gender Policy formulated being revised now has listed the above 10 critical areas of concern.

- a) **Gender, Poverty and Rural Development:** There has been remarkable improvement in this area, with the enactment of the Communal Land Reform Act (Act No. 5 of 2002). Under this law land is being allocated equitably. Widows are given the right to remain on land allocated to their deceased husbands in rural areas and the right to remain on the land is not affected by re-marriage.

Under the registration of Communal Land Rights which started in 2007 ending 2013, conducted by the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement under Rural Poverty Reduction Programme indicates that 45% of land rights registered so far belongs to women. The National Resettlement Policy that deals with the allocation of land is gender neutral. In reference to women's rights, it states that "the same status as men with regard to all forms of land rights, either as individuals or as members for family land ownership trusts ..." and that "every widow or widower will be entitled to maintain the land right she or he enjoyed during the spouse's lifetime", (Legal Assistance Centre, March 2008).

On poverty, the proportion of poor households decreased considerably during the ten year interval between the first and the second household survey (1993/94 and 2003/2004). The target set by the Government for 2006 (28%) had already been achieved in 2003/04. The global target for 2015, however, namely to realise a reduction of the 1990 value by 50%, is still to be achieved.

Challenges: Unemployment is a main concern which is a cause of poverty. The broad measurement concept of unemployment includes those citizens who are no longer looking for job, although they are unemployed and would like to have jobs. The unemployment rate according to this broad definition is 36.7% (2004). Unemployment is highest in the youngest age group (15-19 years) at 67% and lowest in the older age groups. The rural-urban divide in unemployment is moderate, while the rural unemployment rate in 2000 was around 36%, the urban rate is about 31%. More significant is the difference in unemployment amongst men 28% and women 39%. Women, specifically when they have to head households and have children are specifically vulnerable to poverty and malnutrition. Female headed households account for 41% of all households, but for only 29% of total income. It may be that women tend to engage in non-paid works such as child-care and home-making. Furthermore, there are relatively few women reaching higher level positions of employment. (MDGs Report, 2008).

Another challenge is that Namibia is one of the countries affected by HIV/AIDS as the main contributing factors to the growing number of orphans and vulnerable children. The MGECW is charged with ensuring the legal care and protection of children. It is also committed to ensuring the provision of adequate care and protection for orphans and vulnerable children. In efforts to help OVCs and OVC Policy, 2007 was formulated and translated in 6 local languages. The Policy is the foundation on which the MGECW and stakeholders build to provide security for orphans and vulnerable children. It also defines orphans as children under the age of 18 who have lost one or both parents; and vulnerable children are children under the age of 18, who are found to be in need of care and protection. The government has in its database 105,136 children that are receiving children grants monthly. This number is increasing every financial year. The MGECW also gives subsidies to various organisations that take care of OVCs.

- b) Gender Balance in Education and Training:** The Namibian Constitution states in its Article 20 (2) that primary education shall be compulsory and the state shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia by establishing and maintaining state schools at which primary education will be provided for free. Namibia has done well in terms of enrolment of girls compared to boys at primary through tertiary levels. There are 98 girls for

every 100 boys in primary school, and 117 girls for every 100 boys in secondary school. This trend continues right through to tertiary education where female students outnumber male students. Despite the high enrolment of females at primary and secondary levels, female learners face unique challenges in completing their education. Factors such as inadequate prevention and management of learner pregnancies, economic pressures on young girls from family members and financial dependence on older men (“sugar daddies”).

On School Policy on Learners Pregnancy in Namibia, 2008, official statistics on pregnancy-related school drop-outs in Namibia for 2007 show that a total of 1465 learners dropped out for this reason is 96% of them being girls. There are large regional disparities, with pregnancy-related drop-outs being highest by far in Kavango and Ohangwena, followed by the regions of Omusati Oshikoto, Oshana and Caprivi. Information from other sources indicates that the official figures may be an underestimate. Other sources have it that Namibian women continue to give birth at fairly young ages, although there is some improvement on this point in the post-independence era.

Table of Pregnancy-Related School Drop-outs, 2007

Region	Male	Female	Total
Caprivi	0	83	83
Erongo	4	55	59
Hardap	3	44	47
Head Office	1	3	4
Karas	0	37	37
Kavango	17	336	353
Khomas	1	49	50
Kunene	0	32	32
Ohangwena	2	300	302
Omaheke	1	19	20
Omusati	9	173	182
Oshana	6	95	101
Oshikoto	5	136	141
Otjozondjupa	13	41	54
Total	13	1403	1465

Source: Ministry of Education based on information from all primary and secondary schools where the reasons for drop-outs were ascertained by the schools.

NDP3 shows that despite limited research, it is clear that teenage pregnancy and family demands impact female learners. Indeed, if not for this, the percentage of female learners at Grade 10 (16 year olds) and above could be 2% to 3% higher. Although the incidence of teenage pregnancies has stabilised, there is still a lack of support and negative attitudes towards girls who fall pregnant. Pregnant teenagers are required still to leave school, with few returning. A girl who becomes pregnant is by law supposed to be allowed back to the same public school after one year’s absence. However, the girls will have to give proof that they have someone responsible looking after their baby, criteria many cannot meet. Although the one-year absent rule is supposed to also apply to school boys who impregnate girls, school boys are rarely identified and older men seldom face any consequences, although a few schools have taken action.

