



United Nations
Economic Commission
for Africa

5 years after Beijing:

What efforts in favour of African Women?



Assessing the Vital Role of Women in the Family, Culture
and Socialization

September 2001

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Introduction

The countries which participated in the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women decided to include the vital role that women play in the family, culture and socialisation among the 12 critical areas of concern in the Dakar Platform and to work to strengthen it.

This is because all the African States acknowledge the fact that the family is the basic unit of society where the morals, values and behavioural patterns which guide the behaviour of individuals in the society are developed. The family is the first point of socialization through which the child learns her/his role in the society and acquires values and references which largely shape her/his future behaviour. The family is also a place of power relations characterized by domination, conflict or negotiation between men and women, parents and children.

The Dakar Conference acknowledged that women's responsibilities are disproportionately higher than those of other members of the family and, therefore, decided to take measures to strengthen their central role in maintaining family unity and such basic functions as social integration, national cohesion, peace and stability.

The importance given to this issue is largely due to the social, economic and cultural context of women and the family. In sub-Saharan Africa, the family is at the centre of changes affecting the whole society. Developments in households, differences in individual status, different life styles, changing solidarity patterns triggered by the economic crisis, the impact of laws, urbanization, and the alarming spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic all demonstrate the current complexity within families and illustrate their dynamism.

The questions that come up are: What is the relationship between the present situation of the family and the changes taking place in the role and status of women within the family? What is the real scope of the measures recommended by the Platform? How have the measures been carried out in concrete terms? What progress has been achieved? What are the challenges and constraints?

This report results from the two working documents commissioned by ECA to assess the priority concerns of the Dakar Platform and the Beijing Programme as well as the conclusions of the workshop held on this theme during the Sixth Regional Conference on Women. The



Report evaluates the activities carried out and the progress made and identifies strategies that could be implemented during the next five years to speed up implementation of the recommendations on the vital role of women in the family, culture and socialization. It was prepared in accordance with the format laid down by ACW which carried out the evaluation. It takes into account the lessons learnt from the country reports, the conclusions of the said workshop and the information provided by various institutions involved in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Programmes of Action.

1. Background

Women make up 51 per cent of Africa's population and play a key role in production, reproduction and community management in the continent. This role and their responsibilities are, however, little recognized as can be seen in the division of labour, the performance of responsibilities, decision-making and access to factors of production which are based on gender relations in turn governed by a series of representations, codes and values in each society. The definition of roles and responsibilities within the household determines the separate rights and obligations attributed to its various members.

In the rural areas where 62 per cent of Africa's population currently live, women's importance is, first and foremost, associated with their reproductive value. African women have the highest birth rate in the world where the average number of children per woman is 5.31, as compared to 7 or more in Ethiopia, the Niger, Somalia and Uganda. Domestic work and reproduction-related activities take most of the time of women. Although these duties are vital at all levels in the society, they are hardly noticed or attributed any value. As a result, women are given very little support to reduce their workload. Indeed, the contribution of women is not included in national accounts and cannot even be accurately measured for lack of appropriate classification.

Access to and control of resources are also based on gender relations. In Agriculture, where land is collectively owned and inherited through the traditional system, the opportunity for women to gain access to this resource depends on their status in the family.

Generally, women have the right to possess land but not to own it. Consequently, they are reluctant to invest in land as it could be withdrawn from them at any time. The study commissioned by ACW in 1998 on women's access to land and technology, with focus on Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Guinea, showed no significant improvement in this area and that the traditional methods of land ownership remained predominant. In none of these countries did women possess up to 20 per cent of the land whereas they accounted for 75 per cent of the people working on the land.

The implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Programmes is being done in an atmosphere of economic crisis, increasing poverty, widespread armed conflicts and the rapid spread of AIDS. All these factors have a profound impact on the family institution.

Poverty, which is spreading, has particularly devastating consequences on the family structure and on the prospects for social cohesion. Several studies have established a direct link between domestic violence, which is often the result of excessive alcohol intake, and a drop in men's income. Economic difficulties divide parents and children. More and more children or families roam the streets.

Structural adjustment policies have dismantled the traditional systems of protection and social security established by Governments or by the family. Budgetary cuts, the removal of subsidies on basic commodities, currency devaluation, high-interest loans, reviews of pricing policies, privatization and market liberalization have all had a negative impact on family resources. Women have largely borne the brunt of these difficulties. Cost recovery policies and increase in direct service costs have diminished people's access to basic social services. With regard to health, the reduction in hospital beds has increased the workload of women who consequently have to take care of patients at home. In many countries, women are increasingly giving birth at home with all the associated risk of maternal mortality.

Africa is the continent most affected by HIV/AIDS and the spread is most common among women. Recent publications of the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) put the number of infected people in sub-Saharan Africa at 22.5 million, compared to the world total of 33.4 million. Subsistence, poverty, lack of information and education and high cost of drugs explain why most women do

not protect themselves. Moreover, with the lack of communication between couples, particularly on love or sex, women have little bargaining power on sexual relations and protection. This makes them very vulnerable.

AIDS has catastrophic consequences on the family unit. It is a main cause of family break-up in many countries in Southern Africa and East Africa. In Botswana, 31 per cent of the adolescents within the 15-19 years age range are sero-positive. Children and adolescents are also affected by AIDS. About 90 per cent of the world's 8 million AIDS orphans live in sub-Saharan Africa. These children are often rejected or ill-treated as a result of the stigma associated with the disease.

Rapid urbanization is one of the most visible causes of change in the lifestyles and consumption patterns of families. It was estimated that 38 per cent of the people in Africa would be living in cities by the year 2000. Africa has the highest rate of urbanization in the world (4.9 per cent from 1995 to 2000, as compared to 2.3 per cent for the rest of the world during the same period). Urbanization increases the development of an individualistic culture and reduces agricultural production which is the principal area of productive activity for women. The traditional practices and established strategies which minimize the crises caused by urbanization are no longer effective, just like the family and community structures which foster solidarity within the extended family system.

