



Questionnaire to Governments

**on Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
and the Outcome of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the
General Assembly (2000)**

**For preparation of regional review and appraisals
in the context of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing
Declaration and Platform for Action in 2010**

ANNEX: GUIDANCE ON ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN RESPONSES

The examples below are provided as guidance only. Reporting States are not required to cover these issues but should focus on issues which are most relevant in their national contexts. Additional issues not included in the annex can also be raised in the responses.

Comment [UN1]: Inserted by ECLAC

Part One: Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (3 pages)

Please note that the response to Part One of the questionnaire should contain highlights of achievements and challenges. The issues raised in this part can be discussed in more detail in responses to other parts of the questionnaire. For example, issues related to globalization would be discussed in more details under Part Two of the questionnaire and issues on gender-responsive budgeting would be discussed under Part Three.

Comment [UN2]: Suggested by ECE

Guiding questions: The response could, for example, address the following issues and questions:

*a) Has a national policy on **gender equality and the empowerment of women** been adopted and at what level? Was a strategy or plan of action developed to support the implementation of the policy? What mechanisms were established for monitoring and how are different actors held accountable for its implementation? Is there a national coordination mechanism at the highest level to ensure that the policy is implemented in all sector areas?*

Comment [UN3]:

Comment [UN4]:

- Eritrea has formulated a National Gender policy and Action Plan and national development policies, such as the Macro Policy and the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), to affirm the commitment of the government to gender equality. NUEW, the NGO mandated by GSE as Eritrea's national machinery for the advancement of women, developed the **National Policy on Gender (2004), endorsed by the Government Sate of Eritrea(GSE)** which provides a framework for the integration of gender equality in national development planning. Priority areas of the policy are legal reforms and access to justice, political, economic and social empowerment, education, training and health. The policy promotes both mainstreaming and women targeted approaches, encourages the formulation of gender sensitive indicators for monitoring results, the collection of gender disaggregated data and embraces affirmative action. The gender policy also encourages for establishing gender unit or the assignment of gender focal persons in each ministry to facilitate gender mainstreaming.

*b) What impact does the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, and the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, have on the promotion of gender equality? How is implementation of the Convention progressing?*

- In 1995 the government ratified Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). To ensure that the convention is easily accessible and understood, it has been translated into local languages. Other major international human rights instruments and conventions signed by the State of Eritrea include: the Convention on the Right of the Child (1994),

the Beijing Platform of Action (1995), the International Convention on Abolition of Child Labour (2000), the MDGs (2000) and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2001). Viewed against prevailing negative cultural attitudes towards women, this shows a positive determination by GSE to advance the rights of women and children.

- The country's ratified constitution of 1997 enshrines the rights of Eritrean women, guaranteeing equal rights to both women and men. The constitution prohibits any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, colour, gender, religion, disability, age, political view and social and economic status. Various articles in the constitution grant equal rights to women with the intention that they should be treated as equal to men when considering land use, family and marriage disputes, inheritance and the passing of citizenship to their children. These rights are captured in article 7.2 which states that any act that violates the human rights of women, or limits or otherwise thwarts their role and participation is prohibited.
- The Government of the state of Eritrea (GSE) has clearly stipulated in the different policy documents, equal representation of women as one of its basic principles since 1991. Furthermore, it ratified a gender sensitive Constitution in 1997. The political will of the government to have equal representation was clearly stipulated in the proclamation of 1996 which guarantees 30% quota for the representation of women.

*c) What are the **main legislative and policy-making achievements** in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment over the past decade? Please provide details.*