Tertiary Education: The University of Namibia (UNAM), the highest institution of high learning in Namibia has seven faculties and a centre for external studies (Distance Teaching) as listed below with enrolment percentage of males and females per field of studies for 2007: Faculty of Agricultural & Natural Resources 60% male and 40% female, Faculty of Economic & Management Science 45% male and 55% female, Faculty of Education 41% male and 59% female, Faculty of Humanity & Social Science 35% male and 65% female, Faculty of Law 48% male and 51% female and Faculty of Medical & Health Science 22% male and 77% female, and Faculty of Science 61% male and 38% female, UNAM foundation programme 52% male and 48% female.

Table on UNAM Enrolment % per field of Studies, 2007

Faculty	Male %	Female %
Agriculture & Natural Resources	60	40
Economics & Management Science	45	55
Education	41	59
Humanities & Social Science	35	65
Law	48	51
Medical & Health Science	22	77
Science	61	38
Foundation Programme	52	48

Source: MGE CW, Mapping Gender Enrolment on Namibian Tertiary Institutions, 2008

Nursing and teaching have been traditionally a feminine field and it is still pronounced by looking at the number of female nurses and teachers compared to their male counterparts. However, the same disparity still exist in other field like Science and Agriculture and Natural Resources which are regarded as masculine field of study. Great improvement has been achieved in the faculty of Law which was regarded as masculine and now male students are outnumbered by female students in this field.

According to the Millennium Development Goals Second Progress Report for Namibia (2008), the national literacy rate in 2006 was higher for females (94%) than for males (91%). However, there are regional disparities in the literacy rates with Kunene and Omaheke having the lowest rates (68% and 74 % respectively) while Karas (96%), Khomas (97%) and Oshana (96%) have the highest rates. Similarly, Community Skills Development Centres (COSDECs) reports indicate that about 55% of students were females in 2005/6. However, the situation in Vocational Education and Training Centres seems to be different with more male students than female having been enrolled in 2005/06, at 67% male and 33% female respectively.

- c) **Gender and Reproductive Health:** Namibia has a **National Policy on HIV/AIDS (2007)** in place to serve as a guide to all sectors in their response to the epidemic. Namibia has expanded its primary health care programmes in addition to developing programmes to address HIV and AIDS, safe motherhood, tuberculosis and malaria.

Family Planning Policy and a National Policy on Reproductive Health are in place. Family planning services and counselling (MHSS, 2006) are provided free of charge at health facilities to individuals and couples including adolescents on request. Apart from Government, Non-

governmental organisations (NGOs) and some community based organisations provide information to communities on family planning, reproductive health, HIV and AIDS.

Safe Motherhood: Safe motherhood programme covers pre-natal care, deliveries and postnatal care services provided at all health facilities - clinics, health centres, district hospitals and referral hospitals. Mothers are provided with antenatal care services during pregnancy, safe midwifery and delivery services during labour and postnatal care. In 2006, 92% of women who started antenatal care (ANC) took an HIV test. 79% of the pregnant women who delivered knew their HIV status, and of all the HIV positive mothers who delivered, 64% took ARV prophylaxis. These numbers show that there is room for improvement in getting more pregnant women tested for HIV, and Prevention Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) services has been extensive; there is a need for a further scaling up of these services in order to reach all persons in need of such treatment. Effective PMTCT services were introduced in 35 state hospitals and 153 health centres and clinics out of 335 public health facilities. A high number of pregnant women who tested for HIV are provided with PMTCT services. Anti-retroviral treatment is also provided to women who tested HIV positive in order to protect their babies, (MHSS, 2006). However many people do not know their HIV status. The fear of stigmatization, if found positive, has a profound detrimental impact on the numbers of people volunteering for testing. Some 21% of women who have given birth during the period under review do not know their HIV status. Another thing, HIV prevalence rate is measured in pregnant women, and hence excluding men from being included in the sample, which may lead to a skewed picture of the epidemic.

In the area of birth rate, indicators show that an overall fertility rate has dropped from average of 6.1 in 1991 to 4.1 in 2001 and to 3.7 in 2006. This can be attributed to women's greater participation in the formal economy, higher levels of education and better access to and utilisation of contraceptives, as well as the impact of AIDS and fear of contracting HIV. The Maternal Mortality ratio in Namibia has increased from 271 deaths per 100 000 live births in 2000 to 449 per 100 000 in 2006, while contraceptive usage is at 65% in urban areas and 45% in rural areas. Additionally, 93% percent of births in urban area are assisted by skilled birth attendance compared to 66% of births in rural areas. Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) still play an important role in home deliveries, especially in certain communities and regions of the country. A training curriculum was developed to train TBAs in management of safe deliveries, with emphasis on hygiene. TBAs are encouraged to refer women to health facilities during pregnancy, labour and after delivery. (SADC Progress Report, 2006 by MGECEW).