In 1998, 14 out of 53 African States were involved in armed conflicts. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of displaced persons had reached 8 million with women and children accounting for 70-80 per cent. A survey of 15 African countries shows that the number of orphans will double, reaching 4.2 million, in 2005. Armed conflicts, ethnic tensions, political instability and insecurity are the principal causes of the weakening family structure. They have had a serious impact on children and women, affecting their lives and their physical and mental well-being. This category of people have also suffered from malnutrition, exploitation, unending displacement, sexual abuse and rape. Social structures have weakened to the point of families breaking up and of communities and social security systems being destroyed.

A large number of women are obliged to work to earn a living and provide for the needs of their children in an increasingly hostile social environment. The number of single-parent families with women as head is increasing. In Kenya, 33 per cent of households are in this category; in Burundi the proportion is 44 per cent; in Senegal and Egypt 18 per cent, respectively.

The incidence of women as heads of household is either a phenomenon of empowerment or an indication of their precarious situation. Whatever the case, it is a reality that is overturning the conventional definitions of gender relations and social roles. The increase in women's responsibilities in the family has had an impact on the development of their economic and social roles. In many villages the exodus of men has made women head farmers although the family structures do not consider them as heads and women do not enjoy the legal and fiscal rights attached to these positions. The gap between the reality of their status and their status as recognized within the family can no longer be ignored. Measures should therefore be taken to rectify the situation.

In most African societies with a patrilineal family structure, socialization based on male domination and female subordination puts women in a position where they themselves reproduce gender inequalities. Polygamy which is a major matrimonial system keeps the pressure on women. Low level of education, illiteracy and some cultural practices also help to maintain the status quo.

2. Objectives and proposed measures

In the final resolution of the Dakar Conference, African countries affirmed their political will and commitment to make and/or strengthen national arrangements and to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the Platform for Action by increasing budgetary allocations for implementing strategies, programmes and projects in favour of women and young girls.

This resolution urged "Governments in the formulation and implementation of their programmes to focus mainly on the critical areas of the Platform." It also requested African Governments, bilateral

and multilateral development institutions, United Nations agencies and specialized institutions to integrate a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of programmes.

On the “vital role of women in the family, culture and socialization”, African countries undertook:

- (a) To promote the status of women in African societies by maintaining social cohesion and a balance between universality and the quality of the individual;
- (b) To acknowledge and develop the role of women in various socialization processes, in particular, within the family and the community;
- (c) To further enlighten women about religion in order to eliminate misconceptions, such as the subordination of women to men;
- (d) To eliminate, through information, education and communication (IEC) programmes, negative cultural attitudes and traditional practices which prevent women from participating in public and political life;
- (e) To formulate policies and laws giving greater material and moral support to the family and contributing to its stability, taking into account its multiple nature, especially with the growing number of single-parent families;
- (f) To institute social security measures to reduce economic constraints to the education of children, and to develop policies and programmes which take into account the needs of elderly persons in the society;
- (g) To promote equal opportunities for members of the same family, particularly as regards the rights of women and children in the family; and
- (h) To develop sporting activities and art among African women.

On the implementation of the recommendations, they proposed:

- (a) That boys and girls should be mobilized to encourage and support the emancipation of girls and women for the development of African societies;
- (b) That Governments and community leaders should work to eliminate stereotypes based on cultural prejudices by establishing effective and sustained educational and communication programmes and by promulgating and applying appropriate laws;
- (c) That awareness and IEC programmes should be undertaken to change the behaviour and attitude of African parents with regard to the social role to be played by men and women;
- (d) That a module on socialization should be included in literacy programmes;
- (e) That Governments should create an enabling environment for establishing a network of associations to promote the activities of family counselling centres in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities;
- (f) That more impetus should be given to the sharing of roles and responsibilities within the family through positive and new media campaigns as well as school and community programmes, focusing on gender equality and on removing all stereotyping of the roles of women and men within families;
- (g) That Governments, in close cooperation and consultation with employers, should provide and promote ways and means of reconciling economic activity and parental responsibilities, particularly for single-parent households with young children;
- (h) That African Governments should implement effective measures to eliminate all forms of coercion and discriminatory policies and practices on the

family, in general, and on marriage, in particular, taking special measures to eliminate early marriage.

- (i) That written forms of the positive aspects of African culture and heritage should be provided, promoted and developed;
- (j) That governments should implement the recommendations of the International Year of the Family (1994); and
- (k) That laws should be enacted to prevent women and girls from being ostracized by their immediate families and communities.

3. Commitments by regional organizations

The responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations was given to the joint OAU/ECA/ADB secretariat which was established in this connection.

ECA, within the framework of its mandate, took two measures. The first was to upgrade ACW to enable it to follow up the recommendations of the Dakar and Beijing Conferences. The second was to ensure that a gender perspective was integrated in all the activities of its Divisions and its Subregional Development Centres which also have gender focal points.

ACW's mandate is:

- (a) To strengthen the capacity of countries to define and implement policies with a gender perspective;
- (b) To organize follow-up subregional meetings in order to adapt the policies of countries in accordance with the recommendations of the Platform;
- (c) To establish a political science training institute for African women to train them to play their role more effectively; and
- (d) To embark on capacity building for gender mainstreaming within ECA.

To this end, ACW organized four subregional follow-up meetings: in November 1997 in Dakar for West Africa, in June 1998 in Bangui for Central Africa, in November 1998, on Rabat for North Africa and in February 1999 in Seychelles for Eastern and Southern Africa. The meetings examined the progress achieved in the implementation of the national plans of action and the progress reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing Conference five years on.

ACW has drawn up monitoring guidelines and indicators and has provided technical assistance to Mauritius and South Africa in the formulation of gender-sensitive national plans of action. It has assisted the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in the integration of the gender approach in development programmes and economic planning. It has also assisted Guinea and the Niger on people's rights. The Centre has undertaken various training and research activities and has two regional advisers specialized in the rights of women and in women's empowerment, respectively. The services of these advisers have been provided free of charge to countries upon request.

The Committee on Women in Development (CWD), which was formerly known as the African Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC), has been strengthened. The mandate of this consultative body, which is responsible for coordinating policies on women, was revived in 1997. CWD is particularly responsible for the periodic review of progress in the implementation of the Platform at the subregional level and organizes exchange of information, data and experiences on national policies on women. CWD has been very proactive among African policy makers. At the last OAU Summit, it was instrumental to the adoption of a resolution to speed up the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Programmes. That summit's resolution specifically recommends the creation of a post of gender adviser for every Head of State and the regular inclusion of women in the delegations to the meetings of OAU statutory bodies.