- Women in the Eritrean parliament represent 22%. This implies that Eritrean women in the higher echelons of legislative body have not reached the critical mass and consistent effort is needed to ameliorate their position. Yet various measures have been taken to assure women's representation in Eritrea, such as appointing women to high posts, informally influencing women to take leadership position at all levels, and by undertaking intensive sensitization programs that help women to successfully contest in elections.
- As of now, four of the 17 ministers are appointed by the GSE as Ministers of Justice, Health, Labor and Human Welfare and Tourism and one out of the six regional/zoba governors are women.
- In the nation wide election of community administrators a positive discrimination was encouraged in the year 2004. The range of elected female administrators were from 1% - 12% which shows a lot of effort to change the status quo is still needed. Women have been elected as administrators, deputy administrators or members of the administrative committee in the districts.
- One which drastically affects the life of women is handling cases on their day to day affairs. The ministry of Justice has clearly indicated that to ensure gender equality at least one third of community judges should be from the female population. The average percentile of women elected for community judges in the recent election of 2008 is 27.6%, which indicates the advocacy work beside affirmative action is still needed.
- NUEW's role has played a positive role in enabling and encouraging potential female candidates to contest and to avoid the risk of voters being disbursed amongst the contestants and losing the election. The NUEW pursue group right culture, rather than individual right and create the atmosphere were women candidates get together to reach to a consensus who will contest. Mobilizing female voters to vote for women candidates, lobbying to get the support of the male population, training female candidates with the essential skills for running a campaign, public speaking and message development are some. Besides a training package on gender analysis,

communication, conflict management, and result based management (RBM) has been developed and is used to train female leaders at different levels.

d) *To what extent have gender perspectives and the concerns of women been taken into account in preparation of **budgets** at national, regional and local levels? Has this resulted in increased resources for gender equality? Describe efforts to increase and track budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women. Have gender-responsive budgeting procedures been introduced and to what effect?*

Comment [UN5]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

- Although the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) financed in 2005 training of government officials and NUEW on gender budgeting, sector budgets do not yet systematically address gender concerns. The use of gender disaggregated data in the preparation of annual estimates through which Government revenue is distributed is not yet required. Sector investment programs as of now do not require departments and line ministries to consider the impact of their investment programs and budgetary allocations on men and women.

e) *To what extent are the **Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs)** utilized as the national framework for development? What attention is given to Goal 3 on gender equality? Is national-level data available to effectively monitor the achievement of the targets under MDG3? Are gender perspectives and the concerns of women considered in all other MDG goals?*

Comment [UN6]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

- Gender mainstreaming which was identified as the most important mechanism to reach this goal is in the process of implementation in the country. The Ministry of Education, Health, Agriculture, Information and Land, Water and Environment have developed a gender mainstreaming strategy which is in the process of implementation. The Government State of Eritrea (GSE) has aligned its programming with the eight Millennium Development Goals MDGs also, which have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.
- The Government State of Eritrea adopted National Gender Policy in 2004. The policy is premised on the principle of equality between men and women that has been forged through the collective struggle of the Eritrean people and the remarkable participation of Eritrean women therein. The goal of the policy is to provide an overall policy guidance to uphold the principles of gender equity and equality in Eritrea by ensuring that gender issues are integrated into the national development process.

▪ *Is national-level data available to effectively monitor the achievement of the targets under MDG3?*

- While Eritrea is one of the poorest countries in the world it has been on track with most Millennium Development Goals (MDG) except MDG 1 on poverty and MDG 2 on universal primary education. Progress on MDG 7 on sustainable development cannot be conclusively assessed due to lack of data.

f) Provide information on major **government policy discussions and/or parliamentary debates** where gender perspectives and the concerns of women have been taken systematically into account and resulted in policy and/or programmatic changes. What **recent major reforms** have taken place in the country where these perspectives were taken into account? What **major problems** are being debated in the country where the perspective of women and gender equality are considered as an integral part of the overall debate?

Comment [UN7]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

g) In countries emerging from **armed conflict**, to what extent were women involved, and gender perspectives and women's concerns included, in peace negotiations and in planning of reconstruction efforts?

- Eritrea, a small emergent nation is strategically situated in the eastern part of Africa. It has joined the international community in 1991 after an arduous armed struggle against Ethiopian colonialism. Eritrea's independence was formalised on 24 May 1993. Eritrea had been colonized by different powers for more than a century including the Turkish, Egyptians, Italians, the British and Ethiopians. The gender equality philosophy debate was highly contestable in the 1960's, which was later accepted as one of the basic principle of the movement and was one of the main pillars of struggle in the 1970's during the liberation struggle. Since then gender equality was central as the liberation movement did take a clear stand on women's equality, and women fought alongside their male counterparts for their identity as Eritreans, social and gender equality. The Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE), as a continuation of this reinstated its commitment to gender equality and is in the process of mainstreaming gender in all its policies, programmes and operations. Eritrean women have been prominent to voice their identity with the theme no peace without justice, calling for peace that respects their basic dignity and human right.

h) How has **globalization** (for example, the use of ICT, market liberalization, changes in trading patterns, etc) affected the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality? What efforts are being made to reduce potential risks and to build on opportunities for women?

