

Economic Commission For Africa

Sixth Regional Conference On Women; 22-26 November 1999, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Mid-Decade Review Of The Implementation Of The **BEIJING PLATFORMS FOR ACTION IN THE AFRICAN REGION**

Assessment Report On: Evaluation Report On Women and Poverty, And the Economic Empowerment of Women.

By

Perpetua Katepa-Kalala

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Jean Njeri Kamau	- Women's participation in the peace process - Human rights of women
Anthony D. G. Mawaya	- Political empowerment of women - Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
Perpetua Katepa-Kalala	- Women on poverty - Economic empowerment of women
Hoda Mejri	- Les femmes, la communication, l'information et les arts (<i>Women, communication, information and the arts</i>)
Daraba Saran Kaba	- L'accès insuffisant des femmes à l'éducation, à la formation ainsi qu'à la science et à la technologie (<i>Women, education, training and access to science and technology</i>) - L'amélioration de la santé des femmes, y compris la planification familiale et des programmes en faveur des populations (<i>Women and health</i>) Solange Gomba Lemba - Rôle de la femme dans la gestion des ressources naturelles, femmes et environnement (<i>Women and the environment</i>)

- Elaboration et utilisation généralisées de données ventilées par sexe
(*Analysis and utilisation of gender-disaggregated data*)

Khardiata Lo N'Diaye

- Le rôle vital de la femme dans la famille, la culture et la socialisation (*Women, the family and socialisation*)
- La petite fille (*The Girl Child*)

Virtual Editors:

Ken Blackman,
Wangu Mwangi-Greijn, and
Ghyslaine De Souza

ECA Staff:

Communication team.
Divisional representatives at the workshops

Consultant Editors and Proof Readers

Ms Hirut Befecadu
Mrs. Axelle Kabou
Dr. Wanja Thairu

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The views expressed in the thematic assessment reports are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the organizations which provided financial assistance.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

African Governments and international organizations expressed their commitments to implement the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action in their declarations and speeches at the Dakar and Beijing conferences on women. The subsequent National Action Plans showed their commitments further, outlining planned modalities for implementation. These Plans showed that an overwhelming majority of African Governments placed poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women among their top priorities for action.

Country assessment reports indicated that countries faced a number of constraints in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in the areas of poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women. Commonly reported constraints included the lack of financial and human resources; the debt burden, which constrains available resources for gender equity programmes; time constraints associated with women's fulfilment of their multiple roles; war and civil strife.

Despite these constraints, many countries reported progress in implementing some aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action. In the area of policies and institutional mechanisms, countries reported the establishment or the strengthening of national machineries for the promotion of gender equality. In addition, some countries reported the adoption of the principal of gender mainstreaming for all public policies and programmes. Other countries also reported the passage of affirmative action laws to facilitate women's entry into decision-making bodies, especially parliament.

Country assessment reports also note the launching of numerous programmes and projects designed to contribute to the reduction of poverty and to the economic empowerment of women. Commonly reported activities include programmes which provided credit to women, job creation activities, participation of women entrepreneurs in trade fairs and study tours; capacity building for women entrepreneurs and campaigns against poverty. Further, a few countries reported that research was conducted into gender-sensitive budgets. Many countries also reported activities whose goal was to attain improvements in education, health, the environment, and political empowerment. All of these are long-term strategies for the reduction of poverty and are more fully covered in the companion reports on the 10 priority areas of the Platform for Action that is not the direct focus of this one.

At the level of impacts, perhaps the most pervasive is the increased awareness of gender equity issues, especially the notion of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes of Government and international organizations. Little was reported by country reports on the amount of change in the level of women's poverty and economic empowerment. However, the relatively low income growth for the region, especially in sectors where women predominate, such as agriculture, suggest that poverty among women has not fallen in the years since 1995 when the Beijing Platform for Action was launched.

Notwithstanding the achievements to date, much still remains to be done. For instance, many of the plans for mainstreaming gender still need to be implemented. A notable gap also exists in the area of monitoring and the development of indicators for measuring progress. Not many countries gave detailed information on how they assess progress in the implementation of the various critical areas for action.

The Sixth World Conference for Women provided an opportunity for Governments, NGOs and international organizations to make further recommendations for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the areas of the reduction of women's poverty and the economic empowerment of women.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Beijing Platform for Action¹ identified 12 “critical areas of concern” as priorities for action¹. The African Centre for Women commissioned the preparation of evaluation reports on the implementation in Africa of the Platform for Action in these 12 critical areas of concern. The purpose of these reports is to assist in the mid-decade review of the implementation by Governments and international organizations of the Platform for Action in the African region. This is one of those reports. It focuses on two closely related areas of concern:

- the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women (Women and Poverty);
- inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources (Women and the Economy);

It should be noted from the outset that although 12 distinct priority areas are identified, the Beijing Platform for Action points out that there are many inter-linkages among them. As such, the objectives and actions advocated for each are inter-dependent and reinforcing. For example, many of the proposed actions for the reduction of women’s poverty overlap with those advocated in the section on “Women and the Economy” and those of the “Education and Training of Women”. This is not surprising since adequate access to employment and productive resources, basic and advanced education and training, as well as the protection and promotion of women’s human rights, are all strategies for the reduction of poverty among women, and the population as a whole.

In order to describe the context in which the Beijing Platform for Action is being implemented, the report first begins by presenting some of the key characteristics of poverty and economic disempowerment in Africa as a whole, and that for women in particular. Section 3 then reviews the commitments made by Governments and international organization with respect to implementing the Beijing Platform in the two critical areas for action. Section 4 reviews the achievements made to date, while Section 5 reviews the resources allocated to implementing the Beijing Platform. Section 6 considers the mechanisms which have been put in place to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform, while section 7 presents a summary of the results and recommendations of follow-up conferences to the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Conference). Finally, section 8 presents some relevant statistics for the two critical areas of concern in Africa.

¹ The full list of the 12 critical areas of concern is given in Appendix I.

2.0. POVERTY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN AFRICA

2.1 THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY

Poverty can be defined as deprivation from resources (physical, economic, social, etc.), which are needed to achieve a sustainable livelihood. Poverty is recognized to be multi-dimensional in its causes and manifestations, “including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increasing morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion...lack of participation in decision-making and civil, social and cultural life”ⁱⁱ. More importantly, many of the other aspects of poverty (e.g., health, education, environment, political empowerment) are covered more fully in the assessments reports of the other critical areas of concern, the direct focus of this report is poverty and economic empowerment of women..

A commonly used measure of the incidence of poverty is the head count ratio. This is defined as the share of the population whose consumption falls below the “poverty line”. The poverty line is a specified threshold of income or value of consumption for a given country, sub-region or region, below which one is defined as poor. For developing countries, poverty lines are usually calculated as the monetary value of some minimum bundle of consumption goods and services (food, shelter and health, etc.) required to satisfy basic requirements within a particular social context. Poverty lines may differ among countries/regions in a given space in time, and may also vary over time, as socio-economic conditions change.

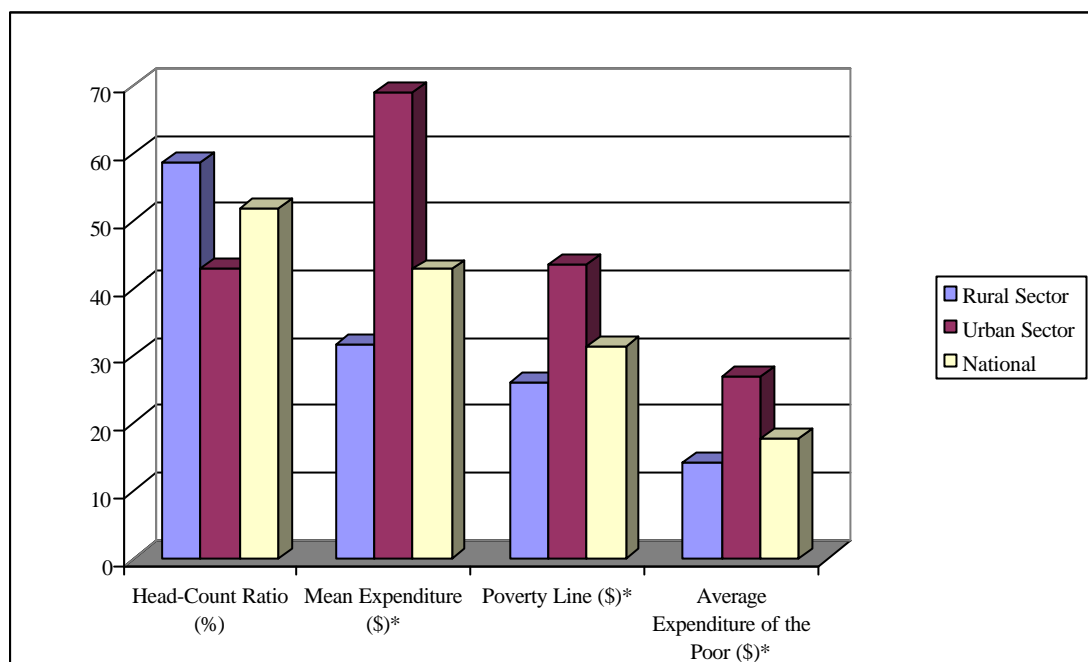
Forty four per cent of the Africa's population lives below the region-wide poverty line of \$39 per capita per monthⁱⁱⁱ. However, the extent and severity of poverty varies among the sub-regions. The least prevalent incidence of poverty is found in the North African sub-region where 22 per cent of the population live below the sub-regional poverty line of \$54 per capita per month. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 51 per cent of the population live below the regional poverty line of \$34 per capita per month.