- d) Violence against Women and Children:** The goal is to ensure that all women, men and children are free from violence in their homes, communities and society. Namibia promotes human rights of women and ensures legal protection of women's rights through an enhanced legal framework, effective implementation of laws and policies, and meaningful access to the justice system. Namibia has formulated various laws to ensure equality in the treatment of women in judicial and quasi-judicial proceedings, including customary and traditional courts. Some of the laws in place are Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996), Affirmative Action (Employment Act (No. 29 of 1998), Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000), Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003), Maintenance Act (No. 9 of 2003) and Criminal Procedure Amendment Act (No. 24 of 2003).

Besides the above laws, Namibia still has a high prevalence of Gender Based Violence. Because of the high rate of gender based violence (GBV) in the country, the MGECW in 2007 held a National Conference on Gender Based Violence. About 350 delegates attended the country's first ever National Conference on Gender Based Violence. The Conference was attended by various stakeholders: Politicians, Judiciary, Police, Medical Personnel, Forensic Services, Social Workers, Prisons Personnel, Traditional Authorities, Church, Media, Community and Civil Society. Action-oriented recommendations came out of the Conference to be implemented by the above mentioned stakeholders. The government is currently developing a National Strategy to combat GBV including Human Trafficking in Namibia. At the same time a five year National Plan of Action with its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to combat GBV including Human Trafficking is being developed.

A National GBV Database System was established and launched in 2006. With financial assistance by UNDP the system is now being modernized to strengthen the efforts of the Ministry and its stakeholders in combating GBV. Due to lack of insufficient GBV data in the country, this multi-sectoral approach was envisaged to provide necessary data for planning and assisting the MGECW to develop focused interventions in addressing GBV. The databases system is expected to capture the data and have facilities for online query and business intelligence data mining or reporting. The data can also be used for interpretation, analysis, running tables and graphs and compile report.

Following are reported cases to NAMPOL on GBV cases, from 2005-2008

Year	Indecent assaults	Attempted rape	Grievance body harm	Murders	Rape	TOTAL
2008	113	217	10738	330	915	11611
2007	127	219	10790	316	1111	12563
2006	97	209	9959	320	941	11526
2005	-	240	10 560	329	931	12060

Regional Reported cases of rape, 2002-2008

Regions	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	TOTAL
Khomas	174	161	180	154	136	166	159	1130
Ohangwena	50	77	73	111	94	110	109	624
Oshana	107	118	100	68	72	90	56	611
Hardap	43	58	77	71	105	165	63	582
Otjozondjupa	45	68	68	102	77	96	82	538
Erongo	67	72	74	56	73	80	88	510
Omaheke	52	58	77	76	51	66	76	456
Oshikoto	53	47	51	48	105	58	74	436
Karas	47	48	59	55	68	55	63	395
Omusati	23	44	55	55	57	80	50	364
Kavango	40	47	48	58	46	47	50	336
Kunene	28	33	28	52	59	51	43	294

Caprivi	34	30	25	25	30	47	28	219
TOTAL	763	861	915	931	941	1111	915	6495

National Advisory Committee on GBV: this committee was established with the directive from cabinet to advise the MGECW and other key stakeholders on police, legislation and other action to be undertaken to combat and prevent gender based violence in our society. In eradicating GBV the government enacted various laws and policies Married Persons Equality Act (Act No. 1 of 1996), Combating of Domestic Violence Act (Act No. 4 of 2003), Combating of Rape Act (Act No. 6 of 2006) and the National Gender Police of 1997. In addition to these laws, 15 Women and Child Protection Units (WCPU) were established in all 13 regions. WCPU consist of professionals such as medical doctors, nurses, social workers, etc., to provide medical services and counselling support to victims of gender based violence. These units are also equipped to administer PEP for rape victims to prevent HIV infections.

16 Days of Activism Campaigns on GBV against Women and Children: This is another effort to raise awareness on GBV country-wide. The MGECW since 2004, in collaboration with various key stakeholders organizes carries out activities aimed at raising awareness to the general public on the negative effects of GBV especially that which is perpetrated against women and children. Gender sensitisation targeting all levels of society is carried out through various activities such as media talk shows for the youth and learners, workshops and meetings in all 13 political regions and organise marches spearheaded by prominent people in society. All these efforts are being made to highlight the connection between women, violence and human rights and just to emphasize that women’s rights are human rights issues. Since 2004, when Namibia started holding these campaigns, there has been a different theme every year.

Legal Literacy Programme: In order to protect women from discriminatory practices, the MGECW and other stakeholders have embarked upon programmes aimed at educating women and men about their rights, entitlements, responsibilities and obligations with regard to national laws and what to do when their rights are infringed upon. Gender and development policies and programmes are aimed at challenging and changing socially prescribed roles in pursuit of gender equality and equity. These programmes aim at empowering women and men to exercise their constitutional guaranteed rights. Since 2002-2008 one thousand four hundred and ninety-four (1,494) were trained in the following laws country-wide: Constitution and Constitutional Law, Legislative Process, Family Law, Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No 4 of 2003), Combating of Rape Act (No 8 of 2000), Will writing and Administration of E state and Maintenance Act (No 9 of 2003). This programme specifically targets Community members, Traditional Leaders, Youth, Learners, Police, Namibia Defence Force, and Church Leaders.