- Informal businesses in Eritrea have become an important generator of employment and income. Women are the majority of the entrepreneurs in this sector, but they are not able to reach their full potential due to lack of access to suitable facilities, markets, finances, technology, information, training and business skills.

i) In which **sector areas** have specific policies, strategies and/or action plans for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment been developed and implemented? To what extent are gender perspectives and the concerns of women routinely taken into account in legislation, policy making and programme development in other sectors, so that inequalities and gaps are identified and addressed?

Comment [UN8]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

- Gender specific policies exist in education, health, and decision-making that ensure gender equality, in Eritrea, since the implementation of these conventions and framework, gender related issues, have improved tremendously and major successes have been achieved.
- The GSE, *Health Sector Policy (2003)*, emphasizes a quality health system that is equitably accessed, affordable and acceptable to both male and female citizens. The Health Policy prioritizes prevention and control of infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS/STI, TB, Malaria, and Reproductive Health.
- The Eritrean government has gone through an ambitious legal reform process, which has supported the commitment to gender equality. Notable among the legal provisions are Labour and Land Reform Proclamations and the legal proclamation which rendered female genital mutilation (FGM) a criminal offence. As a result of the anti-FGM campaign many have begun to stop this practice, and an enforcement village committee has been established in almost all villages.

*j) What types of significant **partnerships** have been established with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, as well as the private sector and other stakeholders, in support of different aspects of national efforts on gender equality and empowerment of women – through for example, advocacy, participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and programmes and service delivery?*

Comment [UN9]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

- To operationalize the Health Sector Policy (2003) the GSE has established a Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), which is an exemplary performer as a multi-sector partnership towards a holistic and sustainable disease control and prevention outcome with emphases on community involvement. The CCM is composed of Ministry of Health (MOH), other Government sectors, and civil-society organizations (CSOs) jointly planning and overseeing the implementation of national programs.
- The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), the women's machinery in the country advocates on gender equity and equality A strong program partnership, that empowers women and targeting traditional, religious, key political and community leaders in the anti FGM campaign and promotion of population/RH issues towards restricting early marriage are some of the best practices.
- The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) have been playing a critical role often in non-clinical settings, providing services, the establishment of youth friendly services, such as centers counselling in HIV/AIDS prevention, family planning and RH and IEC in combination with recreation, service delivery to young people. Initiated also an extensive social marketing campaign for condoms and other contraceptive commodities. The NUEYS campaign to school and out of school youth pregnancy awareness, prevention and management of complications of unsafe abortions and safe abortion services.
- The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE) has been organizing a nation wide program on ASRH for school adolescents. This program is already integrated within school curriculum and NUEW & NUEYS are replicating it to the out of schools as well. Besides reproductive education or sex education begins at middle level, as part of a science class addressing the teenage population in school.
- A mass media campaign such as Radio and TV - RH promotion program on SRH issues, is an on going activity in collaboration with the Ministry of Information (Moi).

*k) What efforts have been made to actively engage **men and boys** in the promotion of gender equality, including for example in eliminating violence against women and*

combating HIV/AIDS? What successes have been achieved and what constraints have been identified?

- In 1997, the Eritrean Constitution was ratified and has sections that address VAW. Different legislations are enacted and amendments to the civil and criminal law are made to ensure the safety and well being of citizens/women and to promote equality and equity amongst all. Aside from these official initiatives, the NUEW & NUEYS continuously campaign amongst women & men, girls & boys to raise the awareness in workshops/ seminars/ conferences regarding VAW.

l) What is the impact of climate change and food and energy crises on the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women? What steps are being taken to reduce the potential risks for and impact on women and to engage women effectively in prevention and mitigation processes? Have social protection measures been put in place to reduce the impact on women and have measures been adopted to support women farmers?

