

Fifteen-Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Africa – Beijing+ 15

Process

Introduction

The last review in Africa of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was in 2004. This was a major review and the process included, country reports, sub-regional conferences, as well as a regional conference. For this review, 44 countries presented their national reports.

It is imperative that the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) continues to inform the political, social and economic development processes in all the member States of Africa. The BPFA provides the actions for the implementation of commitments made by member States to the regional and global declarations as well as to meet the MDG goals.

2010 is the mid-term review to Beijing +20. This is a critical time for stocktaking and determining the miles still to be covered towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The Africa BPFA review will take place in 2009 to be able to inform the global report for the review in 2010.

The aim this time around is to ensure that all 53 member states report on their level of implementation.

I. Activities of the Review

The following activities will be undertaken:

(a) Questionnaire

A questionnaire will be designed as a tool for collecting quantitative and qualitative data from African member States, on the progress that has so far been made on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). The questionnaire will focus on important issues and concerns included in the BPFA, as well as identified emerging issues. It will be officially distributed to all countries in Africa. The Subregional Offices (SROs) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) will be responsible for the distribution and follow up of the questionnaire. The findings of the analysis of the completed questionnaires will be summarized and included in the *synthesis report* of the regional report on **Beijing+ 15**.

(b) Database

The questionnaire will be analysed and a database will be created, mapping out the different indicator results.

(c) National report

National reports are another tool that will be used to collect information on the implementation of the BPF in Africa. The reports will provide more qualitative and in-depth information than the questionnaire. They will include text on the lessons of experience and best practices, beside information on indicators and the gender profile. In order to achieve standardization and uniformity of national reports, annotated guidelines will be designed to help the countries draft their reports. Along with the questionnaires, these guidelines will be prepared and distributed to all countries. Narratives will be selected from country reports to enrich, strengthen and substantiate the regional report.

(d) E-network portal of gender machineries in Africa

ECA will use the existing e-network of gender machineries infrastructure to afford member States an opportunity to dialogue while the review process is on-going. In December 2006, experts from 34 countries were trained and subsequently given access to the e-network. The e-network will be used as a technical tool for gathering and sharing information on the implementation of the BPF in Africa. It will give experts and centres of excellence an opportunity to exchange views and ideas on the Beijing+ 15 review. The technical structure of the portal will be set up around the BPF to solicit views and ideas on implementation of the actions most important for Africa, best practices, lessons of experiences and the constraints and limitations encountered. These will be drawn from the country reports that would have been received.

(e) Beijing+ 15 Review

Numerous lessons were learnt from previous reviews. This review must be very well coordinated, as it involves data entry and statistical analyses of the questionnaires, and analyses of information from country reports and the web-portal. The outcome of these analyses will be used to prepare the Beijing+ 15 review report. This activity will require time and capacity to follow up all stages from data entry to the preparation of draft documents.

Once the Beijing+ 15 synthesis report is drafted, it will be circulated for comments. The peer review will take place at the following levels and in the following order:

1. ACGS staff. This will comprise staff from the three sections of the ACGS. They will benefit the process by sharing their valuable experiences in the previous reviews and in addressing emerging developmental issues;
2. ECA HQs staff. This group will comprise colleagues from other Divisions of the ECA who may pinpoint important dimensions which may have been overlooked by ACGS;
3. ECA SROs staff. SRO colleagues will boost the process by analytically reflecting and ensuring representation of sub-regional dimensions;
4. Members of the Technical Committees. These experts will bring to bear upon the process, their enormous experience in tackling gender issues within the framework of their respective mandates, and
5. Members of the Steering Committee. This group will provide the needed leadership to the process, thus, they will approve the final version of the synthesis and the review reports. Members will include the Bureau to the Joint AU/ ECA Conference of Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs, and UN Regional Organisations.

The revised synthesis report will then be sent to SROs for onward transmission to teams composed of gender experts from the RECs as well as experts drawn from countries in the sub-region for highlighting and underlining issues pertinent to the sub-region. This group will also get access to national reports to assist them in this exercise. This will result in sub-regional reports extracted from the national and regional reports. Emphasis will be placed on sub-regional reviews that are expected to clearly present sub-regional perspectives, as well as chart and elaborate action oriented deliverables.

Finally, all the sub-regional review reports will be compiled and appended to the regional report to produce the Africa Beijing +15 review report.

