

Workshops Outcome

WORKSHOPS OUTCOME

Workshop 1. Women and Poverty and Economic Empowerment

Facilitators: - Marguerite Monnet
- Beth Mugo

Presenter: - Perpetua Katepa Kalala

In presenting the paper on *Women and Poverty and Economic Empowerment*, the consultant underscored the extent of poverty on the continent with approximately 44 per cent of population in Africa living below the poverty line of \$US39 per capita per month. However, there is some regional disparity. In sub-Saharan Africa, 51 per cent of the population live below the poverty line of \$US34 per capita per month, while in North Africa, 22 per cent of the population live below the regional poverty line. Women comprise a disproportionately larger share of the poor than do men. The presentation recalled the objectives in the Beijing Platform for Action for addressing poverty reduction among women and their economic empowerment.

Objectives

These objectives covered the following areas:

Objectives in the area of poverty reduction

- Formulate macro-economic policies and development strategies which support women in poverty;
- Adopt laws and administrative practices for equal rights and access to resources;
- Promote women's access to savings and credit mechanisms as well as institutions;
- Promote gender-based methodologies, including the availability of disaggregated data; and
- Undertake research to address the feminisation of poverty.

Objectives in the area of economic empowerment

- Promote women's economic rights and independence;
- Ensure women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade;
- Business services, training and access to markets;
- Strengthen women's capacity and commercial networks;
- Eliminate occupational segregation and discrimination; and
- Promote harmonisation of work and family responsibilities for both women and men.

Progress and achievements

Given the inter-linkages between these two areas of focus - poverty reduction and economic empowerment – it was important to have a combined assessment with regard to the progress and achievements made in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The progress and achievements to date were summarised at three levels: (a) policies and institutional frameworks, (b): programmes and projects activities, and (c) at the level of impact.

Institutional frameworks: Countries reported that they have established and strengthened institutional mechanisms for gender equality, increased the political participation of women and established women's institutional machineries such as ministries, desks, and commissions. They have adopted legislation and policies to increase women's access to resources and have conducted research into gender-sensitive budgets. SADC was cited as an example of an institution that has started a subregional gender programme.

Activities: Some governments have ensured the provision of credit, job-creation and increased income-earning opportunities; support for women entrepreneurs to participate in trade fairs and study tours; campaigns against poverty; capacity building and skills training to increase income-earning capability and enhancement of food security.

Impact: Greater awareness of issues surrounding the gendered nature of poverty has led to programmes for poverty reduction targeted at women. However, the paucity of data or benchmark indicators, particularly of disaggregated data, has been a major constraint in measuring impact. A global assessment of growth figures from 1995 to 1998 did not indicate the rate of reduction in poverty that would enable attainment of the goal set at the 1995 Social Summit, which was to reduce poverty by half by 2015.

Constraints: The constraints that were mentioned in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action included: lack of resources, women's multiple roles, which prevent them from fully participating in development programmes, the national debt burden, war and civil strife.

Emerging issues: In the next five years, emphasis should be placed on:

- Policies and programmes that show increased political will;
- Enhanced gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes;
- Implementation of programmes for economic growth;
- Continued support for women in poverty and women's participation in the economy;
- Involvement of poor women in articulating, implementing, and monitoring programmes to reduce poverty;
- Promotion of inter-country trade and collaboration among women;
- Increased training for women;
- Establishment in particular, of benchmarks and indicators for monitoring, as an early priority in the next 12 months; and
- Identification and implementation of effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Outcome of the workshop

1. At the level of institutional mechanisms

Strategies

The workshop identified a number of strategies that had been put in place to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, including the following:

- Creation of institutional committees on access to land by women, for instance in Zambia;
- Creation of social safety nets and funding;
- Job creation to young graduates in Algeria;

- Establishment of national credit institutions that take gender dimensions into account, for example, in Burkina Faso and Burundi and, further developed in Madagascar.

Constraints

A number of constraints were identified at the level of institutions, which impede implementation of the Plan of Action. These included the following:

- Insufficient funds allocated to sectors in which most women are employed, for instance, in the agriculture and informal sectors; and
- Lack of gender sensitivity at the level of programme officers.