Gender Sensitisation: Gender sensitization targets the community at large and in particular the youth and learners. The main objective is to create an understanding of gender in relation to sexual and reproductive health; to identify strategies for promoting sexual and reproductive health issues and exercising sexual and reproductive health rights. Topics covered under gender sensitisation are: motivational talks for Senior Secondary Schools (the aim of these motivational talks is to sensitize and equip the school learners with knowledge about gender and sex, alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy, baby dumping, gender based violence, reproductive

health self-esteem and career guidance.); training for condom promoters on gender, condom promotion, sexual and reproductive health; gender, HIV and AIDS.

Various NGOs, apart from their other development programmes they have with communities, they do also join the government in gender sensitisation and the popularisation of the laws mentioned above. In consultation with civil actors and Law Reform and Development Commission, Namibia is continuously reviewing and amending or repealing existing laws and policies in order to address discrepancies, and to revise laws which do not adequately serve the needs of women, men and children. Currently Namibia is busy consulting all stakeholders on Child Care and Protection Bill, which if enacted will replace the outdated former South African Children's Act (Act No. 30 of 1960).

Under the reporting period, various pamphlets and posters on different gender issues were printed and disseminated into communities: These are (i) Background on Gender Based Violence in Namibia, (ii) National Gender Based Violence Conference Recommendations, (iii) Pocket Guide: The Combating of Domestic Violence Act, (iv) Child Welfare Grants, (v) Human Trafficking/Trafficking in Persons, (vi) Guide to Successful Income Generating Activities, etc. Assorted booklets were also published to provide statistics on different fields such Public Service of Namibia, 2006; Private Sector of Namibia, 2006; Management Positions in the Parastatals of Namibia; etc. These are all printed in order to inform, educate and sensitise the nation on all assistance offered by the Government departments and other NGOs.

- e) **Gender and Economic Empowerment:** The goal is to promote equal economic rights between men and women as well as the economic independence of women. **Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996)** specifies equality of persons within civil marriage and does away with the legal definition of a man as head of the house. The Act also provides women married in community of property equal access to bank loans and equal power to administer joint property and stipulates that immovable property should be registered in both spouses' names. **Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (No. 29 of 1998)** identifies affirmative action as a set of measures to ensure that all Namibians have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce, focusing on previously disadvantaged groups such as women and the disabled.

- f) **Gender Balance in Power and Decision Making:** Progress has been in this area, though a lot needs to be done. The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development called for minimum target of 30% women representation to be achieved by 2005. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development signed by SADC member states in August 2008 has raised the minimum target from 30% to 50% of women presentation in all SADC member states by 2015. Namibia achieved 30% target set by SADC and is now aiming for 50% target as set out in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development to which Namibia is signatory. Namibia has achieved 30% of women representation in Parliament and 45% in Local Authority of 2004, the latter making local government the only area in Namibia which has gone far beyond the SADC minimum target of 30% women representation by 2005. However, a closer analysis shows that there are 52 male parliamentarians and 26 female parliamentarians in the National Assembly; while in the National Council there are 19 male parliamentarians and 7 female parliamentarians. When it comes to Cabinet, there are 19 male Ministers and 5 female Ministers. Male Deputy Ministers are 15 and

only 5 are female Deputy Ministers. At regional levels there are 3 female governors and 10 male governors. It is Local Authorities that show a shining example of gender equality with 45% female councillors and 55% male councilors.

- g) Gender, Media Information and Communication:** Although the majority of Namibians are women and are concentrated in the rural areas, the Namibian Media are strongly biased towards urban settings in their coverage. More than 40% of their stories are about the Khomas region, Windhoek in particular- a figure that rises to nearly 60% when national stories are included. The Gender and Media Baseline Study of 2003 (GMBS) found that only 19% of news sources pertain to women and that women are typically portrayed as victims, objects of beauty or in unusual stories rather than as spokespersons. Current media coverage of women gives us little insight into women's contributions to the development process. Although there are a fair number of women working in the media in Namibia they are still under-represented in decision-making positions and issues that affect women more than men are not given equal priority in media coverage.

Media also fail to adequately cover issues of HIV and AIDS. Only 4% of stories in all media monitored focus on or mention HIV and AIDS, and stories of women with HIV and AIDS are almost nonexistent. As an example of this extreme situation, a one-month analysis of media sources showed that men constituted 100% of all those living with HIV and AIDS quoted in the media, in sharp contrast to the rest of the SADC region, where women with HIV and AIDS constituted 52% of such sources (GMBS). However, media outlets are increasingly making an effort to be gender sensitive and to promote media diversity, pluralism, self-sufficiency and independence.