2.2 POVERTY IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the incidence of poverty in rural areas tends to be higher than that in urban areas. Ali and Thorbeck^{iv} found this to be the case on the basis of comparisons of the head-count ratio, the mean expenditure, poverty line and average expenditure for the urban and rural areas (Figure 2.5)². The extent of rural poverty varies among countries. Côte d'Ivoire was found to have the lowest level of rural poverty, while the Central African Republic had the highest proportion (78%) of its rural population living in poverty.

² The data on which these results were based was for the early 1990s. A summary of the data is contained in Table 7.4

Figure 2.5 Rural and Urban Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa



*per person per month

Based on ECA *Economic Report on Africa, 1999: The Challenge of Poverty Reduction and Sustainability*. Addis Ababa: Table 2.4

2.3 GENDER AND POVERTY IN AFRICA

While useful in providing an understanding of overall poverty, commonly used indicators, such as the ones above, do not enable much insight into the gendered nature of the underlying causes and incidence of poverty. They tend to be based primarily on consumption and income data collected at the household level. They are not however, broken down by gender and therefore do not indicate the sex disaggregation of those classified as poor.

These indicators are also unable to reflect gender-based inequities within households. A key challenge for documenting and monitoring the gendered nature of poverty is the development of appropriate and reliable indicators. This would probably entail the use of the common indicators of poverty, discussed above, along with information collected within households. Meantime, there is still a paucity of generally accepted indicators looking at the gender-differentiation in the incidence, severity and change in poverty.

For example, the presence of female heads of households is sometimes considered a generalised likely indicator of women's economic poverty particularly in Africa. However, recent studies have shown that the existence of female heads of households does not always coincide with higher levels of poverty^v. Lampietti found that in West Africa, polygamous male headed households as a group had a larger incidence of poverty in the society. However, an argument can be made that in many cases, women are the defacto heads of households. As such, in some features, sub-units of polygamous households could be considered as female-headed households. Similar results were found for Kenya, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire^{vi}. On the other hand, in Southern Africa, Lampietti found that the incidence of poverty was actually higher among female-headed households.

Other indicators for women's poverty which have been considered include family size, women's control over resources and women's levels of education. However, for the most part, there is still a need to collect gender-disaggregated data, develop indicators and use them for policy, research and advocacy for the enhancement of gender equality in Africa.

Despite the above indicators, key characteristics of women's poverty in Africa could be outlined as follows.

2.3.1 POVERTY AND WOMEN'S WORK

There is growing evidence that in the past decade, the number of women living in poverty has increased disproportionately to that of men^{vii}. This is due to a host of socio-economic biases against women in both the market and non-market spheres of life. Efforts to document the extent of these biases and their implications for poverty among women are growing in Africa^{viii}.

Much of women's burden of work and poverty remains "hidden" to official policies, resources and strategies for reducing poverty. Official policies and programmes continue to ignore the non-market activities which women and men are engaged in. Because women predominate in non-market, household activities, they tend to be more adversely affected by this lack of policy, programme and resource support from Governments and international organizations.

This arises from the fact that a significant amount of the work which women perform (especially in subsistence production, informal employment, domestic and reproductive work) tends to be "invisible". Although progress has been made in some countries to include some subsistence production in the System of National Accounts (SNA), much of women's unpaid domestic work is not counted. The World Bank reports that 66 percent of female activities in developing countries are not counted in the SNA, while only 24 percent of male activities are left out^{ix}. The result of this "invisibility" is that their work tends not to be considered in a regular and systematic manner in public policy, nor budgetary allocations.

Higher incidences of poverty have led to increased workload for poor women. Women's participation in the market economy has increased, especially in the informal sector. Women in Sub-Saharan Africa have tended to enter the informal market more than the formal market in an effort to combat declining real wages and increasing unemployment among the women themselves, and their male partners. This has been the case especially since the early eighties, in the wake of the implementation of economic reform policies in Africa.

At the same time women's domestic workloads have not declined. Women continue to be primarily responsible for such activities as the care of minor children and the elderly members of the household, cooking and cleaning, fetching water and firewood and managing the household in general. Numerous time-use studies have shown that women in both urban and rural areas work longer hours than men, when both market and non-market activities are taken into account^x. This is especially true for poor women who do not have resources to hire additional labour to take over some of the household responsibilities as they engage in market activities.

2.3.2 POVERTY AND WOMEN'S HEALTH³

Poor women suffer from poor health and a high incidence of maternal deaths. Both men and women in Africa face numerous health challenges, often related to poverty. In particular, women face an array of health issues related to their reproductive roles. Women living in poverty tend to have poor nutrition, low access to clean water and sanitation, and less access to medical care. In particular, they tend to have less access to obstetric and gynecological care. Consequently, a higher incidence of poverty tends to correspond with poor health among women, and higher maternal deaths.

Data show that maternal mortality rates for Sub-Saharan Africa continue to be among the highest in the world, being disproportionately higher than the continent's share of births^{xi}. While Africa accounts for 20 per cent of the world's births, it accounts for 40 percent of the world's maternal deaths^{xii}. The rate of maternal deaths varies across countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, ranging between 600 and 1,500 maternal deaths for every 100,000 births.

2.3.3 POVERTY AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Economic poverty tends to go hand in hand with low human capital resources. The UNDP's Human Development Reports (various issues) show that countries with low per capita gross domestic product (GDP) also tend to have lower levels of literacy. In particular, women in developing countries, including African countries tend to have lower literacy rates than men. This is particularly so in rural areas. Fifty two percent of women in Sub-Saharan Africa are functionally illiterate.

2.3.4 POVERTY ACROSS GENERATIONS

Women's poverty has far-reaching inter-generational consequences. Poverty, in general, has adverse impacts upon the welfare of children. In particular, because of the primacy of women's involvement in the care of young children at very early age, women's poverty has even more grave consequences on the educational possibilities and capacities of their children than that of men. The link between women's control and access to resources with expenditure on family nutrition, health and children's education as well as the link between women's education and that of their children has also been well documented.^{xiii} However, poor women tend to have fewer resources and less education than either poor men, or richer women and men.

Poverty has negative gender-differentiated implications for girls' and boys' education. This is due to a variety of factors. For example, an increase in the burden of work of women will tend to increase the amount of work allocated to children. In most cases, female children are required to perform more of the household chores, normally considered the domain of women and girls. However, in some cases children are also engaged in market activities, such as the provision of additional agricultural labour, or even the sale of commodities. For example, Elson and Evers (1997) found that girls in Uganda provided more labour for the production of vanilla, an export crop, than did boys.

A high demand for children's labour, for domestic or other work, tends to have adverse consequences for their education (enrolment, attendance, retention and completion). However, the gender-differentiated rates of boys' and girls' education are not simply

³ Education and health are dealt with in greater detail in separate evaluation reports.

related to the demand for children's labour. Rather, they are determined by a host of socio-economic factors, including the level of public and private investment in education which impacts upon the relative availability of resources for education. They are also influenced by society's perceived gains from the education of male versus female children. Although in most cases boys tend to receive more education than girls in Africa, it has been found

that in some pastoral communities, boys may actually get less education than girls (e.g., in Lesotho)^{xiv}.

2.4 WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY

Although African women participate in all sectors of the economy, their participation rate in the total labour force remains below that of men in Africa. Data from the International Labour Organization^{xv} shows that the women's share of the adult labour force range from 21 per cent to 50 per cent. The lowest rates are generally found in North Africa. For example, the economic participation rates for women over the age of 15 in Libya, Algeria and Egypt are 21, 24, and 29 per cent, respectively. The highest participation rates are found in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women's share of the labour force is between 45 and 50 per cent⁴.

2.4.1 SECTORAL PARTICIPATION RATES

There are sectoral variations in African women's participation in the market economy. Women are predominantly employed in the agricultural sector in Africa, especially in West, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. It is estimated that women account for 60 to 80 per cent of the agricultural labour force, and are responsible for 70 to 80 per cent of food production in Africa^{xvi}. However, women's employment in the industrial sector remains small in Africa, being less than 5 per cent for the majority of countries^{xvii}. In general, the percentage of women in the services sector falls between that in industry and agriculture.

Outside the agricultural sector, women's jobs tend to be concentrated in occupations like nursing and teaching. In the industrial sector, women's jobs incline to be the non-technical, such as secretarial jobs. Women are still under-represented in many occupations, especially in the scientific and technological fields.

2.4.2 PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

In all sectors, women are also severely under-represented in management and decision-making positions. They tend to advance slower than their male counter parts in their careers both in terms of the assigned responsibilities and wage increases. This can mostly be attributed to society's gender biases against girls and women in various spheres of life, including in education and training and in patterns of promotion and allocation of jobs in employment.

Another factor which is often cited for the slower professional advancement of women, relative to men as a group, is their need to take maternity leave, and other leaves associated with the care of infant children. Although at least 40 countries in Africa have laws or regulations which provide for maternity leave^{xviii}, the failure to fully value women's

⁴ See Table 8.4 for a listing of women's participation rates in each African country. The table also contains the economic activity rates by Sex in each African country.

reproductive functions in the market economy results in persistent biases against women's professional progress.