Recommendations

The workshop came up with a number of recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action, which included the following:

- Greater involvement of civil societies in the design of policy, the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects;
- Transparency and greater accountability of government in resource use;
- Strengthening of national capacities (including women's organisations) for international negotiations, e.g., at the World Trade Organisation (WTO);
- Harmonising positions among African countries at international negotiations (e.g., at WTO);
- Debt cancellation and allocation of ensuing resources for poverty reduction.

2. At the level of activities

Strategies

The workshop identified a number of activities that had been undertaken in various countries, for example:

- Encouraging women to go into commercial food processing;
- Providing credit facilities particularly to women;
- Job creation;
- Establishing mutual banks and solidarity funds;
- Engendering or genderizing national budgets;
- Adopting systematic affirmative action to facilitate women's participation in decision-making;
- Strengthening regional networking institutions among experts of gender approaches; and
- Facilitating women's access to training.

Constraints

Despite these efforts, a number of constraints were identified by the workshop, including the following:

- High interest rates charged for micro-credit;
- Short duration of loans;
- Inappropriate micro-financial systems;

- Disruption of household financial arrangements;
- Lack of capacity to manage the loans;
- Lack of adequate land tenure, security, and services for the urban poor;
- Consequences of HIV/AIDS; and
- Consequences of war and conflict.

Recommendations

Infrastructure and finance

- Improve national infrastructural facilities, e.g., roads, information networks, water, electricity;
- Create funds designed to improve general infrastructures such as health centres, schools and child-care centres;
- Develop programmes to enhance land tenure and security and appropriate infrastructure and services for poor urban dwellers, addressing both issues of poverty alleviation and economic empowerment;
- Create specific funds for developing women's income-generating activities;
- Develop micro-financing systems that are adapted to local needs, and that an effectively be used in poverty alleviation, for example, for improving indigenous credit systems such as tontine;
- Establish an African Bank for Women; and
- Increase women's access to formal banks.

Access to information, technology and markets

- Adopt national practical strategies that promote the access of rural women to information and communication and functional literacy;
- Subsidise agricultural inputs including fertilisers and implements;
- Adopt appropriate technology to alleviate women's workload;
- Encourage the sharing of existing indigenous technology among different African countries;
- Promote access to markets at the intra-African and international levels;
- Devise coping mechanisms to enable women to better manage their time; and
- Reduce military budgets and re-allocate these resources to poverty alleviation, health and education.

Workshop 2: Inadequate Access of Women to Education, Training, Science and Technology

Facilitators: - Thokozile Ruzvidzo
- Chaabouni Habiba

Presenter: - Khardiata Lo Ndiaye

The workshop agreed that education was a key factor in the growth and well being of any individual. It was not only a fundamental right of women, but was also a powerful tool for integration of women into the social, economic and political spheres. Yet, Africa had the lowest literacy rate in the world, at 50 per cent. In 1990, the adult literacy rates in sub-Saharan Africa were 61 per cent for men and 41 per cent for women.

African governments and civil society have committed themselves to ensuring gender equality in national policies and programmes, in universal primary, secondary and tertiary education, and in adult literacy. There is also a strong commitment to attaining gender equality in enrolment levels, in both formal and non-formal education, by the year 2000.

Similar enabling commitments have been made by the Organisation of African Unity, the Conference of African Ministers of Education, the United Nations System and UNESCO, often with special reference to the education of girls and women in Africa, and their scientific, technical and professional training.

The Beijing Conference might not have appeared to be the genesis of a remarkable phase in the development of education. It was, in fact, an extraordinary source of inspiration for a new perspective on the education of women and girls, and a new frame of reference. The mid-term review of its implementation revealed that real progress has been made in this area, although the follow-up mechanisms set up at national, subregional and regional levels have not worked optimally. The process has underlined that the education of women and girls, greater participation of women in development programmes and projects, and definitely gender equality in education, are not only some of the best ways to empower women, but are also an investment in the future of Africa.