The Organization of African Unity

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) continues to mobilize African political leaders for the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Programmes through resolutions which are regularly submitted to the meetings of Heads of State and Government. OAU is active in the following areas:

(a) Protection of the rights of the child

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which was adopted in 1990 particularly aims at preventing the economic exploitation of children. The African Common Position against the most intolerable and most abusive forms of child labour which was adopted by the OAU Summit of June 1998 is a breakthrough in this area. In 1997, OAU also established a Special Committee to examine the situation of children in countries under conflict. The organization continues to campaign for the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Finally, the Addis Ababa Declaration which was adopted by the OAU Summit is a reflection of the political will of African countries to put an end to harmful traditional practices.

(b) Mobilization for universal education

By declaring 1997-2006 the “Education Decade in Africa”, the thirty-second session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government which was held in Yaounde, Cameroun, launched a massive campaign to mobilize support for universal education. The Decade was officially launched in 1997. Its action programme was formulated in cooperation with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Regional Development Centres. It aims at extending education specifically to all and at reducing all sorts of disparities, particularly gender inequalities and the disparities between rural and urban areas.

Establishment of the African Women’s Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD)

The objective of this Committee which was established in May 1998 is to promote women’s effective participation in all peace activities, ensuring that the needs of displaced and refugee women and children are clearly expressed.

The African Development Bank

In fulfilling its mandate to foster the social and economic development of Africa, the African Development Bank (ADB) participated at various stages of the preparation and implementation of the Dakar Platform and the Beijing Programme. The Bank’s commitment is reflected in its having integrated the gender approach in its policies and programmes

such that it now has to take the gender perspective into account in formulating and evaluation country projects. Consequently, the Bank has, *inter-alia*:

- (a) Systematically applied the gender approach in projects submitted to it for funding;
- (b) Trained its team leaders and heads of departments in the gender approach;
- (c) Strengthened its human resources and budgetary Unit which deals with women's affairs;
- (d) Increased funding for activities on women's advancement and the protection of the child, especially as part of poverty-alleviation programmes.

However, it is to be noted that, at the regional level, no specific action has been taken to promote the family, except that 1994 was declared International Year of the Family. Even then, there was no follow-up to that Declaration.

ADB, for its part, has financed a research programme on the family in Senegal, but the fact that the research did not focus on the present concerns about family policy considerably reduced the scope of its findings. In terms of programmes, the activities currently being undertaken are mainly focused on family planning to the detriment of the holistic approach recommended by the Cairo Programme of Action on Population and Development which lays emphasis on the need to increase the integration of women and their multiple roles in the family and society.

It is important to sum up that the resolutions adopted have generally not been specific on an implementation mechanism. Thus, with the non-existence of a specific body to which various institutions should render account of the fulfilment of their commitments, each institution has placed its strategic options, priorities and internal constraints above its political and moral obligations to women and girls. Thus, while OAU, for example, has taken laudable initiatives, the weak follow-up mechanisms on women's issues has remained a major constraint to the monitoring of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Programmes

4. The commitment of the United Nations system and other international organizations

Several world conferences have made recommendations on the advancement of women and the family. These include the recommendations of the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), of the Copenhagen Social Development Conference, the World Food Conference, the World Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat), the Beijing Conference on Women and the recommendations of the Declaration of the International Year of the Family.

The commitment of international organizations in this particular regard are mainly contained in the documents on:

- (a) The United Nations system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women during the period 1996-2001;
- (b) The role of development cooperation in the dawn of the twenty-first century; and
- (c) The guidelines of the Development Aid Committee (DAC) for gender equality and the empowerment of women in development cooperation and bilateral cooperation.

On the whole, although the theme under review has aroused little interest its importance for any strategy to strengthen the actions and power of women is well known. Also, no sector concerning cooperation has included the notion of “family”.

While most activities for the advancement of women, children and disabled people have a direct impact on the family, it is difficult to measure this impact and to fully estimate its long-term implications. In fact, the family *per se* is not a clearly defined priority of institutions which therefore do not list it among their concerns.

However, several countries regret that the efforts made by the international organizations to fulfil the commitments made at the Beijing Conference have been below expectation. There is no mechanism for

a consolidated assessment of the financial contributions made by the development partners of African countries to the implementation of the Beijing Programme. It is therefore necessary to establish a mechanism for assessing these contributions at the national, regional and subregional levels.

The spirit of coordination that existed among the funding agencies as they made preparations for the Beijing Conference is no longer there. Moreover, the national coordination mechanisms are generally weak. Indeed, no country has reported having held a successful round table of donors on the implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing Conference.

In spite of these weaknesses, some United Nations agencies have taken significant actions:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in accordance with its Declaration in Beijing, has established a special project on “Women and a Culture of Peace”, and an agenda on the same theme.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has defined three priority areas: the education of girls, women and girls’ health and the rights of women and girls. It also launched, with the support of the Canadian and Norwegian Governments, the initiative for the education of girls in Africa carried out in 27 countries. This programme with a funding of more than \$US 60 million was planned to end in 1999.

The initiative on girls’ education has helped countries, in various ways, to bridge the gap in the school enrolment of girls and boys. The initiative’s strategy is to mobilize entire communities to pursue the set objectives and to fully support the educational system, thus improving the education of girls.

At the regional level, UNICEF cooperates with OAU, ECA and such NGOs as the Inter-African Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC), the Federation of African Women Educators (FAWE) and the Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) in organizing advocacy and social mobilization campaigns and in conducting programme evaluation and research activities. In 1996, UNICEF adopted a new strategic approach based on human rights.



The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is carrying out its mandate in line with the principles of gender equity and equality and women's empowerment adopted by ICPD and reaffirmed at the Beijing Conference. In 1998, UNFPA reviewed its policy to focus more on the gender approach in its population and development programmes. The agency's main areas of activity are: women's rights, violence against women, supporting institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, education and training, the girl-child and women in conflict situations. UNFPA assisted Gabon in carrying out a study on the legal status of women. In Togo, 300 workers in the judiciary and 300 traditional chiefs were sensitized to gender issues. The agency has organized two meetings on population and development in cooperation with the Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians. It provides support to organizations working to stop violence against women in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania and has supported a national survey on harmful traditional practices against women and girls in Nigeria. UNFPA has been giving considerable attention to the AIDS issue.