2.4.3 WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

As noted above, in the past 15 years, the fastest growing source of employment for women in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, has been the informal sector where women engage in a wide array of activities, especially trading. This has emerged as an

important strategy for women to contribute to family income at a time when the formal labour markets have been stagnant or growing very slowly. It has emerged as a strategy for dealing with women and men's increasing unemployment arising from the implementation of economic reform policies in Africa. However, for the most part, the informal sector suffers from a lack of systematic and regular support in the form of official policies and resources.

2.4.4 UNEQUAL ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Even as producers and entrepreneurs, it is widely acknowledged that African women have access to fewer resources than men. For example, relative to men, they tend to have lower access to land, to credit facilities, and to education and training facilities. Even in agriculture where women tend to predominate, credit and land ownership has historically been directed to the male head of the household, to the detriment of women, and, indeed, to the detriment of agricultural development in Africa.

2.4.5 GLOBALIZATION AND NEW INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Finally, on a more general note, there are two major phenomena which are changing the way in which economies function, and have profound implications for men's and women's current and future abilities to succeed in African and international economies: globalization and new information and communication technologies. Due primarily to low literacy rates and lack of training in information technologies, African men and women, especially women, are not able to take advantage of either of these changes to the same extent as the rest of the world. At the same time, African economies are being impacted upon by these changes.

For example, the nature of the job market is changing, albeit to a lesser extent in Africa than other parts of the world. Similarly, world capital markets have expanded rapidly in the past ten years, as the flow of capital around the world is facilitated by new information technologies and ever expanding multi-national companies. The absence of a critical level of the skills and infrastructure that would enable African women and men to participate in the new information economies, is a major impediment to Africa's growth. Not only is Africa not able to take advantage of the benefits of advancing technologies (e.g., cheaper, more effective communication), but it is not able to attract the foreign direct investment needed to support economic development. Instead, African economies continue to experience significant capital flight.

The above (Section 2) highlights the key characteristics of poverty in Africa, the gendered aspects of poverty and women's participation in African economies. This is, in part, the context within which the Beijing Platform is being implemented in Africa. The Fourth World

Conference on Women represents a continuation in a series of landmark meetings on women, their mid-decade reviews, as well as the subsequent recommendations arising from them. In addition, there have been other international platforms for gender equity, including the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Thus, the implementation of the Beijing Platform is, as the Dakar Declaration correctly points out, in many ways a continuation of efforts already begun. A key contribution of the Beijing Platform, however, is the articulation of the 12 critical areas for concern, each with specific objectives, strategies and recommended actions. The rest of the paper considers the implementation of the Beijing Platform in the two critical areas of concern: "Women and Poverty" and "Women and the Economy".

3.0 COMMITMENTS

3.1 GENERAL COMMITMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Various Declarations and Addresses made at the Fourth World Conference for Women expressed the commitments of Governments and Organizations of the United Nations system to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. In the Beijing Declaration, the 189 Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women committed themselves “to implement the... Platform for Action, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all ...policies and programmes”. Likewise, the statement of the UN Secretary General, which was read on the concluding day of the conference, expressed the commitment of the United Nations organizations to implement recommendations and ensure a coordinated system-wide response. Similarly, in his address at the Conference, the President for the World Bank pledged to commit the Bank’s “finance and energy as an advocate and a partner in the fight for equity.

Perhaps the most far-reaching was a commitment to promote an active and visible policy of gender mainstreaming in all the policies and programmes of governments and other actors, including the United Nations organizations. The mainstreaming of gender was advocated in each of the 12 critical areas of concern, including all those that support the efforts and needs of women in poverty, and the economic empowerment of women.

More specifically, for each of the 12 critical areas of concern, the Beijing Platform for Action specified strategic objectives and actions to be taken by Governments, multilateral financial and development institutions, and by national and international non-governmental organizations. It also noted that the primary responsibility for implementation rested with Governments, other actors having more of a supportive role.

3.1.1 COMMITMENTS FOR THE REDUCTION/ELIMINATION OF POVERTY

The Beijing Platform for Action identified the following four strategic objectives for the reduction or elimination of the burden of poverty on women:

- Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.
- Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women’s equal rights and access to economic resources.
- Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.
- Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty.

3.1.2 COMMITMENTS FOR THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Likewise, the following were the strategic objectives listed for the promotion of gender equality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources:

- Promote women’s economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
- Facilitate women’s equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;
-

- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income and grassroots women;
- Strengthen women's capacity and commercial networks;
- Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination;
- Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men

A commitment to implement the Platform meant, *inter alia*, a commitment to achieve the objectives above. Subsequent action plans demonstrated that Governments and other actors accorded varying importance to the various priorities identified in the Platform. However, an overwhelming majority included the reduction of poverty and the economic empowerment of women as national or institutional priorities.

3.2 COMMITMENTS BY AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS

In preparation for the Fourth World's Conference on Women, Ministers and representatives of African Governments in attendance at the Dakar Preparatory Meeting in November 1994 committed to support the implementation of the African Platform for Action^{xix}. In their Declaration they committed to:

“adopt the African Platform for Action as a renewed commitment by African Governments and as a blueprint to further accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in line with the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development; The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and declarations at international and regional levels;”

The declaration noted, among other things, that the African Platform for Action is Africa's position paper that reflects the Governments' commitments to integrate women's concerns in balancing political, economic, cultural and social policy options and harmonizing and reconciling economic growth with social equity.

3.2.1 NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

After the Beijing Conference, most African Governments made public declarations of support for the implementation of the Platform for Action. Notably, the specific National Action Plans^{xx} for the implementation of the Platform for Action further indicated Governments' commitments in most of the critical areas of concern, including the areas of poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women. For the most part, the Plans were prepared as official Government documents which outlined the priorities selected by Governments in implementing the Beijing Platform, as well as the proposed methods and institutional frameworks within which stated objectives were to be met. An evaluation of 48 National Action Plans and/or summaries of these plans^{xxi} submitted by African countries showed that 43 countries had included poverty reduction and/or various aspects of the economic empowerment of women among their national priorities. Box I presents a summary of sectors from the different National Action Plans which referred to the two critical areas.

Box 1. Summary of items of national action plans pertaining to the critical areas of concern of Women and Poverty and Women and the Economy.

- Algeria: To reach disabled women through social and vocational integration;
- Angola: Women and Poverty and education and training of women among national priorities
- Benin: Economic empowerment of women among national priorities;
- Botswana: 1st critical area for action: "Women and Poverty, including Women's Economic Empowerment"; also point out the special situation of female-headed households.
- Burkina Faso: Revise and adopt macro-economic policies, improve access to credit, provide access to employment, access to markets and strengthen women's commercial networks.
- Burundi: fight against poverty among national priorities
- Cameroon: improving the living conditions of women; economic empowerment of women among national priorities;
- Chad: economic empowerment of women and improving living conditions of women among national priorities;
- Comoros: poverty reduction and sustainable development among national priorities;
- The Republic of the Congo: indicated support for formal and informal sector employment. The plan noted that integrating women in development was part of the country's Economic and Social Plan for 1990 - 1994.
- Côte d'Ivoire: Economy and the eradication of poverty among national priorities;
- Egypt: the Second National Conference on Egyptian Women focused on policy formulation for the advancement of women in preparation for the five-year plan for economic development of 1997 - 2002. One of the recommendations from this conference was to promote employment and policies, making women effective in raising the productivity of Egyptian society.
- Equatorial Guinea: Women and the Economy among national priorities;
- Ethiopia: Poverty alleviation and food security among national priorities;
- Gabon: Poverty eradication and employment among national priorities;
- The Gambia: Poverty alleviation among national priorities;
- Ghana: Ghana draft Platform for Action indicates both Women and the Economy and Women and Poverty as priority areas; Have elaborated further objectives on the Strategic objectives outlined in the Platform for Action, and indicated who is responsible for attaining them.
- Guinea: the plan calls for the reduction of poverty and reinforcement of economic roles; Priority is also indicated for the establishment of credit lines and funds to support women's economic activities, including those of women in rural areas.
- Guinea Bissau: The economy and poverty eradication identified as national priorities;
- Kenya: Priority areas: social development; agriculture and food security; Labour force employment.
- Lesotho: Poverty reduction and employment among national priorities;
- Madagascar: fight against poverty and economic empowerment among priority areas;
- Malawi: Poverty alleviation and empowerment among national priorities;
- Mali: proposed the facilitation of women's access to credit. The plan indicates that economic promotion would take up 42.2 percent of the budget (11,135,678,000 cfa) to be allocated to the implementation of the National Action Plan. In Mali, UNICEF provided funding for water projects and small loans to women.
- Mauritania: Combating poverty identified as national priority;
- Morocco: proposed to alleviate poverty and facilitate the training of handicapped women; promote occupational integration of handicapped women.
- Mozambique: provide employment opportunities including self-employment, revise national statistical procedures to include women's work in the informal sector, revise concepts of poverty to include access to land and credit.
- Namibia: Gender, poverty and rural development; economic empowerment among national priorities;

Box 1. Summary of items of national action plans pertaining to the critical areas of concern of Women and Poverty and Women and the Economy.