Evaluation of the programmes and mechanisms put in place to address gender equality in education and training

Progress

A number of countries reported progress in elaborating strategies and implementing programmes to ensure gender equality in education. Examples included:

Adoption of new policies in education and training, with specific policy intentions on girls' education and its prioritisation, especially at primary level;

- Establishment in some countries of universal, free, and in some cases, compulsory education at primary and other levels;
- Deliberate recruitment of female teachers to serve both rural and urban areas;

- Implementing flexible programmes in rural areas to encourage greater enrolment and retention of girls;
- Establishing rural schools closer to communities;
- Providing incentives and facilities such as boarding, transportation, free uniforms, nutritional packages, and reduced school fees to girls in special circumstances, and awarding scholarships and bursaries to retain girls in schools;
- Revising the curricula and materials, removing sexist stereotypes and introducing gender sensitivity;
- Decentralisation of school management to local councils for more efficiency, and to serve community interest and needs better;
- More dynamic partnerships between governments, NGOs, local communities (including parents) and donors have played a key role in gender mainstreaming;
- Strengthening networks of schools to get them closer to communities; and
- Allowing teen-mothers and pregnant girls to continue their education.

Constraints

Whilst varying from country to country, a number of constraints were noted as impacting on programme implementation: Many countries reported:

- A double gap between policy adoption and implementation and between policies and community needs;
- Socio-cultural constraints militate against girls' education, such as the prioritisation of boys' education;
- Lack of human and financial resources, infrastructure and facilities;
- Lack of well-qualified teachers in some countries, especially in the sciences;
- Difficulty in recruiting female teachers, especially for rural schools;
- High dropout rates of girls, due to pregnancy, early marriages and domestic-chore demands at home; and
- Poverty as a hindrance to participation of women and girls in education and literacy programmes.

Recommendations

In addition to the obvious overall imperative of allocating more national resources to education, and establishing free and universal education, the following recommendations were made:

- Reduce the workload of women and girls to enable them to continue their education;
- Increase co-ordination and partnership among all agents involved in education: government, local communities, NGOs, religious missions and donors;
- Encourage local communities to raise funds to support schools;
- Create more attractive incentives for teachers;
- Introduce gender-sensitisation programmes for teachers;
- Revise curricula and training materials to remove gender biases, and increase their relevance and sensitivity to community needs;
- Establish bursaries and scholarships, particularly for girls;
- Remove restrictions to re-admission of teen-mothers and pregnant girls;
- Raise the awareness of communities on the importance of girls' education;
- Foster women's adult literacy programmes; and
- Enlarge the diversity of training programmes on income generation.

Women's access, participation and visibility in science and technology

Progress

Various countries have recognised that the participation and visibility of women and girls in the sciences is marginal. They have been increasing their emphasis on policies and programmes that accentuate the teaching of science and technology in schools. In some countries, the numbers of girls going into the scientific field have increased. To achieve this, activities carried out included:

- Guidance and counselling that orient girls to the scientific field;
- Allocation of accommodation, especially at university level, to girls studying science;
- Establishment of women's associations in the sciences to provide support and networking for women;
- Training of women in special scientific areas, such as computer science.

Constraints

However, the successes reported in this area were limited. The workshop pointed to major factors that hinder gender mainstreaming in science and technology:

- Lack of necessary human and financial resources, infrastructure and facilities;
- Lack of gender-sensitive teaching methodologies, which often result in discouraging girls from taking up scientific careers;
- The periods spent in training are relatively long for girls, and there is no guarantee of employment; and
- Science is still seen, in several communities, as an area for boys and not girls.

Recommendations

Among the steps to take to make the field of science and technology more attractive and accessible to women are:

- Revising the curricula and educational materials at all levels to remove the stereotypes that discourage women from choosing technical professions, and to increase their relevance to job opportunities;
- Encouraging industrial and other employers to prioritise the employment of female graduates;
- Monitoring the progress of women graduates in science and technology, to assist them in their career development;

- Establishing guidance and counselling programmes for girls to enable them to make career choices at an early stage;
- Promoting successful role models of women in science and technology;
- Sensitising girls, teachers and parents in particular to the benefits of technical careers; and
- Developing indicators to evaluate gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in science and technology.