Since 1995, UNFPA has supported the establishment of the network of African Ministers and Parliamentarians and has helped to strengthen the network of journalists and traditional communicators. The African Forum on the reproductive health of youths held in January 1997 in cooperation with ECA and OAU brought together 500 young boys and girls from 48 countries. The recommendations and resolutions of this Forum were submitted to the OAU Council of Ministers.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has launched a one-year regional programme to combat violence against women. The regional seminar held in Dakar in 1998 on the legal implications of violence against women made it possible for some 10 countries to compare their national laws and to recommend that laws, especially those on rape, genital mutilation, domestic violence, sexual harassment and forced marriage should be amended.

Through its "Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts" project, UNIFEM supports the national organizations calling for peace in Burundi and supports women leaders working at the grassroots level in that country.

Following the Beijing Conference, the World Bank integrated the gender approach in its strategic policies. It consequently formulated, in 1997, a regional action plan on gender aimed mainly at investing in the

development of female human resources by significantly increasing women's access to education, health services, nutrition and quality planning. The Bank recently pledged to provide additional resources for education and the development of the girl-child.

In October 1997, the World Bank and ECA organized a conference on "Gender and Law" for East African countries. The conference enabled policy makers and administrators from various countries to compare their national laws on the family and to formulate strategies to reinforce such laws.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played the key role of assisting Governments in drawing up poverty alleviation policies and programmes. UNDP is also involved in the anti-HIV/AIDS campaign as well as in environmental protection. In Malawi, UNDP launched a Programme for viable subsistence to enable families to plan and carry out activities aimed at achieving reasonable food security through the use of household resources.

The International Labour Organization (ILO), through its international programme for the abolition of child labour (ACL), has been supporting efforts to stop child labour. The programme aims to prevent the use of child labour, abolish the most extreme forms and most serious cases of child labour and improve working conditions. To this end, ILO organized in cooperation with UNICEF a subregional workshop on the domestic trafficking of children in West Africa and Central Africa. This workshop held in Cotonou, in 1998, drew up a framework for studying the situation and for improving the coordination of relevant activities carried out between countries and subregions.

In 1997, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and UNFPA made a joint Declaration on female genital mutilation (FGM) in which they affirmed their common position to assist Governments and communities in promoting the health and development of women and children. To this end, WHO formulated a regional plan of action to speed up the elimination of genital mutilation in Africa. The plan which focuses on 26 African countries and covers the period 1996-2015 uses a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach with special emphasis on providing assistance in cases of medical complications resulting from genital mutilations. WHO pledged to assist the countries concerned in preparing their plans of action. The strategies were mainly: to encourage communities to participate in identifying physical, psychological and

emotional problems resulting from these practices; to provide training on how to design an integrated and participatory approach to the elimination of these practices; to design and produce, in cooperation with the people concerned, culturally acceptable IEC materials and programmes with specific targets; and to promote a multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach to the identification and planning of activities.

With regard to bilateral cooperation, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) reviewed its “women and development” policy in 1995 and adopted a new policy on gender equality which focuses more on the rights of women and girls. The strategy adopted in each of the subregions of the continent contains two of the six priorities of the development aid policy of the Canadian Government, namely: women and development, and human rights. The Agency urged each country to prepare its own strategy on gender equality.

The project on the rights and citizenship of women in French-speaking Africa which was initiated in 1997 focuses on Guinea, Mali, Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso. It aims at strengthening respect for the rights of women and girls and at increasing their participation in the democratic process, highlighting the three areas: legal and social equality between men and women; elimination of violence against women and girls; and women and girls’ participation in power and decision-making. The project also aims to support, over a five-year period, the establishment of coalitions of organizations engaged in women’s rights, human rights and the rights of organizations with decision-making powers or influence. The objective is to create a forum in which the subregional committee against practices harmful to the health of women and girls and the Association of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians will also participate.

5. Commitments made by African Governments

It should be emphasized that after the Beijing Conference, several countries gave the Ministries which previously dealt with women’s affairs additional responsibility for family affairs. These decisions only confirmed the interrelationships between women, family and children’s issues. However, it is significant that the national evaluation reports

neither indicated how these interrelationships were taken into account in designing projects and programmes nor did they specify activities undertaken to strengthen the family structure.

In Burundi, women have been included in the Council for National Unity and Reconciliation set up as part of the country's peace-building efforts. In 1998, the "Women's Group" was given an observer status at the Burundi Peace talks in Arusha.

The common position adopted by African countries during the World Social Development Summit reaffirms four priorities:

In March 1998, Morocco established a Ministry responsible for social welfare, the family, children and the coordination of policies and programmes on women. This country set up a Commission on women's issues and development in connection with the preparation of its five-year development Plan, 1999-2003. It urged its Statistical Office and the Centre for Surveys and Demographic Research to apply gender analysis in their data collection activities, a step that would ultimately lead to the adoption of more egalitarian laws.

Box 1

Morocco adopts the gender approach to increase legal equality

- (a) Poverty reduction;
- (b) Creating and maintaining productive employment and incomes;
- (c) Strengthening social integration, national cohesion, peace and political stability in the region;
- (d) Developing democracy, human rights and popular participation.

The preamble of the African Common Position document states that to change the unfavourable human and social conditions in Africa it will be necessary to redirect the region's development strategy. Such a move should involve building and strengthening local capacities while creating confidence in the people. It must involve the people themselves who should be made to play an appropriate role, especially women and young girls who should be agents of a positive change. In view of this, most African countries initiated programmes taking into account the social dimensions of structural adjustment or poverty alleviation. However, none of the assessments carried out in all the subregions mentioned the situation of the family. ICPD had urged countries to take into due consideration the rights and responsibilities of every

member of the family and to take appropriate measures to protect the family from distress and disintegration in accordance with its welfare and health prescriptions and taking into account the survival strategies of the families themselves. The Cairo Conference also urged countries to provide couples and individuals with the means of controlling the size of their families, to include family issues in all development plans, policies and programmes and to encourage analytical surveys on demographic trends within the family cycle in order to improve understanding of the crucial factors affecting small families.