- Niger: Improve the economic situation of women and eliminate poverty: apply macro economic policies that respond to the needs of women and revise legislation and administrative practices; establish cooperatives of women's groups and promote small and medium-sized enterprises run by women.
- Nigeria: Establish income generation activities, link formal banking sector, micro-credit initiatives, target women farmers, provide new skills for food processing, form trade groups; ensure equal access, maximizing women's potential;
- Rwanda: Poverty eradication and economic empowerment included among national priorities;
- Sao Tome and Principe: Poverty reduction identified among national priorities;
- Senegal: 1st area of priority out of five: Economic empowerment of women and fight against poverty; reduce the burden of domestic work on women and girls through the development and implementation of appropriate technologies.
- Seychelles: Human resources development and empowerment of women among national priorities;
- Sierra Leone: To advocate for increased and equitable resource allocation to the social sectors from government.
- Sudan: Poverty reduction among women and support of their economic empowerment.
- Swaziland: Poverty reduction especially in rural areas; promote labour-saving technologies, participation and equality.
- Togo: Economic empowerment and poverty eradication identified among national priorities;
- Tunisia: Strengthen economic potential: provide training, access to investment, financing and facilities for launching new projects; combat poverty: protect women with specific needs, encourage small projects by women.
- Uganda: One of four priority areas: poverty, income generation and economic empowerment: sets out strategic objectives as -
 - To uplift the economic status of women
 - To assist women improve household nutrition, achieve food security and improve household incomes through agricultural production and fishing
 - To improve women's access to financial services
 - To develop the entrepreneurial capacity of women
 - To reduce women's work load
 - To create a regulatory mechanism to promote gender equity and women's economic empowerment.
- United Republic of Tanzania: develop a women's bank from existing credit schemes; increase participation of women in decision-making and improve access to education and employment.
- Zambia: To allocate 10% of budget to encouraging women's income generating activities; improve women's access to credit; promote gender analysis of poverty.
- Zimbabwe: Establish a women's bank; provide credit; target marginalized rural and urban women; provide training and foster development of entrepreneurship.

3.3 SYSTEM-WIDE COMMITMENTS BY UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS

Subsequent to the Fourth World Women's Conference for Women, the United Nations system developed a coordinated System-wide Medium-term Plan for the Advancement of Women for the period 1996-2001^{xxii}. The elements of the plan reflect a more detailed elaboration of the commitments made by the United Nations family of organizations with respect to critical areas for action. It outlines the focus areas for subsequent actions in

implementing plans in support of the reduction of the burden borne by women in poverty as follows:

- emphasis on women in poverty and on the "feminization of poverty" keeping in mind

the growing recognition that empowerment of women is often key to raising the standard of living of the population as a whole and contributes to economic growth;

- increase in productive employment for women;
- focus on increased access to credit and other productive resources;
- focus on adequate social insurance and social security coverage of vulnerable groups, such as workers in the urban informal and rural sectors
- recognition of the links between the social, economic, legal and political spheres of action for effective action to eradicate poverty;
- complementarity between policy reform and direct intervention;
- effective, strategic alliances at the local, national and international level;
- the importance of efforts of preventing and alleviating the effects of natural disasters;
- research and action on gender dimensions of poverty;
- further research and data collection to expand understanding of the optimum policies and strategies needed for poverty alleviation among women;
- investigate the impact on women of globalization, macro-economic policies and economic restructuring with a special emphasis on trade policies and on increasing understanding of how various bodies, including women's organizations, can intervene in the process of policy making with positive effect;
- community development programmes, training and skill formation to assist poor women especially at grassroots level to find employment in the formal and non-formal sectors and to participate in small-scale enterprises;
- technical cooperation, advisory services and training will be major components of UN system activities in addressing this critical area of concern.

Likewise, for the area of Women and the Economy, the UN system-wide plan indicates the UN's commitment to support efforts which

- Enhance equality between women and men in the workplace,
- Increase employment opportunities for women, such as the support of women entrepreneurs.
- Increase the understanding of the conditions under which women work, both in remunerated and unremunerated work through research, data collection, analysis and dissemination. One key area in which the plan expressed further research was that of the implication, for male and female workers, of globalization, as well as studying the impact of macro and sectoral economic policies on men and women.
- Provide technical support to enhance Government's capacity to formulate gender sensitive employment policies, which, for example, enhance job creation for women, and foster the harmonization of work and family life for both women and men;
- Increase women's access to productive resources, especially micro-credit, training, technologies and markets.
- Support the needs and efforts of rural women (e.g. increase availability of appropriate technology to enhance food production).

Like the Platform for Action, the UN system plan emphasizes that the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Platform for Action rests with Governments, and that the International Community will support Governments to achieve their objectives.

3.4 COMMITMENTS BY SPECIFIC INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to the system-wide commitments by the UN to implement the Platform, individual organizations also expressed further commitments in policy statements and other announcements. These were also reflected in their plans and strategies for

implementing the Platform for Action, varying somewhat according to the particular mandates of the organizations. However, as overall priorities, many included the provision of support for the reduction of poverty and economic empowerment of women.

For example, the Food and Agricultural Organization's Plan of Action for Women in Development 1996 - 2001^{xxiii}, indicates the following objectives:

- To promote gender-based equity in the access to and control over productive resources.
- To improve rural women's productivity and enhance the benefits they derive from their contributions to agriculture and rural development.
- To reduce rural women's workloads and enhance their opportunities for remunerated employment and income.
- To enhance women's participation in decision- and policy-making processes

Each of FAO's Departments has defined its functions, vis-a-vis these objectives, as well as strategies and instruments for implementation.

Likewise, in a series of meetings in 1996, the President of the World Bank and Regional Vice Presidents affirmed the Bank's commitment to the Beijing Platform of Action and outlined the strategy to be followed in each Region to implement this commitment. The 1996 progress report of the World Bank^{xxiv} highlighted their commitment to reduce poverty among women by promoting the participation of grassroots women's groups in economic policy formulation. The proposed means of doing this was through poverty assessments, poverty action plans and participatory evaluation methods, country assistance strategies, integrating gender into adjustment operations and economic reform, and protecting public expenditures on social services during adjustment

Similarly, IFAD, UNIFEM and UNDP have also articulated their specific commitments and plans for implementing the Platform for Action. For example, capitalizing on the strategic overlap between the Critical Areas of Concern and the Sustainable Human Development (SHD) paradigm, the UNDP expressed their commitment to supporting the "economic empowerment of women, including anti-poverty strategies, sustainable livelihoods, and the impact of globalization". The Platform outlines one of UNIFEM's roles as "increasing options and opportunities for women's economic and social development by providing...assistance to incorporate women's dimensions into development at all levels"

Other UN organizations committed to gender equity in poverty eradication and the economic empowerment of women include the United Nations Scientific and Social Council (UNESCO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

4.0 PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1 GOVERNMENTS

The National Reports on the evaluation of the implementation of the Platform for Action outline the progress and achievements to date, most grouping these according to the critical areas of concern. While some of the reports separated the achievements in the areas of Women and Poverty and the Economic Empowerment of Women, there was a

tremendous overlap in the accomplishments reported for the two areas. The achievements are grouped together as in the following three categories:

- Policies and Institutional Frameworks.
- Activities
- Impact

4.1.1. POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

The relevant strategic objectives from the segments on Women and Poverty and Women and the Economy in the Platform of Action are listed in Box 2.

Box 2 Strategic Objective correlating with Women and Poverty and Women and the Economy.

Women and Poverty:

- Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty
- Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources

Women and the Economy.

- Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources
- Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;
- Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination
- Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men

Source: Platform for Action

Policies and institutional mechanisms which promote gender equity overall are likely to have positive implications for the reduction of poverty and the economic empowerment of women. Hence, it is relevant to consider progress made on policies and institutional mechanisms which promote gender equality overall, as well as those which specifically target poverty reduction among women and enhance women's economic empowerment.

The national reports indicate that there has been progress made in most countries in either setting up or strengthening policies and institutional mechanisms which promote gender equity. As indicated in the section on "National Action Plans", subsequent to the Beijing Conference, at least 48 countries developed National Action Plans for the implementation of the Platform. In some, these were developed as an integral part of the overall national

development plan (e.g., the Republic of Congo, Morocco). This often entailed consultations among various stakeholders within and outside government.

As a part of making the Plans operational, many countries established and/or strengthened Ministries or agencies directly responsible for promoting the interests of women (e.g., Botswana; Morocco, Nigeria). In some cases, these ministries or agencies had the specific mandate of elaborating and implementing strategies to support the needs of women and children in poverty (e.g., Angola). In addition, some countries have also passed affirmative action policies to promote access for women to decision-making bodies which determine political, social and economic policies (e.g., Eritrea, Ghana and Uganda).

At the sub-regional level, in 1997, Ministers of SADC unanimously approved the establishment of a SADC Gender Programme. In part, this entails the establishment of a standing committee of ministers responsible for gender affairs in the region, a Gender Unit in SADC consisting of at least two senior officers, and gender focal points in sectoral departments.

Legislation and policies which ensure increased access for women to productive resources have also been reviewed and/or passed. For example, laws and policies which promote women equitable access to land and credit have been passed (e.g., Ethiopia). In Kenya, there was a review of laws as they pertain to women. In addition, a gender database was established. Most countries have laws requiring non-discrimination in pay for the same work, although the persistence of inequality in women's and men's wages suggests that these laws are not being implemented effectively.

In South Africa and Zambia, research has been conducted in developing gender-sensitive budgets. Likewise, with the support of the World Bank, some research has been conducted to promote gender-sensitive economic reform policies (e.g., in Mali, Zambia, Ghana under the Structural Adjustment and Gender in Africa (SAGA I) initiative).

Overall, it appears that efforts to implement the Platform for Action in Africa have led to a greater acknowledgement of the importance of gender in policy making, and certainly a proliferation of declarations and plans to ensure gender equality. However, the evidence suggest that the extent to which substantive work in reviewing and actually adopting macro-economic policies which address the needs and efforts of women in poverty all over the continent is limited. Similarly, there is no evidence that there has been much change in the past five years with regard to policies and institutional mechanisms which impact upon women's working conditions, including the harmonization of work and family responsibilities for both women and men, in both the formal and informal sectors.