Conclusions of the workshop

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, education of the girl-child was an important issue. Education was a key tool for the empowerment of women at all levels of society and in the social, political and economic sectors. The Extraordinary Summit of the OAU on Education should include the issues of gender and education.

Therefore, countries should:

- Set gender-based targets, develop gender indicators and provide gender-disaggregated statistics for evaluating the extent to which policies and programmes have led to the empowerment of women by the year 2005.
- Address the gap between the educational needs of the population, and the provision and quality of education, with special reference to the training of employable young people.
- Advance women's education as essential for increasing their economic and political integration.
- Encourage South-South co-operation and networking in science and technology.
- Increase women's participation in decision-making in Education Ministries.

Workshop 3: Women, Culture, the Family and Socialisation

Facilitators: - Miriam K. Were
- Fatou Sow

Presenter: - Khardiata Lo Ndiaye

The workshop on *Women, Culture, the Family and Socialisation* was held on 23 and 24 November 1999 at ECA-UNCC in order to review the progress made in the implementation of this area of concern in the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. It also made recommendations for future actions. The workshop was chaired by Dr. Miriam Were and Prof. Fatou Sow as the facilitators. Ms. Wambui Karanja and Mr. Pierre Demba were nominated as rapporteurs. The workshop considered the document entitled, "*Women's vital role in culture, the family and socialisation*" which is annexed to the present report. The discussion was in two main parts. The first part dealt with family, culture and gender relations while the second part focussed on issues specific to the family.

Culture, family and gender relations

In this first part, the workshop examined the socio-cultural and economic context within which African women were playing their vital role. It also examined the commitments of African governments, and of international and regional organisations to the implementation of the strategies of the Beijing Platform, the progress made and the constraints encountered.

The meeting recognised that the family as the basic unit of society was the most critical environment for socialisation; and was a space of power relations (domination, conflict, negotiation, etc.) between men and women, parents and children. Therefore, the family should promote gender equality.

The debates also covered various phenomena that influence relationships between men and women in African societies and their perceived gender roles. They further examined the socio-cultural values, both positive and negative, which affect family structures and relations.

Among the constraints discussed were the stresses from increasing urbanisation; the crisis of modernisation; the culture of consumption; political crises and armed conflicts; widespread and acute poverty; and the hegemony of male culture and of gender-based unequal power relationships. The prevailing ideology was reinforced through language, cultural values, and legal systems that reinforce male domination and lead to the subordination and submission of women. Therefore, even though women played a crucial role within the various forms of the African family and society, they remained at large, powerless. Some cultural practices were also blamed as some of the causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). These included polygamy, inheritance of widows by male relatives of the late husband, and sexual subordination, among others. Women should get information about their rights in the family and be empowered to negotiate and communicate within the family

Family and society

In discussing the relationship between society and family institutions, five key areas emerged as needing special attention. These were:

1. National environment and legislation;
2. The relationship between men and women within families;
3. The critical role of women in perpetuating oppressive practices against other women;
4. Empowerment of youth for effective living, preparation for marriage and parental responsibility; and
5. Child rearing and socialisation.

Many speakers pointed out that in order to deal effectively with issues of subordination of women in society, it was necessary to examine the structures and above-mentioned institutional arrangements that perpetuate female subordination as expressed in the five areas.

It was noted that a national environment supportive of the advancement of women should consist of peace and stability for sustainable development. It should have supportive laws, with provisions for affirmative action in favour of women, as their condition affect the family, the workplace, and economic and political spheres.

With respect to gender relations within families, the meeting agreed on the importance of sharing responsibilities within the family, based on the gender ideology in which women are not disproportionately burdened. The relationship between spouses has been negatively impacted by the rapid movement of people from rural communities to urban centres, which still carry forward rural-based relations. Furthermore, women lose the limited power they exercised in the rural setting and important supportive social networks.