Studies conducted by MISA and its regional media partners in 2003 as well as the Global Media Monitoring Project that took place in 2005 both came up with the same conclusions that:

- i. Women's views and voices are marginalized and underrepresented in the world's news media. Women who constitute 52% of the world's population and who are an important part of media consumers, only made up only of 21% of people featured in the news.
- ii. Women are most underrepresented in radio where they only make up 17% of news subjects as compared with 22% in television and 21% in newspapers.
- iii. Men's voices still dominate in hard news. Men are the majority of news subjects in all story topics.
- iv. Even when women do feature in the news, they are more likely to be found in 'soft' stories such as celebrity and arts where they make up 28% of news subjects and least likely in 'hard' news about politics and governments and the economy.
- v. Men dominate as spokespersons and experts. 86% of all people featured in news stories are men. Men also made up 83% of all experts in media coverage. Instead they are often more present as voices expressing personal experience (31%) or popular opinion (34%).
- vi. Women are more than twice as likely to be portrayed as victims than men. Female and male victims are more common currency in news programmes. However women disproportionately represented in this way with 19% of women portrayed as victims compared with 8% of men.
- vii. News is still mainly reported and presented by men. The only exception is among television presenters. 57% of television news stories are presented by women. Elsewhere women are a

minority. This imbalance is most evident in newspapers where only 29% of the newspapers items are written by female reporters.

- viii. Female reporters are more likely to cover 'soft' news. Men tend to cover the 'hard' topics – news that is perceived as serious. Only 32% of stories on politics and government are reported on by female journalists as compared with 40% of stories on social issues such as education or family relations.
- ix. More female news subjects are found in stories reported on by female journalists. In stories reported by women, 25% of news subjects are women as compared with 20% of news subjects in stories reported by men.
- x. Women are very unlikely to be the central focus of a story. Only 10% of news stories worldwide have women as a central focus. The proportion of these stories varied widely across different topics. Women were central to the news story in 17% of 'soft' topics such as celebrity news, sports or social issues. Only 3% of stories on economics and 8% of stories on politics and government had women as a central focus.
- xi. News stories are more likely to reinforce than challenge gender stereotypes. Only 3% of stories challenged stereotypes compared to with 6% of stories that reinforce gender stereotypes. More generally though, news content reinforces gender stereotypes by depicting a world in which women and girls are relatively invisible.
- xii. Gender (in) equality is not considered newsworthy. 96% of news stories worldwide do not highlight issues of gender equality or inequality. The stories that do highlight gender equality or inequality make up only 4% of news stories.

h) Gender and the Management of the Environment: Due to Namibia's location within arid and semi-arid zones, the country is characterised by low rainfall and frequent drought conditions. The majority of Namibians lead a rural life style. Their livelihood mainly depends on the natural environment for food, shelter and a number of other products and resources essential for their wellbeing, including grazing, firewood, water and fruits. Women are the primary users of the environment. In most rural communities, women and girls constitute 75% of the workforce that fetch water and collect firewood. Fetching water is primarily a female task given that 36% of rural households have daughters fetching water, as compared to 15% which have sons fetching water. The Namibian government has made great strides in amending the Nature Conservation Ordinance 4 of 1975 thereby allowing for a progressive policy of Community-Based Natural Resource Management. It is hoped that these programmes, combined with adequate female representation in their implementation, will contribute to greater recognition of the roles of women in the protection, management, and use of the environment.

i) The Girl Child: Although Namibia has made progress in terms of enrolment of girls in primary school, they tend to gradually drop out in upper primary and high school due to pregnancy, poverty, and cultural practices, such as early marriages. Teenage pregnancy is reported to be the highest main reason for girls dropping out of school with a rate of 23.9% in the Kavango Region and 21% in Ohangwena Region, while early marriages are the second highest reason of female school drop-outs. The number of girls dropping out of school is still quite alarming, threatening the retention and completion of the girl-child at upper primary and secondary levels.

The plight of vulnerable children whose both parents are alive but face economic hardships due to poverty and unemployment is not adequately met as they seem to be falling through the cracks of social safety nets.

Limited sex disaggregated data in most institutions makes it difficult to monitor and evaluate implementation of women empowerment programmes across sectors.

- j) Gender and Legal Affairs:** Apart from the national laws as mentioned in paragraph (d) above, Namibia acceded to various regional and international instruments that promote gender equality. According to Article 144 of the Namibian Constitution, all international instruments that Namibia acceded to form part of the Namibian laws. Apart from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Namibia acceded to, amongst others, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1992) and its Optional Protocols (2002), The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children (1997), the Millennium Development Goals (2000), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), African Charter on the Rights of the Child (1990) just to mention a few.

Ministry of Gender Equality and Child welfare has initiated legal literacy programme that aimed at popularizing gender related laws in the communities. Through this programme community members are aware of their rights and this resulted in more cases of GBV being reported to the police. However, there has been a challenge of withdrawn of GBV cases by the victims. Reasons for withdraw of cases include economic hardship and pressure from family members. However, an intervention was made by the state that serious cases such as rape should not be withdrawn anymore, but it is difficult if the complaint has already withdraw the case.