(f) Regional Ministerial Review Conference

The Beijing+ 15 review and its main findings will be presented at a four-day regional Ministerial review conference that will consist of two segments – a three-day expert group meeting (EGM) that will be followed by a one or two day ministerial conference. Representatives from governments, women’s networks, NGOs, gender institutions, and experts from various organizations will attend EGM to debate and validate the Beijing+ 15 review, consolidate its main findings and outcomes, and prepare a draft ministerial declaration, actionable recommendations and the way forward. The recommendations will form the basis for the Plan of Action to be implemented by the member States. These will be articulated at country, sub-regional and regional levels. At the one-day conference of ministers, the states will endorse the Beijing+ 15 review and adopt a final ministerial declaration, and formally adopt the Regional Review Report as Africa’s input to the global Beijing+ 15 process. Unless one of the member States makes an offer, these two back-to-back events will be held in 2009 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa.

II. Beijing+ 15 review mechanisms

Close consultation between the ECA, AUC and UN agencies will ensure consensus and common understanding of the Beijing+ 15 review process. This initial stage will formalize the relationship and roles of the different stakeholders and other appropriate follow up mechanisms. These partners will seek to harmonize the Beijing+ 15 review process with their ongoing and mandated processes such as the achievement of the MDGs and NEPAD consultation processes.

Membership of the steering committee will consist of the Bureau of the Joint AU/ ECA Conference of Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs, ECA, AUC, UNFPA, UNIFEM, AfDB, UNICEF and UNDP. The terms of reference of the steering committee will be to: -

- i. Discuss and validate the Beijing+ 15 review proposals and processes;
- ii. Ensure the availability of human and financial resources for Beijing+ 15 review throughout 2008 and 2009;
- iii. Harmonize the Beijing+ 15 review with relevant ongoing processes of each member organization of the Steering Committee;
- iv. Provide inputs for the finalisation and for the review of Questionnaire and Concept Note and other documents;
- v. Advocate, create awareness and support the Beijing+ 15 review process at the sub-regional, regional and national levels;

- vi. Discuss issues that may affect the implementation of the review process and provide guidance on the ways to address them;
- vii. Monitor and follow up on the achievement of key milestone outputs of the Beijing+ 15 review process;
- viii. Provide inputs for the finalisation of the draft Beijing+ 15 Regional Review Report, and
- ix. Provide guidance to the preparation, outcomes, etc. of the Ministerial Conference.

In addition to the Steering Committee, the ECA, AUC, UNIFEM and UNFPA will set up multi-sectoral individual institutional Technical Committees to oversee the substantive quality of documents and provide technical support throughout the entire review process.

When the draft Beijing+ 15 synthesis report is ready, the steering committee will have an opportunity to provide input. In preparation for the Regional review, the Beijing+ 15 synthesis review Report will be circulated to all African countries for their review and comments as a way of validation. It will then be tabled to the EGM, which will be attended by representatives of all the African countries.

III Beijing @ 15 Review Partners

The Steering Committee comprising of at least the Bureau of the Joint AU/ ECA Conference of Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs ECA, AUC, UNIFEM and UNFPA, will coordinate the Beijing+ 15 review activities. Other partners will include the AfDB, RECs, Gender and women's networks, Donors, ECA divisions and SROs. In addition to sharing of responsibilities and exchanging of knowledge and information, the partnership will harness human and financial resources for undertaking the above-mentioned activities. Close collaboration with the AUC, UNIFEM, AfDB, and UNFPA, will be pursued to ensure that research results are fed into the advocacy tasks of AUC, the development tasks of the AfDB, as well as the policy analysis and advocacy tasks of ECA, SROs and UNFPA. Regional Economic Communities (RECs), will also be involved in the process.

IV Workplan 2008-2009

The work plan described in Annex 1 will enable timely preparation of administrative and substantive inputs into the preparation of the Regional Review Report.

Annex 1: Work Plan for 2008 - 2009

Activity	2008	2009			
	4 th Q	1 st Q	2 nd Q	3 rd Q	4 th Q
Setting up the Steering Committee	X				
Dissemination of the questionnaire to countries	X				
Follow up of questionnaire with countries		X			
Collection of completed questionnaires		X			
Coding, data entry and analyses of completed questionnaires		X			
Preparation of guidelines for country reports	X				
Finalization of the guidelines for country reports	X	X			
Dissemination of the guidelines to countries	X				
Follow up and collection of country reports	X				
Operating the web portal	X	X	X	X	
Analyses of information compiled through the web portal			X		
Prepare annotated guidelines for the review document		X			
Establish drafting committee		X			
Preparation of the Beijing+ 15 draft synthesis report		X			
ACGS peer review		X			
ECA peer review		X			
ECA SRO peer review		X			
Technical committee peer review		X			
Steering committee peer review		X			
Countries, institutions and experts peer review		X			
Produce draft 2 of the Beijing+15 synthesis report		X			
Inclusion of subregional perspectives into draft 2 synthesis report			X		
Production and translation of draft for the Expert Group Meeting			X		
Organization of the ministerial conference				X	
Finalization of the Regional Review Report					X
Translation of the Regional Review Report					X
Dissemination of the Regional Review Report					X