Comment [UN10]: Additional changes from ESCAP

- Gender and the environment are intrinsically linked. Increased deforestation leads to soil erosion, reducing agricultural productivity, contributes to decreased water availability and increases the burden of women. Women spend less time on productive activities as they spend more time looking for water and fuel wood. Under certain circumstances women may be forced to cut the very trees that provide forestry products important for survival. Women's traditional knowledge of natural resources is crucial. Daily contact with the environment engenders with a special relationship and knowledge of traditional plants, herbs and forest products. Despite the perception that and decision-making related to land is still identified with men, women greatly participate in land conservation, contributing to the success of these projects.
- The **National Environmental Management Plan (NEP) (1995)** is the blueprint for the protection of the scarce environmental resources. The plan introduces the establishment of protected areas and the rehabilitation of degraded environment, promotes people's participation in planning processes and the management of the natural resources, supports the new ethic of sustainable living, stresses the need to maintain the diversity of environmental systems and promotes the development of integrated management strategies that allow for the multiple use of natural resources.
- NEP also recognises the importance of women in environmental management and aims to ensure that women's participation in environmental protection is enhanced. The mobilization of women for environmental protection activities, including awareness on negative farming methods that lead to degradation, and terracing are widely practiced. Implementation of NEP policies and recommendations have strong connection with traditional way of preserving though women's equal share and benefit, tend to lack local understanding due to reluctance to change the 'custom and practices' of the rural communities.

m) What is the impact of the financial crisis on the promotion of gender equality? What measures have been taken to reduce the negative impact on women's access to resources, income and social protection? To what extent have measures to revive growth mobilized women's economic potential?

Comment [UN11]: Suggested by ECE

- Since independence GSE has given high priority to policies and programs aimed at achieving economic growth and development. The government's commitment to poverty reduction is enshrined and articulated in all major policy documents, such as The Macro-Policy of 1994, the I-PRSP (2004) and the Food Security Strategy (2004).
- Although the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) financed in 2005 training of government officials and NUEW on gender budgeting, sector budgets do not yet address gender concerns.
- While Eritrea's small and medium enterprise (SME) sector holds great potential, it has remained under-developed. GSE has established a Small and Medium Enterprise Development Unit (SMEDU) in the Ministry of Trade and Industry mandated to support SMEs with free training, information and advice. A one-stop-shop for business licensing has also been established to simplify business registration processes.
- Limited entrepreneurial skills and knowledge and/or ability to access markets are some of the concerns facing women in business.
- Lack of property and collateral make it difficult for Eritrean women to access capital in commercial banks, where they access only 9% of available credit.
- The Ministry of Local Government established the **Savings and Micro Credit Programme (SMCP)** in 1996. The SMCP has since 2002 been operating as a semi- autonomous institution under the Ministry of National Development. It is the largest micro-credit provider in the country, operating in all six regions and 92% of sub-regions. It has to date established 357 village banks with 35,000 customers, 40% of whom are women. They are targeted at government and private business employees. The 2007 report of SMCP revealed that credit is helping women to break cultural barriers and improved the livelihood of 87% of its clients. Repayment rates increased from 74% in 2006 to 80% in 2007. As of 2007 the main share of loans provided were agriculture (33%), services (59%), and manufacturing (2%). From 1997 to 2007 some 22,600 clients accessed the SMCP, of which 47% were women beneficiaries, 74% of whom were urban residents.
- NUEW micro-credit program started in 1995 but was hampered due to the Ethio-Eritrean conflict in the period of 1998 to 1999. During the early 2000s NUEW restarted set up a **micro-savings and credit program** with the assistance of donor funding. Loans are given to groups of 6-8 members after a week of training on different types of credit, application and best practices. NUEW has recently revived the micro credit programme in Gash-Barka, Debub and Maekel regions. A total of 4,071 women have benefited from the current NUEW programme.

Part Two: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (10 pages)

Please organize the response to this part of the questionnaire according to the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (except for critical area H which is covered in Part Three of the questionnaire).