Additionally, the recent unprecedented socio-economic crises in many African countries have exerted enormous pressure on the institution of the family. The meeting felt that there was need to educate both men and women about their responsibilities and what they should expect of marriage.

Several delegates pointed out, that many men, affected by the crisis, were no longer able to contribute towards the maintenance of their families. They were facing a situation that should be addressed if family stability and integrity are to be ensured. In many instances, men have not been given an opportunity to address issues that impact negatively on the family or those that promote their own well being.

While the ideology of the extended family has remained the norm in many societies, the nuclear family has also gained momentum but not without many unresolved contradictions that need to be addressed.

The issue of sexuality was important for the family because sexuality was not only about reproduction. Sexuality was also about pleasure and communication between partners. However, sex relations were often relations of domination based on gender and often expressed in rape, incest, sexual harassment and other forms of gender violence.

Societies therefore needed to explore ways of transforming those relations of domination to relations of equality and caring.

In discussing women's role in perpetuating negative practices on other women, e.g. supporting FGM, early marriage, mistreatment of widows, etc., it was pointed out that women needed to be made aware, especially through women's organisations, of the fact that they have internalised values of male domination that lead to their continued subordination.

Parenting and socialisation posed important challenges that include challenges specific to the young; differential socialisation that perpetuates the ideology of female inferiority; division of labour on strict gender lines and major discrepancies between family values and those of education institutions regarding issues of gender equality.

It was felt that if families succeeded in inculcating and helping children to internalise values of gender equality, this would be the answer to transforming societies towards gender equality. Communities needed to explore child-rearing patterns such as organised group day-care arrangements under adult supervision, rather than leaving young children in the care of other children.

It was acknowledged that the media plays an important role in disseminating ideas and philosophies in societies. In Africa, partnership was needed between the media and women, so that media reports about the advancement of women are positive and supportive. This support should promote gender equality and refrain from perpetuating negative stereotypes of women. The workshop agreed that equality is imperative for long-term, sustainable development, in the interest of the entire society and not only for "the good of women".

The workshop ended on a positive note by requesting national governments and development partners at all levels to provide strategies and programmes designed to enhance the stability of the family institution. Since culture was dynamic, there would be opportunities for positive change. In this respect, family well being must be included in the national development agenda.

Recommendations

- Peace and stability are prerequisites for the sustainability of the well being of societies and families. These prerequisites should be promoted in all countries.
- The negative cultural attitudes and harmful traditional practices that hinder women's participation in the political and public spheres must be removed, through education in all social institutions. In particular, women need to be made aware, especially through women's organisations, of the fact that they have internalised values of male domination that lead to their continued subordination.
- The States need to provide the legal framework – in family codes – that establishes equality between men and women and protects the rights of all family members.
- There should be sharing of powers, tasks and responsibilities within the family for more equality between men and women.
- Given the isolated nature of families in urban communities, building of solidarity and structures designed to enhance family stability and/or social support systems, especially to newly married couples, needs attention.
- Governments should provide strategies and programmes designed to promote life-enhancing stability and strengthening of family institutions.

- Research on the African family should be promoted, including family dynamics with regard to culture, HIV/AIDS, economic well being, the care of the disabled, the aged, etc.
- The role of the media in promoting gender equality is critical.

Workshop 4: Women's Legal and Human Rights

Facilitators: - Gladys Mutukwa
- Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson

Presenter: - Jean Kamau

The workshop on the critical area of concern entitled “*Women's Legal and Human Rights*” had more than 150 participants from governments, NGOs, regional and sub-regional organisations, UN agencies and bilateral and multilateral partners.

The discussions were preceded by the Consultant's summary presentation, which highlighted the fact that although African governments had committed themselves to implement all the human rights instruments, including CEDAW and CRC, that they had ratified, many women faced additional barriers to the enjoyment of their human rights. African women's human rights were clarified to include rights to, *inter alia*:

- Security in the private and public sphere;
- Access to resources at the family, community and state levels, including right to credit;
- Participation in decision-making, leadership and governance at the family, village, community, state, subregional, regional and international levels;
- A fair, just and equitable justice system;
- Education, training, jobs and other opportunities.