PART THREE

Institutional Development

- a. **Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW):** The MGECW is the lead agency, which coordinates gender issues with NPC and sector ministries to ensure the coordination of gender goals implementation and submissions made to National Planning Commission (NPC) by implementing sectors/institutions that they are gender responsive, and that their implementing structures with their functions are responsible for gender equality. The Ministry was created in the year 2000 as the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare with the mandate to ensure gender equality and equitable socio-economic development of women, men and children". In 2005 the name of the Ministry changed to: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. This was necessitated by the perception men had about the Ministry that it was only catering for women, thus the change in name; however, the mandate did not change. The Ministry has come up with a six year strategic plan from 2005 -2010 which is also under review, stipulates the mandate, vision and mission statement of the ministry.

- b. **National Advisory Committee on GBV:** Cabinet directed that such Committee on GBV be established to advise how best to combat gender based violence in the country. The committee was launched by His Excellency President Pohamba in November 2008, during the 16 Days of Activism Campaigns against Gender based Violence, which Namibia commemorate year, with different themes every year; from 25 November to 10 December, International Human Rights Day and in Namibia being celebrated as Namibia Women's Day. This committee brings together key representatives of the government, development partners, civil society, private sectors and other relevant stakeholders to advise on implementation of policies, legislation and their implementations and other actions to combat and prevent GBV, and also to advise appropriate implementation of recommendations made by the 2007 GBV National Conference.
- c. **Women and Child Protection Units (WCPUs):** WACPU use a multi-sectoral approach for the fight against GBV through the empowerment of women and girls aims to prevent and protect survivors of all forms of GBV and sexual assault and seeks to enable them to rebuild productive lives of dignity and purpose. These Units are functioning with combined financial assistance from government and UNICEF.
- d. **National Gender Mainstreaming Task Force:** The Task Force is in place and composed of all sectors' gender focal points to encourage implementation of a multi-sectoral approach of gender-mainstreaming programme at all levels of decision-making in all sectors of development. The Task Force is composed of six (6) working groups namely Power and Decision Making and Peace-keeping, the Girl Child, Economic Empowerment, Education, Health, Gender-based Violence, Sexual Harassment and Legal Affairs. This working groups except the one for GBV, are chaired by stakeholders/or gender focal points.
- e. **Gender Focal Points:** Gender focal points (GFPs) are reappointed at senior level in all sectors, in all line ministries of government, agencies and institutions. They are being retrained in gender matters to enable them to mainstream gender in structures, programmes and activities. A gender mainstreaming approach implies that they have the ability to influence programming processes that include policies, legislation and budgets. As part of their responsibilities, GFPs should be able to make decisions regarding implementation of the National Gender Policy and to provide an oversight role in departmental programmes to ensure that they are gender responsive in those sectors/institutions. GFPs in close coordination with the MGECW should ensure the integration of gender concerns in the Ministries/institutions' policies, programmes, budgets and annual work plans; and also to ensure their sectors' compliance with national commitments such as NDP3, poverty reduction strategies and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in relation to the goal of gender equality. The MGECW has the responsibility to build capacity of other institutions in gender analysis, planning and budgeting. It is also their responsibility to monitor and evaluate sector programmes for their impact on gender equality.

The GFPs are also mandated to:

- i. Developed and implement the ministerial gender mainstreaming plan.
- ii. Raise awareness on gender and specified issues within the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Plan Action among the staff members within their Ministries / Offices.

- iii. Identify training needs of staff members in their Ministries/ offices around gender issues relevant to that Ministry and facilitate training and advance information sharing around relevant issues.
- f. **Sector Ministries:** Sector Ministries are responsible, with the support from MGECW, to implement effective gender policies and ensuring gender mainstreaming within their sectors, and expected to translate the Gender Policy into sector gender strategies and align it to their sector-specific activities. For example the ministry of Defence has established a gender desk and developed a strategy and action plan. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Forestry has also established a gender unit. The Namibian Police within the Ministry of Safety and Security have successfully managed to establish a gender division with representatives in regions. Other ministries have either strategies or gender policies in place. Ministries are also expected to:
- i. commit adequate resources for implementation of gender related activities;
 - ii. create commensurate structures to ensure integration of gender activities and participation of women including at the local council levels.
 - iii. ensure disaggregating of data and information by sex as applicable; and
 - iv. collaborate with gender and women's empowerment organizations such as women's groups, CBOs and NGOs on matters of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.
- i) **Judiciary:** Judiciary is very important the execution of enacted laws to ensure that rights of women and children are upheld and that justice takes should be seen to be done, especially in gender based violence cases; that when they are brought before the courts they receive priority attention.
- J) **Police:** It is the responsibility of the Police to protect all people and to be sensitive to women and children when they report cases of gender based violence. In order to lessen already traumatised victims of gender based violence, police officers should ensure that all surrounding circumstances to any case of GVB are handled with care and professionalism. Women and Child Protection Units (WCPUs) that fall under them should be manned by trained police officer in gender based violence issues.
- k) **Regional and Local Authorities:** Gender equality remains a pressing concern at the local level, particularly in rural communities. Regional and local authorities play an important role in implementing gender policy objectives at the community or grassroots level. They are therefore:
- i. working in conjunction with the MGECW to ensure incorporation of the National gender Policy objectives in the programmes of Regional and Local Authorities
 - ii. working to ensure adequate female representation in regional and local councils and other decision-making positions;
 - iii. ensure sufficient support for female decision-makers and provide proper in-service training to allow them to be active and engaged members of regional and local decision-making structures; and
 - iv. in conjunction with civil society, provide education and awareness programmes for both men and women on issues pertaining to gender equality.