Although in most countries, population programmes do not give specific attention to the family, the regional evaluation report on the implementation of the ICPD recommendations shows that taking measures to improve the quality of life of various segments of the population could have a positive impact on the family. About 84 per cent of the countries participating in this evaluation have taken measures to foster equal opportunities in favour of the girl-child and to give her legal protection. More than half of them have made laws and formulated policies and strategies for adolescents. About 85 per cent of the participating countries have taken measures to increase the minimum age of marriage from 18 to 21 years. Finally, various methods have been developed for sensitizing young people.

6. Results and recommendations of follow-up meetings and conferences

The initiatives taken on the family focused mainly on the issues of peace and rights. The Pan-African Women's Conference on a Culture of Peace organized jointly by OAU, AWCPD and other NGOs, from 17 to 20 May 1999, in Zanzibar, the United Republic of Tanzania, marked a watershed in the mobilization of women for peace. This Conference was preceded by the Women's Leadership Forum on Peace held in Johannesburg in 1996 and the Pan-African Conference on peace, gender and development held in Kigali in 1997.

The Pan-African Women's Conference on a Culture of Peace was meant to serve as a forum for women to coordinate their peace activities for stronger influence on decision-making throughout the continent. This

initiative was supported by UNESCO and led to the adoption of the Agenda for African Women for Peace which is a platform for action for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa. This Conference was a milestone in the campaign to declare the year 2000 as the “International Year of the Culture of Peace” under the auspices of UNESCO.

The African First Ladies held two meetings: one in 1997 in Abuja, Nigeria and the other in 1998 in Accra, Ghana. The Accra Plan of Action on peace and humanitarian issues of the First Ladies of West Africa and the Abuja Declaration on humanitarian issues were adopted by African Heads of State.

The workshop held from 11 to 13 December 1998, on women and the aftermath of civil war, led to the establishment of a Coalition of African Women against war to support the Algiers Declaration adopted by the International Colloquium on contemporary forms of violence and on a culture of peace, held in 1997. Furthermore, the Coalition seeks to use its influence to bring assistance to women living in countries where there is conflict. Finally, it aims to popularize education and spread information on rights at the regional and international levels

Other measures taken which had an impact on the family included:

- (a) The organization, jointly by UNHCR, UNDP, UNIFEM and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), from 16 to 19 February, 1999, in Kigali, of a Regional Consultation on the rights of women to possess and own land in conflict situations and during reconstruction; and
- (b) The inter-agency workshop held in Addis Ababa in 1997 on best practices for women in peace-making and conflict resolution.

These meetings led to the establishment of such bodies as the African Women on Peace which has been operating since 1998 and the creation of a number of active peace organizations at the national, regional and subregional levels throughout Africa. These organizations provide new horizons for non-violent resolution of conflicts and the emergence of new forms of solidarity. Following up the implementation of the recommendations of such bodies is challenging even for the initiators, owing to the inadequacy of mechanisms for coordinating their activities as well as their insufficient resources.

7. Progress achieved

This study's assessment of the activities undertaken exposes five methodological problems. The first is the paucity of data on the role of women in the family, culture and socialization. The second is that existing studies do not state the impact of the activities that have been undertaken in this area since the Dakar and Beijing Conferences. The trends are muddled up reflecting the fact that the family is at the centre of complex social, cultural, political, legal and economic interactions which only a long-term observation can reliably discern. The third is that these interactions cannot simply be reduced to a few factors whose effects alone are thought capable of explaining progress or lack of it. The fourth is the difficulty of determining whether or not the trends observed are reversible. The fifth is the separation of the catalytic agents of change from other factors.

To these methodological difficulties must be added the fact that none of the 43 countries which submitted a report to the Sixth Regional Conference on Women indicated that it had included this theme in the priorities of its action plan. Consequently, the experiments carried out in these areas are very modest. Finally, it should be recalled that "the vital role of women in the family, culture and socialization" is not expressly included in the Beijing Programme of Action, but only implied in the recommendations. Moreover, policies and programmes on women should take into account the environment in which women live so that opportunities can be developed for them and appropriate measures taken to remove the constraints to their advancement.

This progress analysis therefore relies on a series of documents, including background documents (country reports and thematic assessments) prepared for the Sixth Regional Conference on Women, the evaluations of various follow-up conferences and the findings of research work. Most of the evaluations reviewed acknowledge that:

- (a) Women and girls' access to education has increased their participation in economic and political activities, and that fertility rates have declined in countries where education has made much progress. This development has had a positive impact on women and other members of the family. According to United Nations estimates, the overall fertility rate in

Africa should be 3.28 children per woman by 2025. This downward trend is already being observed in North Africa where the marriage age has considerably decreased. The fertility rate in Southern Africa and East Africa was 3.9 children per woman for the period 1995-2000. This trend is expected to extend to West Africa and Central Africa where more effective population and reproductive health policies have progressively been implemented since 1994. The downward trend is also due to the late marriage of educated girls.

- (b) The right of a woman to control her fertility is increasingly being recognized as a fundamental human right. In many countries, access to contraceptives is limited mainly by inadequate supply rather than by religious considerations. However, while information on contraception has markedly developed in other regions of the world, Africa is lagging behind. South Africa is the only country which has a law on abortion, enacted in February 1997, giving women and young girls the right to undergo an abortion in the first two months of pregnancy with State financial assistance. Here minors can have abortions without the prior consent of their parents.
- (c) More and more measures are being taken in countries to eliminate harmful traditional practices (HTPs), such as FGM, early marriage and violence against women. The number of countries that have enacted laws on violence against women and girls has increased considerably since 1994. Since 1996, Burkina Faso's penal code has provided for the punishment of parents, practitioners and persons aiding and abetting FGM.

In 1999, Senegal enacted new laws against all acts of genital mutilation, sexual harassment, rape and child prostitution and corruption. These laws aim to strengthen the protection of women and the girl-child.

A women and girls' rights watch comprising various human rights organizations, women's organizations, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for Family Affairs has been established by decree.