Guiding questions: The response within each critical area of concern could address, but does not need to be limited to, the issues outlined below:

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects

*a) In relation to the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action and other key issues, what **successful actions** (such as legal measures, policy reforms, media campaigns, and pilot programmes or projects) have been taken by the Government or other actors (NGOs, civil society, the private sector) to achieve these objectives. Please provide concrete examples.*

- The Eritrean government is committed to gender equality and has ratified relevant international conventions. The constitution also enshrines gender equality. Eritrea has formulated a National Gender policy and Action Plan and national development policies, such as the Macro Policy and the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), to affirm the commitment of the government to gender equality.
- The Eritrean government has gone through an ambitious legal reform process, which has supported the commitment to gender equality. Notable among the legal provisions are Labour and Land Reform Proclamations and the legal proclamation which rendered female genital mutilation (FGM) a criminal offence.
- The Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) made a deliberate effort to ensure women's participation in every stage of the constitution-making process. Hence, fifty percent of the members of the Constitution Commission were female, effectively taking part throughout the process.
- Article 7.4 of the constitution affirms that all Eritreans, without distinction, are guaranteed equal opportunity to participate in any position of leadership in the country. However women's representation in high office is still low despite affirmative action measures. These include a legislated quota reserving 30% of seats for women in Provincial and District Assemblies and National Parliament. Affirmative action regulations also exist stipulating the minimum number of women in community courts and other local level decision-making bodies, such as village land committees.

The State of Eritrea ratified the **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** in 1995. The Convention was subsequently translated into the local language and widely disseminated, particularly among women. There is a strong commitment and political will on the part of the government, which provides a supportive environment for the implementation of the Convention. With the enactment of the Eritrean Constitution on May 23, 1997, the following provisions were incorporated:

- Sub-article 7.2 which proclaim: "Any act that violates the human rights of women or limits or otherwise thwarts their role and participation is prohibited."

Consequently, Eritrean women had the opportunity to make their voices heard and advocate for their rights and concerns through their participation in various consultation forums organized by the Ministry of Justice's **Law Reform Committee**, established in 1997. Thorough reform of the Civil & Criminal Codes that repealed all prejudiced clauses has been in process ensuring participatory approach. The reform process is almost complete and the revised codes are ready to be officially enacted. The following were part of this revision:

Civil and Penal Codes Revised

- **Article 45** - both husband and wife have equal rights as head of their household.
- **Article 46** - marriage is based on the free consent of both partners and need no parental consent.
- **Article 48** - Women can enter marriages freely and are awarded the same rights as men
- **Article 49** - prohibits bride price and dowry.
- **Article 50** - kidnapping for marriage is illegal.
- Legal age for marriage is raised to 18.
- **Articles 708-721 of the colonial Civil Code**, on irregular unions, have been abolished because they do not provide any legal protection of women's rights upon marriage, divorce and succession;
- The death penalty commuted to life imprisonment for convicted women who may be pregnant or have children under three years was abolished;
- Abortion, although still punishable under the Penal Code, is permitted in situations where a physician can certify that the woman would suffer grave and permanent damage due to severe physical and mental stress, or when the pregnancy has resulted from rape or incest;
- Rape is punishable under the law with a maximum sentence of imprisonment of up to 15 years. Pornography and other indecent and obscene exposures are also punishable under the penal code;
- **Article 635**, which bluntly glorifies the marital power of the husband, was automatically repealed and was replaced by Article 45 of family law which recognizes the equal rights and status of both sexes and keeps the interest of the children and the mother.
- **Proclamation No. 158/2007** prohibits the practice of female circumcision. Performers face up to 3 years of jail time in addition to a hefty fine. Death as a result of FGM is punishable up to 10 years of jail time. Promoters of the practice face up to 6 months jail time plus a fine.

*b) To what extent have **specific commitments** on the critical areas of concern – for example in terms of resource allocation, legislative change and policy and programme development - made by the Government at the Fourth World Conference on Women or in other contexts, been met?*

Comment [UN12]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

National Gender and Action Plan (NGAP) 2004-2008. This single document addresses gender related issues and specifically gender based violence. It is developed to ensure that gender concerns are integrated in all aspects of the national development process. The purpose of this plan is to provide a guideline for effective implementation of gender related commitments made by the Government of Eritrea in the following international Conventions:

- The Beijing Platform For Action 1995
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2000
- The Convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1995
- The Convention on Child Rights (CRC) in 1994

- The program of action adapted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)
- The World Social Summit for Development in Cairo (WSSD)
(Source: National Gender Action Plan)

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

c) Describe the **obstacles, gaps and challenges** encountered in implementation of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.