4.1.2 ACTIVITIES

Box 3 Strategic Objective correlating with Women and Poverty and Women and the Economy.

Women and Poverty:

- Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms
- Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminization of poverty

Women and the Economy:

- Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women;
- Strengthen women's capacity and commercial networks;

Source: Platform for Action

Subsequent to the Beijing Conference on Women, countries engaged in various activities designed to disseminate the Beijing Platform for Action across the public and private sectors. For example, in Nigeria, the Platform was translated into a number of local languages and was disseminated widely. The National Action Plans and Country Evaluation Reports from some countries suggest that there was a wide consultation with civil society in developing implementation strategies (e.g., Ghana, Guinea and Senegal).

Numerous programmes and projects addressed both the short-term and long-term needs of women in poverty, and the economic empowerment of women. Many of those related to the long-term reduction in poverty involved projects in education and health, and are addressed in the evaluation report on those two critical areas. Although this section does not focus on them, it is important to bear in mind that the strengthening of women's capabilities in all spheres, (education, health, economic, leadership and decision-making, etc.), all interact to support the reduction of gender-based poverty.

The most widely reported type of activity in support of the reduction of women's poverty and the economic empowerment of women was in the programmes and projects providing credit to women. Notably, women's NGOs are noted as being very significant in implementing projects which provided women's access to credit (e.g., Botswana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Kenya, Zambia). The support of multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors was also widely acknowledged. Some of these programmes enabled women without their own collateral to gain access to credit.

Other programmes also specifically targeted women. For example, there were those which were designed to create jobs and increase income-earning opportunities for women (e.g., in Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria). The National Report from Nigeria reported that in 1996, 1375 women's groups made up of 6875 women in 11 states were trained in income generating skills, marketing and rural economic management. Likewise, training sessions were conducted in such areas as credit and business management, and marketing.

Entrepreneurs from some countries (e.g., Ghana, Nigeria, and Ethiopia) participated in national and international fairs for women entrepreneurs. Two such fairs were the 1st and 2nd Global Women Entrepreneurs Trade Fair held in Accra (1996) and Addis Ababa (1998) in

which organization and implementation the African Centre for Women of the Economic Commission for Africa and UNDP were critically involved. Similarly, some attended the ECA/OAU All African Trade and Tourism Fair in Kaduna, Nigeria, in 1997. In the Seychelles and Uganda, financial and other assistance was provided to support women entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs also participated in the ECA/UNDP supported study tours to India and Sri Lanka. Others who participated in the follow-up meetings included leaders of associations of women entrepreneurs, representatives of technological and business support institutions. The tours and subsequent meetings were designed to build capacity and promote an exchange of information and increase collaboration among various actors in support of African women's businesswomen. Among the issues explored was the framework for establishing women's business centres and guaranteed funds.

Campaigns against poverty were held in some countries (e.g., in Morocco), and several countries instituted or strengthened programs to mitigate the effects of macro-economic policies on people living in poverty, especially women and children (Ethiopia, Ghana, Niger, and Nigeria, Zambia).

The national evaluation Reports and other documents indicate that there have been a wide range of projects and activities which have a bearing on reducing poverty and promoting the economic empowerment of women in Africa. However, there is a paucity of data to enable an assessment of the extent of change in the number, frequency and effectiveness of these programs in the last five years, and how these parameters may have changed from the years before the implementation of the Platform.

4.1.3 IMPACTS

Box. 4 Relevant Objectives in Critical Area of Women and Poverty, and Women and the Economy.

Poverty:

- The reduction or elimination of the burden of poverty on women

Economy:

- The promotion of gender equality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources

Source: Platform for Action

a) Reduction and Elimination of Poverty among Women

The evaluation of the overall impact of the implementation of the Platform for Action on the reduction or elimination of poverty among women is complicated by several factors. First, there is a general paucity of gender-disaggregated data to enable a definitive assessment for the continent as a whole, nor even for specific countries. Further, the Platform for Action has been implemented alongside other initiatives for poverty reduction and economic empowerment of women. Thus, it would be difficult to separate out the impacts of the Platform, per se, from those of other initiatives. None the less, it is possible to make some comments on the overall state of poverty in Africa in the last five years, bearing in

mind the growing evidence that the burden of poverty is increasing more rapidly among women and children, than men.

b) b) Poverty Reduction and Income Growth: 1995 - 1998

As indicated earlier, the incidence of poverty in Africa for both women and men is still very high. Further, the causes and manifestations of poverty have distinct gendered aspects and have particularly disturbing implications for children. These are also gender-differentiated.

At the 1995 Social Summit in Copenhagen, a goal was set to reduce the number of people living in poverty in Africa by half by the year 2015. According to the Economic Commission for Africa, this goal could be reached only if there was a 4 per cent reduction in the number living in poverty each year. This could be accomplished either through income growth or income re-distribution. Given an average annual population growth rate of 2.5 per cent, this would entail an average economic growth rate of at least 7 percent per annum. Similarly, The World Bank^{xxv} estimated that it would take income growth rates of at least 5 – 8 percent to reduce the number of poor in Africa.

Considering the income growth rates in Africa in the years since the launching of the Beijing Platform in 1995, unlike the decade from the mid-eighties to the-mid nineties when Africa's income was practically stagnant, Africa has experienced some moderate growth. According to the ECA's Economic Report on Africa for 1999, in the years from 1995 to 1998, Africa's GDP grew at rates higher than the continent's population growth rate. In 1998, GDP grew at the rate of 3.3 per cent, having risen from that of 2.9% in 1997.

However, this masks the regional disparities which exist on the continent. For example, in 1998, only the North and Central African sub-regions grew. The other three sub-regions (West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa) experienced declines in GDP growth rates. The oil-exporting countries as a group grew at the rate of 3.7 per cent in 1998, while the non oil-exporting countries as a group grew only at the rate of 2.9 per cent in 1998.

Thus, actual GDP growth since the mid 1990s, though positive, fell far short of the minimum levels required to reduce the number of people living in poverty in Africa. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that there has been any redistribution of incomes in favour of the poor. The ECA reports that "Africa has the second most unequal income distribution in the world next to Latin America". Thus, on the basis of GDP growth and income distribution, this demonstrates that poverty in Africa has not declined in the years since 1995, especially among women.

In conclusion, we note that various reports (e.g., national reports, and reports of various international organizations) indicate that a large number of activities have been carried out which were designed to promote poverty reduction or elimination. In addition many countries have expressed their commitments to engendering policies and programmes; some have even put in place structures to facilitate this. However, the rate of economic growth for the continent has been relatively low; population growth rates continue to be relatively high; many countries are burdened by high external debts. In addition, there is little evidence to suggest that Governments have restructured their overall resource allocation in favor of the needs and priorities of women. In this climate, it is unlikely that in

the past five years, there have been significant strides made in the reduction of poverty overall, especially that of women.

c) Gender Equality in Economic Structures, Policies and Resources

Gender-based inequity in assets (human capital, productive assets and social capital) still persist. The adoption of gender mainstreaming of all government policies and programmes, if fully implemented, is likely to improve the situation of gender imbalance in the sphere of social capital by increasing the number of women in leadership and decision-making. More gender responsive Government programmes are also likely to bring about a re-orientation of priorities, and subsequently in Government spending patterns.

However, gender-mainstreaming programmes are relatively new in Africa. Thus the jury is still out on whether or not the desired effects will be realized with regards to the promotion of gender equality in all spheres, including in reducing gender-based poverty and economic participation.

Agriculture remains the primary source of employment in Africa. In the agricultural sector, the proportion of women is nearly always higher than that of men, even though regional differences exist^{xxvi}. The share of women employed in industry remains low, less than 20 percent and as low as 2 percent in some countries (e.g., Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar).

One noticeable change which has continued to occur in employment patterns in Africa is the expansion of the informal sector (e.g., within and cross border trading, artisan manufacture and sales). For example, a survey conducted by the World Bank found that over 95 per cent in Ghana and 90 percent in Zambia of female workers are employed in the informal sector. This has been marked by the entrance of large numbers of women as the households have tried to compensate for the fall in men's real wages and employment. Women continue to be disproportionately employed in the informal sector, a sector which

still receives little structured support in terms of infrastructure (e.g., water, power, telecommunications). Workers in the informal sector also have relatively low access to credit.

Overall, the unemployment rate of women continues to be significantly higher than that of men. Thus, although some steps have been taken to pass legislation that increases women's access to productive and other resources in some countries (e.g., land and credit), women still continue to be at a disadvantage in terms of access and control of economic structures. Further, much work still remains in the harmonization of paid and unpaid work, and gender equity in the participation of women and men in both of these spheres.

4.2 SYSTEM-WIDE ACHIEVEMENTS BY THE UNITED NATIONS

At the system-wide level, perhaps the most noticeable result of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action has been the advocating of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes of the UN as a key strategy for achieving gender equality. The Report of the Secretary General to the Economic and Social Council in 1997^{xxvii} noted that discussions of women's concerns in the United Nations intergovernmental bodies had expanded beyond the more limited fora in which they used to be discussed before the Fourth World Conference on Women (e.g., within the Commission on the Status of

Women, and under the item “Advancement of Women” at the Economic and Social Council).