Mali and Kenya are implementing ambitious national plans of action to eradicate genital mutilation, and Ghana and Togo have taken measures against sexual harassment and forced marriage. Djibouti and Egypt have enacted laws against FGM.

These series of laws can considerably improve the status of women in the family provided implementation mechanisms and support measures are instituted.

Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire have focused on establishing legal clinics and the training of para-legal officers. Tunisia is exemplary in the protection of rights within the family.

Finally, the Council of Ministers and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU adopted, in July 1998, the Addis Ababa Declaration expressing their commitment to the eradication of HTPs.

The economic activities of women have increased, indicating a change of mentality as well as of the economic context. Women's work seems to be moving away from the home to the market, that is, the informal sector. According to statistics published by the United Nations, women aged 15 years and above accounted for more than 50 per cent of the activities in this sector during the period 1970-1990. In the urban and semi-urban areas, the contribution of women to the household income has become an essential factor for the survival and development of the household, especially in many countries where there are unemployment and delays in the payment of salaries as a result of structural adjustment programmes. In the rural areas, an increasing number of women are requesting individual plots of land and investing increasingly in cash crop and crop diversification to generate more income for the survival of the family. Women produce food crops which are often stored as security stock. Their role in food security is increasingly being recognized although not adequately supported.

Women have become most active in women's organizations in the last few years. Although social and gender relations seem to have hardly developed within family units, women have indeed become very active in community affairs through their organizations and associations. The emergence in rural areas of women's organizations and associations

Efforts have been made to further protect the rights of women in the family with regard to inheritance, customary marriage, divorce and related matters. In fact, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been signed by all but seven countries which had reservations. Botswana ratified this Convention in 1996 and has been reviewing all its laws on the status of women since 1997.

Zimbabwe has amended its law on inheritance to reestablish equity between boys and girls. Namibia enacted a new law giving women the same rights as men with regard to decision-making, property, credit, social security, health and education. The Law Reform Commission of the country has a committee on women's rights. These measures have made it possible to include provisions for the respect of gender equality in marriage laws. Uganda adopted a new Constitution in 1995. South Africa passed the Employment Equity Bill to encourage equal participation of women in the modern sector of the economy.

However, the irony of it all is that the multiplicity of reference legal systems overshadows, if not impedes, recognition of the rights of women, especially as regards land ownership rights and rights within the family.

Box 2

Increasing formal recognition of the rights of women in Africa

expressing various concerns is the most visible sign of women's active participation in community affairs which goes beyond their role of maintaining ancestral practices or simply their traditional role. In Senegal, for example, the number of women associations rose from 4,700 in 1987 to 6,800 in 1999. Women's networking has been established or is being strengthened in all the regions of the continent.

Women are asserting their role in conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace. African women have, indeed, decided not to remain mere victims. They spoke out at the Kampala Conference in 1993 and have organized themselves to participate effectively in conflict prevention and resolution at the highest level. The NGO, "Women, Africa Solidarity", was established in 1996 to coordinate the activities of women and organizations working to achieve peace at all levels. This NGO sent two high-level missions of African women to the leaders of Liberia and Burundi. It has also organized training sessions in conflict resolution and peace-building.

The "Women for peace and non-violence in Africa" and the PanAfrican Women's Conference for a peace culture which has UNESCO support are movements active in peace-building in Africa. Their peace efforts led to the establishment by ECA and OAU of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development in 1977. The Committee comprises women from various domains: Governments, NGOs and

civil society. Its main objective is to strengthen the participation and influence of women in the peace process, especially through the OAU mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution. The strategies adopted for conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace are:

- (a) Establishing peace networks at the national and subregional levels;
- (b) Training of trainers in the techniques of negotiation in conflict resolution;
- (c) Carrying out case studies on conflict situations and non-conflict situations alike for a better understanding of the causes of conflict in order better to prevent them;
- (d) Increasing the role of the media in conflict prevention;
- (e) Promoting civil education in schools, in the family and in the community;
- (f) Encouraging the establishment of a network of “child ambassadors” for peace and for the defence of rights in schools;
- (g) Developing education on a culture of peace;
- (h) Publishing information on the peace-building activities of women;

African First Ladies have established a framework for action and formulated strategies for promoting peace on the continent. They have drawn up a Common Agenda for the development of a peace culture. This is one of the most significant documents demonstrating their commitment. Women’s peace networks are operating in all countries in conflict and often take part in peace talks at the highest level.

The importance of women’s role in education is increasingly being recognized. Several studies have shown that women heads of household, normally pay more attention to the education of girls than do their men counterparts. Even with the rather precarious situation of women, they see education as crucial and devote additional resources to it. Studies conducted in Côte d’Ivoire have shown that where the income of women

increases two-fold, the share allocated to education increases by 2 per cent and that given to tobacco and alcohol reduces by 26 and 14 per cent, respectively (Hoddinot and Haddad 1995).

8. Constraints and challenges

Although women play an important role in the daily life of the society and the family, they are still widely regarded as inferior. This is a major obstacle to their advancement as well as to the human resources development of their countries. A combination of factors are responsible for this. In fact, it has been demonstrated that **poverty and high fertility compel women, their families and their communities to adopt a strategy of survival.**

Poverty further increases the socio-cultural constraints on women. From 1970 to 1995, Africa's income per capita dropped by more than 80 per cent. According to UNDP, 54 per cent of Africans live in absolute poverty. Out of the 48 countries classified as the lowest in the human development index, 37 are in Africa. Poverty is very much linked to family size and women are the ones who suffer most from the consequences of this. The poorer the family, the longer women have to work and the more they engage in economic activity to provide for the welfare of the family. It is estimated that 37 per cent of women-headed households in the urban poor areas of Cairo live in very miserable conditions. The survey conducted in Mali on the economic and social situation of households shows that the percentage of poverty in households increases proportionately to the number of children in the households. Consequently, 40 per cent of poverty affects households with 3 to 5 persons. This percentage increases to 60 per cent among households with 5 to 9 persons and to 70 per cent among households with 10 or more persons.