Statistics from various countries on FGM, rape, femicide, sexual abuse and other forms of violence were presented to demonstrate the fact that women's human rights are being systematically and continuously violated in many countries.

The report also stated that there had been such significant achievements as wide ratification of CEDAW, adoption of its Protocol, and enactment of progressive constitutions and laws in some countries. However, *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women continued, partly because of the conflict arising from the existence of dual or triple legal systems and insufficient political will to implement the PFA fully.

It was further noted that a number of countries had not submitted their reports to the monitoring bodies. The process of preparing reports was seen as one way of reviewing and assessing the rate of implementation.

In the workshop, the participants agreed with the Consultant's report and recommendations and gave further examples of what needed to be done in order to have real and sustainable improvements.

Discussions

Participants noted that although there were excellent examples of progress achieved, such as legislative reforms, and improved policy frameworks by governments and civil society, a great deal still needed to be done to establish a culture of respect for women's rights.

It was also noted that the conflict of laws arising from the application of statutory, customary and religious laws in matters of personal life had led to denial of women's

rights, as most of them were inconsistent with international women's human rights standards.

In the search for ways to accelerate the protection of women's human rights, it was observed that institutional mechanisms at national, subregional, regional and international levels could be effective in promoting women's rights.

At the national level, governments needed to establish effective national machineries for enhancing recognition of women's human rights. The national mechanisms require adequate financial and human resources to carry out their mandate.

Participants mentioned excellent initiatives at the subregional level to demonstrate that effective steps could be taken for implementing the PFA. The SADC subregion and French-speaking West African States had undertaken comprehensive legislative and policy changes as a strategy to eradicate violence against women. The SADC Addendum on Violence against Women was a clear example of subregional efforts that can be replicated and that can be catalytic for actions at the national level in other parts of Africa. Recommendations were made on actions that governments, NGOs and other stakeholders should adopt to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls effectively in the new millennium.

Recommendations

Recommendations for accelerating the protection of women's human rights included:

- Enactment and effective implementation of legislation that protects women from various forms of violence;
- Domestication of the provisions of CEDAW and CRC by adoption of constitutional clauses for automatic conversion of international conventions into national law upon ratification;
- Removal of reservations on CEDAW;
- Harmonisation of all laws with international conventions to resolve contradictions between statutory, customary and religious laws;
- Sensitisation of all stakeholders, especially those in charge of legislation and law enforcement, on the importance of women's rights;
- Education of women on their rights, including training of women trainers;
- Training of judges and magistrates and of law enforcement officials;
- Use of the media to disseminate information on women's rights and cases of violations;
- Training of parliamentarians, and civil society and government officials on gender issues and women's rights;
- Building of linkages between women's rights and their access to resources and services, such as education;
- Increasing the number of women lawyers and legal experts as one of the effective ways of ensuring participation of women in the promotion of women's rights and in the enactment of laws in favour of women;
- Documentation and publication of best practices in the enforcement of women's rights, in view of possible replication and institutionalisation;
- Regular reporting by countries to the CEDAW Committee and the CSW to enable systematic monitoring and co-ordination of activities with respect to women's rights;

- Establishment and application of democratic rules and universal law for all citizens irrespective of gender; in some cases there is a tendency to misinterpret religious and customary laws deliberately in favour of men; and
- Institution of sanctions against those law enforcement officials who do not enforce legal provisions and court rulings in favour of women.

Noting that gender-based violence forms of sexual harassment and exploitation were persistent human rights violations caused by prevailing patriarchal systems, the unequal status and role assigned to women, and by lack of adequate legal protection against violations of women's rights, participants also recommended:

- Provision of legal assistance and rehabilitation services for women victims of violence, including victims of marital violence as well as refugee women and those affected by conflict;
- Legal literacy for grassroots women in local languages, and human rights education for boys and girls at the earliest age and throughout schooling;
- The UN Declaration on Violence against women should be made into a treaty so that its provisions become binding on the signatories;
- Studies on the incidences and cases of violence against women to improve the data and information on this issue for the purpose of lobbying for more adequate protection of women;
- Collaboration among all actors including the police, health services, judiciary and NGOs, in the enforcement of laws on women's rights.