The report of the Secretary-General also notes that gender sensitivity is apparent in aspects of the work of regional commissions. For example, the Economic Commission for Africa adopted a resolution to strengthen women’s contributions to the second African Industrial Decade as an effort to mainstream gender. In addition to adopting policies and frameworks which promote the mainstreaming of gender in all policies and programmes, individual UN organizations have worked with Governments in numerous programmes to support the implementation of the Platform. This section reviews those in the areas of poverty and the economic empowerment of women.

4.2.1 POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

Many of the organizations of the United Nations have taken steps towards engendering their policies and programmes. For example, the UNDP has put in place a policy to allocate 20% of its programme resources for the advancement of women and has a goal of achieving gender parity internally by the year 2005.

Similarly, the World Bank’s Monitoring Unit, Poverty and Social Policy Department, reported that Country Assistance Strategies (CAS) which focus on gender issues have been developed for some countries (e.g., Madagascar, Mali, Senegal, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda). Country Assistance Strategies provide the strategic framework for the Bank’s lending and policy activities in a particular country. In Africa, it is now being proposed that all CAS indicate three priority actions to be taken which address the major constraints which women face.

The Bank has also initiated programmes which integrate gender into adjustment operations and economic reforms. Consultative processes have allowed for a greater involvement of NGOs (including women’s groups) in policy formulation at the country level. In Africa, consultative mechanisms have been established in Benin, Burkina Faso,

Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zambia.

At the very minimum, some organizations have at least issued statements or publications on a vision of gender mainstreaming within their organizations (e.g., the World Bank, UNDP, FAO). For example, the Special Programme of Assistance to Africa, in which the World Bank takes a leading role, has issued Status Reports on Poverty in Africa. In particular, the one for 1998 was devoted to exploring the inter-linkages between gender, growth and poverty reduction.

4.2.2 ACTIVITIES

The ECA African Centre for Women, has been a leader in the African region in supporting women entrepreneurs. They have supported and organized study tours for African businesswomen to Asia, as well as a major conference entitled: “African Women and Economic Development: Investing in Our Future”, on 28 April – 1 May 1998. The ECA also supported studies and meetings such as those for The Expert Group Meeting to Review Surveys on Women’s Access to and Control over Resources (especially land) in the various regions of Africa. In addition, the ECA organized sub-regional conferences to

assist Governments in the development of the national Action Plans for the implementation of the Platform for Action. At these meetings, they provided training on such aspects as the development of indicators for measuring progress in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The Secretary General of the UN appointed a Special Advisor on Gender^{xxviii}. The Special Advisor on Gender has led the efforts to liaise with organizations within the United Nations system. Organizations with which consultations have been held include the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the subject of developing a project on mainstreaming a gender perspective in multidimensional peacekeeping operations. In addition the Special Advisor has coordinated gender-focused activities with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) among others.

The Secretary General has appointed a focal point on gender issues in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). In keeping with the strategy of gender mainstreaming, adopted by the United Nations system, in November, 1998, the ITU adopted a resolution to include a gender perspective in their work. The focal point is supposed to spearhead investigations and analyses of the impact of telecommunication technologies on women and men.

Other organizations within the United Nations which have conducted numerous research, funding and other supportive activities in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action include the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), UNIFEM and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). One notable collaborative effort has been that of establishing the Women Watch, an internet site on the advancement and empowerment of women. Maintained by the DAW, the site is also supported by the World Bank, the UNDP and the Spanish National Machinery.

Increasing food security is a key aspect of poverty reduction. FAO, WFP and UNIFEM are among some of the organizations that have been working in the area of gender and food security in the Africa region both before and after the Beijing Conference. Their activities

include targeted provision of emergency food supply (WFP) to the provision of credit for the establishment of small scale farming operations (FAO, UNDP). There is a growing recognition of the importance of a gendered approach to the provision of this assistance, especially to vulnerable groups.

In Africa, UNIFEM has focused on strengthening gender expertise in both regional organizations, such as SADC, and national institutions. For example, UNIFEM has been working with SADC since the early nineties to build gender capacity through gender analysis training, national and regional internships, and creation of a fund to support pilot projects and action research that promote women's economic and political empowerment. Likewise, UNIFEM has been working with food sector planners, again providing targeted gender training. This has resulted in the incorporation of "gender language" in SADC's food security strategy.

UNCTAD has conducted studies on enhancing the participation of women entrepreneurs in developing countries. In Africa, the countries selected for the studies were Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Madagascar, Tanzania and Zambia.^{xxix}

The World Bank is supporting women-friendly technologies in many parts of Africa. For example, in Uganda and Kenya the Bank's support to agricultural research includes improved techniques for growing vegetables near houses; simple tools for weeding and harvesting that are designed for use by women, and improved food processing techniques. A consultative approach is being stressed at various stages of the project cycle.

The ILO, the World Bank and other UN agencies contributes both financially and in terms of human resources to the Special Programme of Assistance for Africa. The SPA has supported research and other efforts devoted to integrating gender concerns into economic reform policies in Africa. For example, the SPA supported the Structural Adjustment and Gender in Africa (SAGA) initiative, which promotes the training of Ministries of Agriculture in West Africa on how to incorporate gender dimensions into the selection, design and implementation of agricultural projects. Similarly, ILO is the lead agency for the SPA priority area "Poverty Reduction through the Promotion of the Informal Sector and Employment Generating Opportunities" whose interventions include the reform of macro-economic policies, government regulations and developing market networks between the formal and informal sectors, and the provision of physical and administrative infrastructures. The Report of the Secretary General^{xxx} states that "serious attempts are being made to maintain a gender focus in this component"

4.2.3 IMPACT OF UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

Through the provision of financial and technical support, the United Nations organizations have facilitated the growing awareness of the gendered nature of poverty and gender bias in the economy. For example, the UNDP support for the preparation of the National Action Plans and the Country Evaluation Reports of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This helped to build capacity and awareness of the Platform's objectives, strategies, implementation and intended outputs in all areas, including women's poverty reduction and the promotion of gender equity in economic activities. Further, they have also provided assistance to Governments for articulating the nature and extent of poverty in their countries^{xxxi}.

Through the creation of Women Watch, a web site on gender issues in development, the United Nations enabled increased access to information about women's issues. For example, on-line discussion groups were held on such topics as women's health and

violence against women. Further, information about the activities of the United Nations concerning the implementation of the Beijing Platform became more readily available. Although many women in Africa still do not have access to the internet, researchers, decision-makers and other advocates for women's empowerment were able to access and disseminate this information in a variety of formats, such formats as reports, as well as presentations to conferences (e.g., the ECA's landmark conference on "African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future 1998), etc.

Overall, there has been increased coordination among United Nations agencies concerning the implementation of the Beijing Platform within the UN. This has been facilitated by the appointment of the Gender Advisor, the Gender focal points and the efforts to reach a common ground in the manner in which the Platform was to be implemented, especially with respect to gender mainstreaming.

The ECA/UNDP support of women entrepreneurs has enabled participating businesswomen to increase their knowledge about business activities in Africa and other parts of the world. The creation of business centres, once accomplished could enable businesswomen to access more resources (e.g., technical and financial) in a systematic manner. However, that has yet to be implemented.

5.0 RESOURCES

5.1 GOVERNMENTS

Information on human and financial resources allocated to the implementation of the Platform, overall, and that for carrying out actions in each of the 12 specific areas of concern was not readily available. In their analysis of the implementation of the Platform to date (March, 1999)^{xxxii}, the Commission for the Status of Women noted that most action plans do not include budget proposals, or indicate sources of financing for the strategies and actions indicated. However, some country reports indicate that there was an increase in the amount of funding allocated to programmes that target women (e.g., Botswana).

In some countries, national machineries for women were established and/or strengthened (e.g., Botswana, Morocco and Nigeria). The Nigerian report notes that the upgrading of the National Commission for Women into a Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development has entailed additional female human resources, including a Cabinet Minister.

The reports indicated that, national and international financial and human resources were allocated to the development of the National Action Plans, as well as the evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. For example, the country report of Nigeria acknowledges the collaboration of UNDP with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in the preparation of the report.

Some country reports (e.g., Botswana; the Republic of the Congo), also indicate that various multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors (e.g., SIDA, UNDP, UNIFEM) provided support to the national gender programme and/or to NGOs working directly with women. However, there is no mention made of the extent of support.

However, there is not enough information available to assess the amount of resources which went into the overall implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the areas of poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women.

5.2 UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RESOURCES

Information on resources available for the implementation of the Platform specific to Africa was not available. However, some information was available about overall financial resources devoted to promoting gender equality, and those for poverty reduction programmes by some UN agencies.

At the 43rd session, the Commission on the Status of Women acknowledged the difficulties involved in estimating overall expenditure for the implementation of the System-wide Plan for the period 1990 - 1995. A UN study^{xxxiii} on "Technical Assistance and Women: from mainstreaming towards institutional accountability" noted that the estimation of expenditures on specific target groups is complicated and requires further efforts to develop methodology. It also pointed out the importance of commitment to monitor resource allocation for activities that address gender - both targeted and mainstream activities.

However, at the 40th session, the CSW reported that individual agencies, funds and programmes were taking steps to increase resources to support the implementation of the

Platform. For example, UNICEF aims to double its budget for education by the year 2000 with special emphasis on girls' education. UNESCO's Programme Budget for 1996-97 on women and gender increased by 22% over the previous biennium and ten new special projects had been designed in addition to the mainstreaming of gender, with budgets amounting to \$10 million. Similarly, the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly agreed to the creation of three new professional posts for the Division for the Advancement of Women to carry out its mandated activities, including those of coordination, monitoring and outreach activities in support of the work of CSW and CEDAW.