- Border conflict and delay in the implementation of demarcation i.e. the no peace no war situation
- Recurrent drought and famine affecting mostly women and children
- Deeply entrenched traditional values and institutional capacity limitation in implementation
- Inadequate representation of women in decision-making posts at all levels
- Lack of disaggregated data
- Pregnancy related morbidity, HIV and AIDS and harmful traditional values and practices such as FGM pose considerable dangers to the health and well being of women in Eritrea
- Shortage of education of girls and women at higher levels which is the most important factor in determining the health patterns, economic status and general empowerment of women
- Lack of schools in remote areas, long school distances, parental scepticism, shortage of adequate female role models and early marriage.
- Fuel-wood crisis is one of the major challenges; it increases the workload of women since fuel wood collection requires more time and energy.
- ...

C. Lessons learned

d) Provide information on the **main lessons learned** in implementation in relation to each of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.

- Throughout its history, the NUEW proved to be an effective organisation with widespread, solid grass-roots presence. Moreover, the wide-range of projects and activities carried out over the years by the NUEW, benefiting tens of thousands of mainly poor rural women, have contributed to the credibility and trust it enjoys among Eritrean women. The NUEW also boasts a wide network of both national partners, ranging from government ministries to no-governmental and community organisations, institutions of learning and the private sector, as well as international partners both in the immediate region and elsewhere, established over the years through joint activities and cooperation. The NUEW has also managed to organize a strong and effective network of women within the country and the Diaspora.

- Considering that ensuring women's rights is not an exclusive responsibility of women and their organizations, commitment of government and non-government entities are also contributing their input towards women's development agendas.

*e) Provide concrete examples of **successful interventions** and explain why these were judged to be successful? Describe any effort to replicate these efforts.*

There are many interventions made by the GSE to alter the life of women in general, to write some of them

- The Macro Policy (1994) articulated a vision for the education sector as building an enabling environment in which the standard of living of the people will advance, and human capital is the decisive factor of development.
- The Government of Eritrea has been engaged in the construction of schools from pre-school to higher education since independence so as to expand access to educational opportunities for all citizens.
- The **National Education Policy** (NEP) (2003) provides detailed activities to address the identified challenges.
- The 2003 five-year **Education Sector Development Programme** focuses on improved access; curriculum, textbooks, quality assurance and school support system; teacher education and development; and capacity building.
- The results of these measures can already be seen. One thousand girls benefited from the UNICEF financed incentive scheme until 2007 and a further 1000 are to benefit from 2008 with World Bank financing. An evaluation of a World Food Programme intervention from 2002-2004, supplying wet rations in primary schools increased enrolment by 18% - 21.9 % for girls and 14.3% for boys. The quota for girls in TVET has led to a 30% increase in girl's enrolment so far. Entry requirements for girls in tertiary education were also lowered to increase enrolment of girls. Access of girl learners has increased tremendously as more and more schools have been built closer to village communities, and boarding schools and hostels have been constructed for girls and disadvantaged children. Resistance by some parents sending their daughters to boarding schools or hostels still continues however.
- A nominal fee is paid for registration, admission, drug supplies, radiology, and laboratory services in health facilities. However patients with exemption papers from local governments are treated at no cost.
- The Government of Eritrea has formulated a **Health Sector Policy (2005)**, which emphasises equitable provision of basic health services to all people. Priority is given to the prevention & control of infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS/STI, TB and Malaria, as well as the reduction of maternal mortality.

Part Three: Institutional development (4 Pages)

Guiding questions: The response could address, but does not need to be limited to, the issues outlined below:

d) What **national mechanisms** exist for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women – for example, ministry, national commission, parliamentary committee or commission? What mandates and resources does each body have and have these increased in the review period? How do these bodies work together? Describe the location of the national mechanisms and the access to decision-making processes. What networks have been established and how effective are these networks? What resources do the national mechanisms have in terms of staff and financial support? What percentage of financial resources comes from international or bilateral donors or other external sources?