Since women do not own land and have to be responsible for most of the work on the farms and at home, the only thing that they really have control over is their ability to reproduce which is a long-term insurance. These women produce many children to reduce their workload as well as their vulnerability. This is a rational defence strategy which unfortunately has a far-reaching negative impact on the reproductive health of women and compromises the future of thousands of young girls.

The impact of poverty alleviation programmes implemented after the Copenhagen World Social Development Summit has yet to be felt although it is unclear whether it will have any large-scale effect. Most of these programmes focus on women and young girls, but are poorly directed. Moreover, the strategies for poverty alleviation are not well developed and their impact on the socio-economic conditions of women is not much felt.

With the exception of Egypt which has set up a huge Economic and Social Development Fund, the strategies in Africa are invariably corrective measures against the negative impact of micro-economic adjustment policies. Macroeconomic and sectoral policies covering all the various segments of the society are not fully taken into account.

Lack of autonomy and decision-making power within the family

Women have little control over their lives and only control areas in the family and the society where the powers of men are not at stake. This seriously affects women's reproductive health. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has revealed how vulnerable women are as a result of their social status.

Reducing women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS requires improving their status in society which also means improving, among other things, their access to education and communication and their economic empowerment. All the surveys conducted on these issues have stressed the need to sensitize men and to involve them in AIDS-prevention programmes. Uganda has played a pioneering role in this respect as the percentage of sero-positive pregnant women there has been reduced from 21 per cent in the early 1990s to 15 per cent by the mid-1990s. The case of Uganda illustrates the close link between socio-economic development, public health and the development of fundamental human rights.

Inadequate protection of women's rights within the family

Generally, there is a big gap between the legal provisions in force in countries and the actual application of these provisions. This is even

more so for the fact that family affairs are governed by many different legal systems among which are civil law, customary law, and legal systems applicable to certain religious communities or ethnic groups. Moreover, the people for whom these laws are meant sometimes do not have a thorough knowledge of them. Sometimes too, there are no mechanisms for implementing these laws. Progress made in mobilizing women in defence of their rights is not usually sustained. Women's ownership of land is not guaranteed, not even by the reform plans of liberalization policies. Under the circumstances, money is seen as the fastest means of acquiring property, but it is the main factor of discrimination. Several countries have acknowledged that reforms to give women access to land have been among the most difficult to implement. In Swaziland, a woman cannot acquire property or secure a loan without the prior consent of her husband. Several countries do not have family codes. The fact that some countries have been drafting a family code for the past 10 years is clearly indicative of a lack of political will.

Inadequate support to enable women to reconcile their domestic and professional work

Changes in the family structure have reduced the responsibilities of the extended family to children while a growing number of women work outside the family home. About 97 per cent of children aged 0-6 years have no access to primary education and lack adequate care. The abandonment of these children at a critical stage in their lives has a negative and costly impact on their long-term development. This is the age when children should be protected, properly fed, cared for and given affection which they need to strengthen their ability to learn.

Programmes focusing on the care and development of the girl-child should reduce the domestic workload of mothers and provide for some of the basic needs of the child. Unfortunately, these issues are not included in the priorities of countries but, fair enough, pilot experiments carried out in Kenya, South Africa, Senegal, Namibia and Mauritius have shown that importance is being given to programmes for children, mothers and their communities:

Box 3

Few countries establish mechanisms for highlighting women's contribution to the economy

The contribution of women is largely underestimated due to the absence of appropriate gender-disaggregated data. These data are essential for the formulation of policies and for appropriate decision-making. The need for reliable data on the activities of women has been recognized since the Mexico Conference, but little progress has been made in this respect.

No African country has reviewed its national accounts to adapt it to the international definition of economic activity endorsed by the United Nations in 1993. Surveys have not been conducted on time-series budgets and the implementation of satellite systems of national accounts.

The majority of women work in the informal sector of the economy and, therefore, their contribution can be best assessed by improving the methods of assessing activities in this sector. In most countries, data collection largely relies on external funding which therefore determines the priorities. Technical capacities for building data banks are lacking and, generally, prioritizing the follow-up of structural adjustment policies have relegated the building of data banks on the social situation to the background. The issues of gender social relations are not thoroughly addressed and resolved. Gender analysis is still inadequate in most countries either for lack of political will or for inadequacy of tools for implementing this approach.

Inadequate consideration for the various roles of the family

The role of the family as a framework for economic decision-making and action is not fully taken into account. Parental education and programmes for the girl-child are absent from almost all the action plans of countries. Counselling and assistance services for families only deal with disputes. Parents are not very much involved in matters concerning the reproductive health of adolescents. This is a major handicap for which the media and the various cultural and environmental resources have not been fully used to help correct. The innovative experiment currently being conducted in West Africa with UNFPA support includes using traditional communicators to sensitize people to family-related matters. This type of activity should be pursued and developed.

Socio-cultural constraints

These are the fundamental causes of women's underdevelopment. Negative beliefs and traditions are still widespread while emphasis is hardly given to such positive steps as the pursuit of a consensus among women. Negative images of women still exist in school textbooks and

in the media in spite of efforts made by women in the communication profession to combat such stereotypes. Preference for boys which still continues in most societies, is another constraint. Although studies have not been done on the impact of these preferences on the girl-child, there is no doubt whatsoever that they have severe consequences on her physical, emotional, psychological and intellectual development. Polygamy and big families remain the main determinants of masculinity.

9. Conclusions

The assessment of the implementation of the recommendations of the Dakar Platform on “the role of women in the family, culture and socialization”, focused on a series of issues which provided the bases for the participants of the Sixth African Regional Conference of Women to discuss:

- (a) Culture, the family and gender relations; and
- (b) Family and social institutions.

On culture, the family and gender relations, the Conference emphasized the need for Governments and development partners at all levels to develop strategies and programmes to strengthen the stability of the family institution. Culture as a dynamic process provides opportunities for a positive change. Family welfare should be included in national development plans.

Factors influencing gender relations in African societies, gender roles, and the positive and negative socio-cultural values affecting the family structure and relations, were examined.