- l) **Autonomous government bodies and institutions:** Autonomous government bodies and institutions, such as State-Owned Enterprises, have a role to play in ensuring gender equality in their workforces and in the actions they take that are affecting Namibian women. Autonomous government bodies and institutions are to:
- i. translate the National Gender Policy into institution-specific policies, strategies and activities;
 - ii. support staff in building their capacity in gender analysis, planning and budgeting;
 - iii. monitor and evaluate sector programmes for their impact on gender equality;
 - iv. commit adequate resources for implementation of gender-related activities;
 - v. disaggregate data and information by sex where applicable; and
 - vi. collaborate with MGECW on matters of gender mainstreaming.
- m) **Political Parties:** The involvement of political parties is vital for the realisation of gender equality at all levels of decision-making. Political parties are to work together with their constituencies and ranks to:
- i. promote gender equality through participation in all political parties policies, structures, activities and systems;
 - ii. disaggregate data and information by sex where applicable;
 - iii. collaborate with MGECW on matters of gender mainstreaming; and
 - iv. promote affirmative action measures in party structures, processes and mechanisms.
- n) **Development Partners:** Development partners play a very important partner with the Gender Machinery, and play a crucial role in financing the implementation of development programmes and coordination with the international community to ensure greater support for gender policy objectives. The development partners are involved with the Gender Machinery in the following capacities:
- i. promote and support gender programmes areas in development cooperation partnerships;
 - ii. establish appropriate donor coordination mechanisms for ensuring gender responsiveness of development cooperation and partnerships;
 - iii. collaborate with MGECW on matters of gender mainstreaming; and
 - iv. develop incentives for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in development programmes and policies.
- o) **Private Sector:** The private sector is encouraged to engage in the support of gender equality. Greater involvement of the private sector will ensure that gender policy objectives are disseminated to the broader public the actual realisation of gender equality. The private:
- i. in conjunction with the MGECW, create sexual harassment awareness campaigns and other education programmes to promote gender equality in the workplace;

- ii. disseminate information on laws and policies affecting women in the private sector, including the Labour Act and the Affirmative Action Act; and facilitate opportunities for females to voice complaints and concerns at workplaces and to have their issues addressed in manners respecting gender equality and human rights of women.

P) Indicators Monitoring and evaluation of the gender equality programme will be to the extent possible be aligned to agreed national, regional and international indicators and targets in instruments such as NDP3, MDGs, SADC Gender Protocol, A monitoring and evaluation framework will be worked into the plan of action currently underway to operationalize the gender policy

PART FOUR

Remaining Challenges and Actions to address them

Although Namibia has really made strides in achieving gender equality there is still a lot to be done; as negative attitudes towards gender equality are still persisting, this hinder gender mainstreaming into all sectors. The majority of men regard gender as a women issue that in discussion it is sometimes regarded as just any other business.

- Lack of expertise in Gender Responsive Budgeting is a key challenge. This is more so with limited knowledge and understanding of gender issues by managers and financial personnel in offices/ministries/agencies who should mainstream gender into the national budget. Currently it is difficult to track budget allocations in different sectors that benefit women. Reliance on outside expertise also remains a challenge.
- Namibia has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, and women account for 53% of all reported new HIV cases. In 1992, the HIV prevalence among pregnant women was 4.2%, and rose to 22% in 2002. The 2004 prevalence rate stood at 19.7%, while the 2006 prevalence rate increased to 19.9% in 2006. Women who die from HIV and AIDS are an average of 5-10 years younger than men. The percentage of young women living with HIV is 29% compared to only 8% for young men. Some of the consequences of HIV and AIDS include the domestic burdens of women and girls as they have to provide the lion's share of home-based care for those who are ill, as well as support for affected families. Female-headed households and poorer women are more affected by this as they have few resources and time to spend. In this respect HIV and AIDS constitutes a serious challenge not only to health but to development of the country as a whole.
- Women in Namibia continue to experience pervasive gender and intra-household inequalities contributing to income poverty. Poverty is most pronounced among the 44% of female headed households in rural areas. Approximately 67% of the population live in rural areas, a decline from 72% in 1991. About 52% of the population in rural areas are female. This slightly skewed sex ratio is the result of men migrating to urban areas in search of employment. Particularly in the populous north where 42.6% of the population live, women who care for small children and elderly are the main participants in subsistence agriculture and maintain rural homesteads while men are away in urban areas. Most rural Namibians depend on subsistence agriculture, often in conjunction with

cash income, pensions and remunerations. However, 36% of rural Namibians have no source of income other than subsistence agriculture.