Comment [UN13]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) a women’s organization has been mandated by the government of the State of Eritrea to operate as national machinery for the advancement of women. It is mandated to both coordinate and monitor gender-related activities and to implement them.

- Established in 1979, NUEW has been the main focal organization for mobilizing women and integrating them in the process of national transformation during the liberation war. The organization has continued to function as the main focal organization for advancement of women after independence too. Currently, NUEW has a membership of more than 200,000 women, with headquarters in Asmara and offices in the 6 zobas, 56 sub-zobas, 58 branch offices in 18 countries around the world. It also has chapters in the public and private sectors. Its mission is to ensure that all Eritrean women confidently stand for their rights and equally participate in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres of the country and share in the benefits.

b) Have **focal points** for gender equality and empowerment of women been established within line ministries, and in which ministries? What support is provided from within the ministries? What support (training, advice etc.) is provided by the national machinery? How effective are these focal points?

- A five years National Plan of action on gender development has been developed by the NUEW, relevant legal provisions enacted and **gender focal points** appointed in some Ministries.

c) What **monitoring mechanisms** have been established to measure progress in implementation – in relation to national policies, strategies and action plans as well as international commitments? How is accountability for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women established across all ministries? How is coordination achieved? What role does the highest level of Government play?

Comment [UN14]: Additional inputs based on comments of ESCAP

- A mechanism for coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the NGAP is has yet to be fully instituted. This is in line with government and NUEW approach to focus on building capacity in the various partner institutions before embarking on the formation of elaborate institutional structures.

- Although some ministries have already established a system of collecting and keeping statistics in a gender-disaggregated style, a consistent approach that embraces all government line ministries, private sector, non governmental organizations and other concerned institutions needs to be integrated and streamlined.

*d) What levels of **capacity** for promoting gender mainstreaming have been achieved? Through which mechanisms? What are the remaining challenges in the area of capacity building?*

- The **Centre for Gender Research, Studies and Resources** is in the process of establishment at the premises of the NUEW. This Centre will not only enable generation of gender disaggregated data for national policy planning but will also enhance capacity in generating the required knowledge and developing the information needed for strategic approaches to mainstreaming gender in all sectors and at different levels of the country.

*e) Has a core set of **indicators** been established and where is responsibility for monitoring located? What gaps and challenges remain in relation to data and statistics? In which areas is lack of sex-disaggregation still a problem? In which areas do new types of data need to be collected? To what extent are the national statistical office and the statistical units in line ministries aware, committed and capable of providing the required data? In which sectors, and to what extent, is sex-disaggregated data being used effectively to inform policy-making and planning?*

- In the framework of the National Gender Action Plan **indicators** have been developed for each set of planned actions and objectives in each area of priority. These will be used for monitoring progress in each area. The framework also indicates the key actors under each strategic objective.

*f) Provide information on the **roles of different stakeholders**. For example, what role does Parliament play in the promotion and monitoring of gender equality and women's empowerment? How could this role be strengthened? Describe the role of NGOs in planning and implementing the follow-up activities. Do NGOs participate formally in the mechanisms established to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women and support reporting on and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)?*

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g)

The female parliamentarians have a loose network and the NUEW has at different times conducted capacity building workshops, this network has been active in the campaign that bans FGM. Besides all are involved in different committees that promotes women's and girls empowerment.

Part Four: Remaining challenges and actions to address them (3 pages)

Provide information on areas requiring future action.

- a) List any **further actions and initiatives** which the Government intends to take to fully implement the Platform for Action and outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly beyond 2010.

Eritrea is committed to:

- Ensuring at least women's power and decision making role is high on the agenda.
- Achieving millennium development goals to reduce maternal mortality rate by 50% .
- A continuous effort is in process to reach gender parity in education, at primary middle and secondary level, taking into consideration diversity and geographical location.
- Achieving food security and ensuring women to be equal beneficiaries, at least 30% quota is allotted for women to share land and to promote agri-mechanization.

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Describe the **priority areas** that have been identified for improving implementation in the next five years. examples of measures (with targets and timeframes) which will be taken in each of these areas.

b)

- Women in power decision making role
- Women and Health
- Girls Education and training of women
- Poverty eradication and economic empowerment of women

- c) Outline explicit **new commitments** that will be made to accelerate implementation?