Regarding the political commitment and concrete actions towards elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, participants further recommended the following:

- Inclusion of reports on violations of women's rights in all reports under any human rights treaty;
- Promotion of more women at decision-making at all levels including parliament;
- Establishment of special committees on human rights at different levels;
- Wide dissemination of information on the optional protocol on CEDAW and the additional protocol on women's rights being introduced in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. These should be made accessible for women to use as a mechanism for the defence of their human rights. However, the complaint systems should be simplified in order to make them easily accessible.
- Documentation of best practices to give visibility and recognition to countries with highest performance while shaming and even sanctioning those that fail to respect their commitments, in order to encourage countries that actively promote women's rights.
- Encouragement of public-interest litigation that uses international conventions in the absence of explicit national legislation.

Among the benchmarks and monitoring indicators to measure progress in the elimination of gender-based discrimination, participants listed:

- Gender-responsive legislation and policy frameworks;

- Society's improved perceptions;
- Sensitivity of the police to gender-based violence;
- The level and quality of media coverage;
- The delays in ratifying and domesticating CEDAW; and
- Regular and quality reporting to the monitoring bodies.

Effective and sustainable protection of women's human rights called for adequate resources and support. The participants therefore recommended:

- Mobilisation of partnerships and resources at national and regional levels;
- Establishment at the national level of broad partnerships among relevant government and non-governmental bodies, civil society and development partners, to ensure efficient co-ordination, synergies and greater impact of actions;
- Building of strategic alliances with departments in charge of justice, national planning, and budget and finance, to secure resources for legal assistance and rehabilitation programmes for victims of violence;
- Establishment of inter-ministerial committees with clear terms of reference and resources to monitor the implementation of various international obligations;
- Use at the subregional and regional levels of groupings such as SADC, ECOWAS, and EAC, as the institutional framework for partnership and capacity building among countries, for effective exchange of experiences and replication of best practices. Other subregional groupings are urged to follow the example of SADC in adopting the Gender Declaration and Addendum on Violence against Women;
- Inclusion by international partners of higher commitments to programmes and activities to promote women's rights in their co-operation agreements;
- Donor co-ordination of activities, to build on their respective comparative advantages in providing material, financial, technical and institutional support for the promotion of women's rights. .

Workshop 5: Mainstreaming of Gender-Disaggregated Data (GDD)

Facilitators: -Yassine Fall
- Mr. Onsembe
Presenter: -Solange Goma

After the progress report on implementation of the commitments concerning the mainstreaming of gender-disaggregated data (GDD), the discussion focused on four main questions:

Elaboration of indicators

The first question, in three parts, related to the elaboration of indicators and guidelines for decision-makers, planners and stakeholders in the socio-economic, cultural and political spheres.

Progress at the country level in the adoption of GDD and formulation of guidelines

Most of the participants were conversant with gender-disaggregated data in the socio-economic sphere, particularly in education and employment statistics. However, the coverage of gender-disaggregated data was more modest in the rural areas, although various collaborative mechanisms exist between government departments responsible for gender issues and other ministries. These collaborative mechanisms are particularly visible in the case of data gathering and/or processing for gender, population and household censuses or agricultural surveys.

The participants stressed that more effort was required to internalise the gender dimension and integrate it as a statistical tool, so that indicators could be developed to serve as benchmarks in the follow up and evaluation of programmes. Users should be conversant with the development of indicators by formulating accurate categories of data to suit their needs.

Regarding guidelines and laws, not many contributors gave an account of their experiences in connection with the introduction of statistical legislation or draft legislation to integrate gender into the data-gathering process.