The CSW reported (40th session) that the World Bank committed to increase its lending programmes for women's health and education in developing countries, including devoting close to \$5 billion per year to projects that have specific actions to improve women's lives and to promote gender equality. UNIFEM's activities are devoted to the economic and political empowerment of women. From 1975 to 1995, their funding increased from US \$2 million to US \$16.7 million in 1995. UNDP has pledged to devote 20% of programme funding for gender programmes and has established a Poverty Fund to support the formulation of national strategies of poverty eradication in which the elimination of the feminization of poverty is a central goal. The WFP has a practice of setting quotas for activities aimed at reducing poverty in specified countries.

The FAO Plan of Action for Women in Development, indicates that the plan would be implemented through the use of regular and field programme resources to be stipulated in the various Division's biennial Programme of Work and Budget.

The African Development Bank provides financing for a wide range of development activities, including those which target women^{xxxiv}. For the period 1990 to 1998, the African Development Bank financed 134 projects, of which 122 projects specifically incorporated gender concerns.

5.3 OTHER INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

The Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (CGAP) was founded by Canada, France, the Netherlands, the United States, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the United

Nations Development Program/United Nations Capital Development Fund and the World Bank following the 1993 International Conference to Reduce Global Hunger. It was formally constituted on June 27, 1995 Other participants of the initiative include Australia, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and the Inter-American Development Bank.

The CGAP funding, initially pledged at US \$200 million, is dedicated to support the work of pioneer institutions in the field of micro-finance mainly in countries with a per capita income below US \$800. For example, eligible micro-finance institutions obtain support to build capacity of financial institutions targeted at the poorest groups of the society. Often, these are women. One of the central objectives of the program is to mainstream micro-finance within the World Bank.

"The Platform for Action calls upon Member States to support efforts to redirect and generate resources to support effective follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women". Accordingly, UN and other international agencies are attempting to mobilize new funding from sources such as the private sector, governments that have not contributed in

the past, foundations and individuals”. UNIFEM has developed a strategy to identify and attract non-traditional sources of funding, while enhancing its relationship with its traditional donors (both public and government).

6.0 MECHANISMS FOR MONITORING

Overall, the reported mechanisms for monitoring consist mainly of institutional reporting and coordinating mechanisms. For the most part, there is a severe paucity of data on actual indicators, and observations of changes in these indicators.

6.1 GOVERNMENTS

There also is not much information available on the mechanisms which were put in place by Governments to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the areas of poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women. Although most National Action Plans do identify the actors for the various activities proposed, there is little information about the institutional monitoring arrangements, and even less on the indicators for success.

However, some reports do note that following the Fourth World Conference for Women, Governments established or strengthened existing institutions responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the Platform.(e.g., Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco). Ghana points out the establishment of a “Gender Monitoring System” responsible to monitor the mainstreaming of gender into government sectors. Likewise, the Ethiopian Report states that the Women’s Affairs Office in the Prime Ministers Office has the mandate to coordinate and facilitate conditions to promote gender equity.

6.2 UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

For the UN system as a whole, the Commission for the Status of Women reports on the progress of the implementation of the Platform by the UN system to ECOSOC every year. Within each organization, there is usually a delegated unit for monitoring and reporting on the implementation, usually the gender focal points of the organizations. The Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality provides an opportunity for the sharing of ideas and collaboration on programmes which have implications for gender equality.

The Regional Commissions, such as the Economic Commission for Africa, have the mandate for monitoring the implementation of the Platform in the regions. The ECA also has the mandate for assisting member states in Africa by providing technical assistance, information and assisting in the evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Platform in Africa.

Some organizations have outlined in some detail their monitoring mechanisms. For example, the FAO Plan of Action for Women in Development outlines the organization’s structures and processes for monitoring and evaluating progress. A Steering Committee on Women in Development serves as a coordinating and advisory body on all Women in Development matters. This group meets at least once per year, and may meet more frequently as required. Members of the Steering Committee are drawn from the different departments in FAO, facilitating the coordination of the Plan’s implementation. In order to

accomplish their mandate of providing policy guidance and coordination, the Committee:

- monitors overall progress in implementing the FAO Plan of Action on Women in Development and assesses and reports on results and impacts;
- reports and provides advice to the Director General and the FAO senior management team;
- provides a forum to review and clarify inter-Departmental issues relating to the implementation of the Plan;
- ensure agreement and operational coherence between technical and administrative units regarding Organization-wide actions for monitoring and implementation of the Plan of Action.

In addition to its coordinating function, the Committee has the authority to convoke such activities as specialized studies and consultations with technical specialists when needed. Within the FAO, the Integration of Women in Development Service (SDWW) has the responsibility for external coordination, which involves, among other things, liaising with other UN agencies and donor governments regarding the implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Similarly, at the World Bank, the President has established a committee of Bank staff to report to him on Bank progress in defining and implementing gender policies every three months. Also, the World Bank formed an External Gender Consultative Group to foster dialogue on gender issues between Bank staff and NGOs.

The Monitoring Unit in the Poverty and Social Policy Department (PSP) of the World Bank reviews documents on all newly approved Bank projects. One of the criteria on which projects are rated is whether there are special project components intended to benefit women or whether gender issues are directly addressed. Country assistance strategies and economic and sector studies are also being rated for their incorporation of gender. These ratings are used mostly as internal monitoring tools.

Another example of a monitoring arrangement within the UN system is the Gender Sub-Group of the UNDG. The Division for the Advancement of Women is one of the members of the Gender Sub-Group which is chaired by UNIFEM. It constitutes a monitoring mechanism and enables the provision of input and guidance on gender issues to the UNDG.

7.0 RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF BEIJING FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

7.1 NATIONAL CONFERENCES

Many countries held national conferences to further discuss the implementation of the Platform for Action. For most, the National Plan for Action was formulated as a result of a series of conferences and consultations among Governments and civil society. As discussed earlier, the Plans identified which of the 12 critical areas of concern were considered National Priorities. Most also indicated the strategies and actions for reaching stated objectives, and also identified actors. The elaboration of the Plans facilitated subsequent implementation.

7.2 SUB-REGIONAL FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

Box 5 Results and Recommendations of Sub-Regional Follow-up Meetings

Dakar, Senegal^{xxxv}

25 – 27 November 1997

- Economic empowerment and poverty elimination identified among seven priority areas (para. 59); Responses to ACW questionnaires showed that 13 out of 15 national Plans of Action identified poverty elimination and/or aspects of economic empowerment of women as national priorities (annex 2)

Bangui, Central African Republic^{xxxvi}

22 – 25 June 1998

- Summary of national action plans showed that 4 out of 5 Plans identified elimination of poverty, improvement of women's lives and/or economic empowerment of women as national priorities.

Rabat, Morocco^{xxxvii}

27 30 October 1998

- Presentation of analysis of national Plans for Action; 6 out of 7 Plans identified poverty elimination and/or aspects of economic empowerment of women as national priorities (annex II);

Victoria, Seychelles^{xxxviii}

15 – 18 February 1999

- Responses to ACW questionnaire showed that 14 out of 16 countries named poverty reduction/elimination and/or aspects of economic empowerment of women as national priorities (annex III);
- Proposed: 6 strategies for accelerating women's access to land (para. 109);
- Discussions and recommendations concerning AIDS and economic empowerment of women (paras. 110 – 113).

7.3 REGIONAL CONFERENCES

African Centre for Women of the Economic Commission for Africa: African Women and Economic Development: Investing in our Future: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 28 April – 1 May 1998

- Discussed the importance of analyzing globalization and international trade agreements from a gender perspective.

- Discussed the need to understand and act on the interactions between gender, growth and poverty reduction as an avenue for improving Africa's growth prospects.

Recommended:

- Reduction of the burden of women's responsibility at the family level, through, *inter alia*, the introduction of appropriate technologies and better sharing of domestic tasks.
- Integrating gender concerns into national budgets and procedures;
- Promoting and protecting women's access to and ownership of land in rural areas;
- Facilitating women's access to markets, regional trade and scaling up women's enterprises. Governments should put in place flexible rules and regulations, simplified registration and procedures for women-owned businesses.
- Mobilizing resources for setting up community social security and insurance programmes.
- Promoting gender-sensitive credit schemes.

7.4 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

CSW acting as the preparatory committee for the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" Second Session. 15 – 19 March 1999.

- The Commission on the Status of Women proposed "globalization and the economic empowerment of women, especially poor women" among four broad issues which cut-across several critical areas of concern, and needed further analysis and proposals for action.

CSW 40th Session – 1996

- The critical area of women and poverty considered on the agenda. Re-iterated the importance of reducing poverty among women in enhancing gender equality.

ECOSOC 31st meeting 17 July 1997

- Vice-president of the Council introduced the draft agreed conclusions (E/1997/L.30) on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

ECOSOC 33rd meeting, 18 July 1997

- The Council adopted the draft-agreed conclusions.

Social Summit – Copenhagen, 1995

- A goal was set to reduce poverty in Africa by half by 2015.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

African Governments and international organizations expressed their commitments to implement the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action in their declarations and speeches at the Dakar and Beijing conferences on women. The subsequent National Action Plans showed their commitments further, outlining planned modalities for implementation. These Plans showed that an overwhelming majority of African Governments placed poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women among their top priorities for action.

Country assessment reports indicated that countries faced a number of constraints in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action in the areas of poverty reduction and the economic empowerment of women. Commonly reported constraints included the lack of financial and human resources; the debt burden, which constrains available resources for gender equity programmes; time constraints associated with women's fulfilment of their multiple roles; war and civil strife.