- **Gender Based Violence:** Besides the achievements in enacting national laws, there are some obstacles such as the high rate of gender based violence (GBV) in the country. In the key findings of the KAP study conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (2008), it was found that gender based violence is still generally tolerated in most communities in Namibia. The study revealed that the percentage of those ever subjected to physical abuse was 34% (40.5% females, 27.6% males) while those subjected to mental abuse were 59% (59.5% females, 58.5% males), and those who have experienced both physical and mental abuse were 69.3% (69.7% females, 68.9% males). Among those interviewed married women are significantly more likely to have been subjected to GBV than single women, regardless of age.
- On the issue of violence against children, the study found that 42.5% of the adults' interviewees 42.5% agreed that "to bring up a child correctly, you need to physically punish them". These findings show concerns about "children and their rights".
- The Married Person's Equality Act (Act No. 1 of 1996) address only civil marriages and customary marriages are left out. Though there are still quite a substantial number of communities that marry customary, this Act excludes customary marriages as the law was intended for civil marriages. Customary marriages are regarded as automatic out of community of property. When there is divorce or death, widows normally walk away empty-handed. The only reference made in this Act is only in respect of equal powers of guardianship of children of the marriage whether married in terms of civil or customary law. However, there is a draft bill on customary marriages that is still to become a law.
- Another social problem facing women is the fact that many who have been married under customary law have no written documentation to prove their marital status. The result is that their husbands are free to marry other wives. The lack of such documentation causes problems when the husband dies. However, purported and actual members of the deceased's extended family just come and grab his property. Partly because the wife married under customary law cannot prove her status, property grabbing goes on unopposed. This practice is particularly prevalent in remote rural areas, where it has been a custom for generations. People are also simply not aware of laws which prohibit property grabbing. Women and their offspring are then usually also driven from the land that they had tended together with their late husbands. (Women and Custom in Namibia, 2008)
- **Poverty and Rural Development:** Poor households, including the severely poor, currently make up around 28% of all households, while the severely poor households are at 4%. MDG country progress report indicates that both figures have decreased significantly since the beginning of 1990s.
- Cultural practices such as widows inheritance, widow cleansing, sex and initiation practices can be seen as obstacles to women's empowerment and furthermore they contribute to the spread of HIV and hinder gender equality and women's development. Furthermore, property grabbing that still

existing, where the husbands' families as opposed to the wives' families, inherit the husbands possession when the husband dies, place women in vulnerable positions.

- Poverty is a factor that is negatively influencing women's empowerment. Poverty is closely linked to low education levels. Being poor and with low education contribute to a person's vulnerability, especially if there are not aware of their human rights.
- The reason that women have limited access and control of resources like men, especially when it comes to land, credit, livestock, disadvantage them leading to poverty, and abuse.

Plans for Future Actions and Initiatives

Although there are some obstacles such as domestic violence and HIV and AIDS in women's participation in development process, Namibia has so far done a lot to create an enabling environment for gender equality. These are such as the Constitution to start with, the domestication of different international legal instruments, reforms and development of the legal reform in the country as well as policies and programmes that have been created to bring about a just society. One of Namibia's Vision 2030 visions is gender and development, whereby 2030 Namibia would want women and men at all levels and in decision making positions including the political arena.

- Currently, Namibia is launching a Multi-Sectoral National Strategy to address GBV including Human Trafficking. The process to develop a five year National Plan of Action with its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to combat GBV including Human Trafficking is also in advanced stage. Namibia is also launching nationally a Media Campaign on Zero Tolerance campaign for GBV including Human Trafficking in 31 July 2009. A comprehensive policy and legal framework to combat human trafficking is also under way.
- Development of a national Strategy/Plan of Action on gender and peace keeping and peace building are being worked on.
- The National Development Plan (NDP3) key result areas are being reviewed from a gender perspective.
- **Legislation and Policy Development:** The National Gender Policy of 1997 and its Plan of Action are being reviewed to accommodate new and emerging issues at national, regional and global level that have implications for gender equality such issues include the worsening situation of HIV and AIDS, international economic development issues, globalisation and climate change; all of which have disproportional impacts on women and girls.
- **Trade and Economic Development:** Currently women's participation in the labour force is lower than that of men, at 47% to 60% respectively. Gender variations also occur when a comparison is drawn between subsistence agriculture and wage employment. MDGs report show that 44% of female headed households depend on subsistence agriculture and only 28% make a living from wage employment. In contrast, more than 50% of men depend on wage labour and only 29% from

subsistence farming. The overall share of women aged 15⁺ in wage employment in non-agricultural sectors is relatively low at 47%.

- **The Girl-Child:** The School Policy on Learner Pregnancy in Namibia is being reviewed. The current policy allow teenage mothers to return to school after spending one year with their babies; which may not augur well with the continuous education of the teenage mother. Furthermore, the Government has entered into a joint initiative with relevant stakeholders to assist economically disadvantaged girls to obtain exemptions from paying school-related expenses.

References

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