Women and the family are mainly faced with the following obstacles: growing urbanization, the modernization crisis, consumer culture, political crisis and armed conflicts, poverty and inequitable power relations bolstered by an ideology increasingly supportive of male domination, women’s subservience and the subjugation of women through language, cultural values and legal systems. **Under these situations, women continue to play a crucial role in the family and in African societies but general remain powerless.**

It appears that certain cultural practices contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Notable among these are: polygamy, remarriage of widows to the male relatives of their deceased husbands and sexual subjugation. Women should obtain information on their rights and should have the ability to negotiate and communicate.

On the relations between the society and the family institutions, participants at the workshop identified five critical areas requiring special attention: national legislation and environment; gender relations within the family; the critical role of women in perpetrating oppressive practices against other women; ensuring that young people lead responsible and healthy lives; preparation for marriage and parental responsibility; and the education and socialization of children.

Several participants emphasized the need to analyse the structures and the institutional arrangements which encourage the subjugation of women in order to combat them effectively. Participants also pointed out that a conducive national environment for the advancement of women should meet certain criteria, such as: peace, stability for sustainable development and forward-looking laws for affirmative action in favour of the advancement of women's position and work in the family as well as in economic and political activities.

The workshop stressed the need to share responsibilities in order to alleviate the workload of women in the family. It observed that relations between couples were negatively affected by migration to the urban centres from rural areas, a phenomenon that also makes women to lose important social links and the little power that they exercised in the rural areas.

The workshop recalled that responsibility for the defence, stability and integrity of the family lay with both men and women who therefore should be educated on their responsibilities in and expectations from marriage. Most African countries were going through an unprecedented economic crisis which put considerable pressure on the family institution. Several participants therefore highlighted the need to pay attention to the situation of the unemployed who became incapable of contributing to the upkeep of their families. They noted that while the extended family system continued to be the norm in several African countries, the nuclear family was gaining ground.

Participants also mentioned that sexuality was a very important issue for the family as it meant more than just reproduction; it concerned communication between partners. For most women, however, gender relations generally meant male-domination which often took the form of rape, incest, sexual harassment and other forms of violence. To put an end to this situation, participants recommended that the society should look for ways and means of changing the domination-based relations to relations based on equality, goodwill and respect.

With regard to the role of women in the perpetration of negative practices against other women, the workshop urged that women should be sensitized, especially through women's organizations, to stop perpetuating values that continued to put them under male domination.

Parental responsibility and socialization were major challenges, especially for young people, and took the form of: differential socialization which presented women as inferior; discrimination in the division of labour; major disparities in the views of families; and educational institutions on gender equality.

Participants stated that in order to sensitize the society to the need to promote gender equality, families should first inculcate the values of gender equality in their children. They also recommended that communities should reexamine their principles with regard to the education of children.

The meeting then noted that the media for their part played an important role in the dissemination of information and ideas in the society. African women should, therefore, establish a partnership with the media so that, together, they could foster the advancement of women. This partnership was all the more vital as women's equality was an essential condition for development and was beneficial to the society as a whole.

10. Recommendations

The workshop participants made the following recommendations:

1. As peace and stability are the primary conditions for the continued welfare of families and societies, they should be encouraged in all countries.

2. Negative cultural attitudes and traditional practices hindering the participation of women in political and public life should be eliminated in all social institutions through education.
3. Women should be sensitized, especially through women's organizations, to the fact that they themselves have accepted the values which continue to subject them to men.
4. Governments should establish a legal framework or enact family laws instituting gender equality and protecting the rights of family members.
5. Powers, work and responsibilities should be shared more equitably between men and women within the family.
6. Considering the isolation of families in urban communities, it is important to strengthen solidarity, the structures for improving family stability and the social support systems, especially for new couples.
7. Governments should draw up strategies and programmes to develop family stability and strengthen family institutions.
8. Research on the African family should be encouraged: focusing on such areas as family dynamics in culture, HIV/AIDS, economic welfare and care for disabled people and elderly persons.
9. The role of the media in promoting gender equality should be strengthened.

Annex

Questionnaire for the workshop discussion

The national plans prepared by countries are mainly aimed to achieve a harmonious advancement of women as mothers, wives and individuals within the family. The plans should therefore shift their emphasis from a conflict scenario where the interests of women and families are determined by men to a more harmonious scenario where the roles and responsibilities of each and everyone are recognized and respected. Even in this approach, obstacles, including cultures and heritage, have been identified. However, there are also opportunities to be explored and/or revitalized during the next five years. In doing this, the following three areas of concern will be taken into account:

- (a) Women's empowerment within the family;
- (b) Social and legal protection of women within the family;
- (c) Strategies for developing the positive aspects of culture and traditions for the advancement of women and for safeguarding the family.

Questions on the empowerment of women within the family

1. Judging from your experience, how would you assess the impact of projects and programmes to enhance women's empowerment in decision-making?
2. What are the main constraints to the economic activities of women?
3. How can the economic activities of women be developed?
4. How can the existing mechanisms be adapted to respond to crisis situations?
5. How can women be encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation of initiatives for their advancement?
6. What are the most successful strategies that women have

developed during the past few years?

7. What effects have these strategies had on women and other members of the family?
8. How can women be involved in poverty alleviation policies and programmes, in HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, and particularly, in reproductive health programmes for adolescents?
9. What services and what support and follow-up measures could be established within homes and in professional circles to develop the economic activities of women?
10. What strategies could be used to involve men in activities to develop the role of women?
11. What strategies could be developed to improve the sharing of responsibilities between men and women in the family?
12. What areas should be explored through surveys and research to deepen knowledge about the complex relationships within the family?

2. Questions relating to social security and legal protection of women within the family

1. In the light of the experiences of your country, state the main constraints to the application of the laws made, including:
 - (a) Family Law;
 - (b) Property Law;
 - (c) Law on Violence Against Women.
2. What are the best ways of removing these constraints?
3. What are the measures that have been most effective in improving the status of women in the family?
4. What role should be played by the various actors?
 - (a) Governments;
 - (b) NGOs;
 - (c) Women's organizations.

5. What strategies could be used to develop respect for the rights of various members of the family?

3. Questions on strategies for developing the positive aspects of cultures and traditions, for the advancement of women and for safeguarding the family

 1. What strategies could be developed for collecting and popularizing traditional practices and cultures concerning the family?
 2. How can community values for change be integrated in development projects and programmes?
 3. How can peace-keeping activities undertaken by women be developed and expanded?