Despite these constraints, many countries reported progress in implementing some aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action. In the area of policies and institutional mechanisms, countries reported the establishment or the strengthening of national machineries for the promotion of gender equality. In addition, some countries reported the

adoption of the principal of gender mainstreaming for all public policies and programmes. Other countries also reported the passage of affirmative action laws to facilitate women's entry into decision-making bodies, especially parliament.

Country assessment reports also noted the launching of numerous programmes and projects designed to contribute to the reduction of poverty and to the economic empowerment of women. Commonly reported activities include programmes which provided credit to women, job creation activities, participation of women entrepreneurs in trade fairs and study tours; capacity building for women entrepreneurs and campaigns against poverty. Further, a few countries reported that research was conducted into gender-sensitive budgets. Many countries also indicated activities whose goal was to attain improvements in education, health, the environment, and political empowerment. All of these are long-term strategies for the reduction of poverty and are more fully covered in the companion reports on the other priority areas of the Platform for Action.

At the level of impacts, perhaps the most pervasive is the increased awareness of gender equity issues, especially the notion of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes of Government and international organizations. Little was reported by country reports on the amount of change in the level of women's poverty and economic empowerment. However, the relatively low income growth for the region, especially in sectors where women predominate, such as agriculture, suggest that poverty among women has not fallen in the years since 1995 when the Beijing Platform for Action was launched.

Notwithstanding the achievements to date, much still remains to be done. For instance, many of the plans for mainstreaming gender still need to be implemented. A notable gap also exists in the area of monitoring and the development of indicators for measuring progress. Not many countries gave detailed information on how they assess progress in the implementation of the various critical areas for action.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations to enhance further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action are drawn from National Reports as well as from the Workshop on the reduction of poverty and the economic empowerment of women, which was conducted at the Sixth African Regional Conference on Women.

- Continue show of political will for gender equality in all spheres
- Lobby for peace and elimination of conflict
- Put resources into development of mechanisms for mainstreaming gender into all aspects of policies and programmes of government and international organizations; there should be gender auditing at all levels
- Implement policies and programmes which promote overall economic growth
- Continue support for women in poverty and their participation in economic activities
- Include gender equality in poverty reduction strategy papers; involve women in the development of poverty reduction strategy papers
- Involve poor women more in articulating, implementing and monitoring programmes for the reduction of poverty; support poor women at the grassroots level
- Support poor women in pastoral and hunter-gatherer communities
- Promote activities for greater inter-country trade and collaboration among women
- Support women in gaining greater access to markets
- Strengthen national and regional organizations to register and collect data on women entrepreneurs
- Support the training of women in commercial food processing
- Support the development of appropriate technologies
- Lobby for debt forgiveness
- Increase training for women in global, trade and macro-economic issues; include women on delegations to international meetings such as the WTO
- Involve women in debt auditing
- Invest in information and communication technologies; establish tele-trade centres
- Continue provision of credit to poor women; credit should go hand in hand with training and capacity building to enable better management of loans and businesses
- Promote women's education to promote long-term poverty reduction
- Establish benchmarks and indicators for monitoring poverty in the next 12 months
- Lobby governments to increase budgets for agriculture and reduce budgets for defence
- Investigate issues of child labour and enforce ILO agreements
- Support women in mining and promote girls education in mining
- ADB sets aside an allocation (25%) of resources for lending to women
- National labour laws to be revised to make them gender neutral and respect women workers rights.

NOTES

ⁱ United Nations. Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995*. New York 1996.

ⁱⁱ Ibid. p47

ⁱⁱⁱ Economic Commission for Africa. *Economic Report on Africa: The Challenge of Poverty Reduction and Sustainability*. 1999. Addis Ababa, 1999. E/ECA/CM.24/3

^{iv} Ibid. para. 78

^v Appleton 1996; Lampietti 1998; Quisumbing, Haddad and Pena 1995; Whitehead 1998; Woldemariam 1998 – in Blackden C. Mark and Chitra Bhanu (1999) in Blackden C. and Chitra Bhanu (1999). World Bank Technical Paper No.425. *Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction: Special Programme of Assistance for Africa, 1998 Status Report on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington D.C.; and United Nations Development Programme (1997). *Progrès dans la lutte contre la pauvreté en Afrique*. New York.

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} United Nations. Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration (1996). *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 4-15 September 1995*. New York . para. 48

^{viii} Blackden C. Mark and Chitra Bhanu (1999). World Bank Technical Paper No.425. *Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction: Special Programme of Assistance for Africa, 1998 Status Report on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington D.C.

Economic Commission for Africa (1999). *Economic Report on Africa 1999: The Challenge of Poverty Reduction and Sustainability*. Addis Ababa.

United Nations Development Programme (1998). *UNDP Poverty Report 1998: Overcoming Human Poverty*. New York.

United Nations Development Programme (1997) *Progrès dans la lutte contre la pauvreté en Afrique*. New York.

^{ix} Blackden C. Mark and Chitra Bhanu (1999) World Bank Technical Paper No.425. *Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction: Special Programme of Assistance for Africa, 1998 Status Report on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington D.C

^x Ibid. Section 1.6

^{xi} United Nations Development Programme (1997) *Progrès dans la lutte contre la pauvreté en Afrique*. New York.

^{xii} UNFPA in Blackden C. Mark and Chitra Bhanu (1999) World Bank Technical Paper No.425. *Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction: Special Programme of Assistance for*

Africa, 1998 Status Report on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington D.C. Section 2.18

^{xiii} Ibid. Section 2.18

^{xiv} Ibid. Section 2.13

^{xv} ILO STAT Working Papers Nos 1996-1, 1996-2, 1996-3, 1996-4 and 1996-5; and Yearbook of Labour Statistics (Geneva, various years up to 1996), and national statistical reports in UN Statistics Division website: WWW.un.org/depts/unsd.

^{xvi} ECA “ A Study of the Economic Empowerment of Women and their Role in the Socio-Economic Development of Africa”, Addis Ababa, August 1996

^{xvii} ILO STAT Working Papers Nos 1996-1, 1996-2, 1996-3, 1996-4 and 1996-5; and Yearbook of Labour Statistics (Geneva, various years up to 1996), and national statistical reports in UN Statistics Division website: WWW.un.org/depts/unsd.

^{xviii} Ibid.

^{xix} *Report of the Preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. Dakar, November 1994. (E/CN.6/1995/1)*

^{xx} The texts and/or summaries of some of the National Action Plans from African countries are available on-line at www.un.org/womenwatch

^{xxi} Summaries of some of the national action plans were made by the Division for the Advancement of Women, and are available on their website (WWW.un.org/womenwatch); Further, in evaluating 48 National Action Plans, the ACW indicated which of the 12 critical areas for action were identified as national priorities.

^{xxii} Proposed System-wide Medium-term Plan for the Advancement of Women 1996-2001 *Commission on the Status of Women - Fortieth Session. Report of the Secretary General. E/CN.6/1996/CRP.2. 1996. 11-22 March 1996*

^{xxiii} FAO Plan of Action for Women in Development 1996 - 2001. Report of the FAO Conference - 28th Session. 20 October - 2 November, 1995.

^{xxiv} Implementing the World Bank's Gender Policies. Progress Report No. 1, March 1996.

^{xxv} Blackden, M. and C. Bhanu. *Gender, Growth and Poverty Reduction. Special Programme of Assistance for Africa, 1998 Status Report on Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. World Bank Technical Paper no. 428; 1999.*

^{xxvi} Ibid.

^{xxvii} Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system. *Report of the Secretary General. Economic and Social Council substantive session for 1997 coordinating segment. 30 June - 25 July, 1997.*

- ^{xxviii} Report of the Secretary General. CSW 42 Session, 1999. *Follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. New York
- ^{xxix} Report of the Secretary General. *Development of Africa: Implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council, specifically the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa*. Geneva, July 1999, para. 31.
- ^{xxx} Report of the Secretary General. *Development of Africa: Implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council, specifically the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa*. Geneva, July 1999. Para 19
- ^{xxxi} United Nations Development Programme (1998). UNDP Poverty Report: Overcoming Human Poverty. New York. P. 28 – 30.
- ^{xxxii} Follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Commission on the Status of Women. Forty Third Session, *Report of the Secretary-General. Addendum: Update of the synthesized report on national action plans and strategies for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action*. March 1999. E/CN.6/1999/2/Add.1
- ^{xxxiii} United Nations, 1995 *"Technical Assistance and Women: from mainstreaming towards institutional accountability"* (E/CN.6/1995/6)
- ^{xxxiv} African Development Bank submission in response to a questionnaire sent in preparing for this report, 1999.
- ^{xxxv} Economic Commission for Africa. *Sub-regional follow-up meeting on the implementation of the African Platform for Action*. 25 – 27 November 1997, Dakar, Senegal.
- ^{xxxvi} Commission Economique pour l'Afrique. *Réunion sous-régionale pour l'Afrique Centrale, préparation à la Conférence quinquennale de suivi de la mise en œuvre des Plate-formes d'action*. Bangui, République Centrafricaine, 22 – 25 Juin 1998.
- ^{xxxvii} Economic Commission for Africa. *Sub-regional follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platform for Action – North Africa*. Rabat, Morocco, 27 – 30 October 1998.
- ^{xxxviii} Economic Commission for Africa. *Sub-regional follow-up meeting on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action – Eastern and Southern Africa*. Victoria, Seychelles, 15 – 19 February, 1999.