Best practices

- An experience worthy of emulation by other countries was the development of lists of reference for submission to planners and macro-economists to guide them in the allocation of resources towards women's advancement. This gender mainstreaming of public expenditure should be taken up in subsequent discussions. It was reported that South Africa was already set on that course, and other SADC countries were following suit.
- Training sessions and sensitisation campaigns for statisticians have proved useful in familiarising them with the subject and integrating the gender approach.

Developing common indicators for African countries

Under this heading, it was recognised that a set of indicators common to African countries should provide a conceptual framework and a regional mechanism for comparison. This scheme of reference should, however, be flexible enough to be able to suit country-specific realities and needs.

Evaluation of public expenditure

The second question concerned the evaluation of public expenditure allocated to women. The experiences of Southern Africa in this areas was noteworthy. On the basis of the practice in Zambia, the process consists of the following stages: development of lists of reference on gender issues for planners and economists, and their utilisation for advocacy and training for macro-economists and planners in the use of lists of reference.

The whole purpose of gender-disaggregated data was to help highlight inequalities in the allocation of resources between women and men. The resultant indicators could then be used in advocacy with decision-makers for corrective measures in the allocation of resources.

It emerged, for instance, that in Botswana, gender-sensitive analysis of public expenditure revealed a number of sources of marginalization in the application of interest rates. Those results led to corrective measures designed to reduce interest rates in favour of women.

All the same, difficulties remained, particularly in the context of structural adjustment and stabilisation. In particular, the participants underscored the difficulties faced at country level in the formulation of new budget lines devoted to research on, and elaboration of, new statistical data.

Another area of difficulty related to lack of expertise in national economics and national accounts. People working in GDD and gender mainstreaming frequently faced difficulties in accurately articulating their needs to statisticians and macro-economists.

Problems of methodology

The third question related to the methodology employed in formulating quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the work done by women. It emerged that the formulation of methodologies for evaluating the work done by women entailed the definition of homogeneous concepts. For example, the activity in question should be defined so that it takes non-monetary work into account. The nature of the data to be gathered necessitated the adoption of new approaches, which were mainly qualitative:

- (a) Participative approach, involving women in the principal phases of data gathering, processing and analysis;
- (b) Operational research;
- (c) Group discussions, etc.

In evaluating the work of women, it was necessary to review the cluster of information to be gathered. In the case of agriculture, for example, a review of the concept of the household, taking into account the milieu in which agricultural activity takes place,

was an example of the methodological approaches through which the gender dimension could be well reflected.

Other avenues of methodological innovation included new information technologies and decentralisation of data gathering. Evidently, the effectiveness of GDD as a strategy depended upon the support of women in general as well as on the government departments responsible for women's affairs in particular, in terms of appropriate training and involvement in various stages of the process.

Capacity building

Fourthly and lastly, capacity building for women, the priority areas of intervention in the coming years, and the key partnerships required, were considered.

Capacity building for women was seen as entailing training in advocacy, establishment of women's networks and women's associations, and establishment and dissemination of databases.

Among the priority areas identified, the following were retained: the productive economy, the informal sector, the economy in general, and national accounts—the last-mentioned as a source of disaggregated data showing value-added.

Regarding the principal partnerships, the role of government, through its data gathering, processing and dissemination agencies, remained paramount (i.e. the national statistical agencies), as do NGOs, women's associations, development partners and other bilateral and multilateral agencies.

Recommendations

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Centre for Women (ACW) should:

- Elaborate a basic conceptual framework for the development of gender-disaggregated data;
- Develop an advocacy strategy aimed at decision-makers at the national and regional levels, for the integration of GDD into data gathering, processing and analysis;
- Produce homogeneous indicators that can be used in different countries;
- Produce and disseminate quantitative and qualitative profiles on women;
- Conduct training in gender mainstreaming to survey personnel engaged in data gathering;
- Establish a follow-up and evaluation framework for the implementation of commitments on GDD;
- Provide assistance to countries in the use of new technologies for GDD dissemination;
- Develop national statistical expertise on gender and on GDD utilisation;

- Identify national priorities in concert with country experts;
- Utilise social accounts matrices by sector on the gender approach to internalise the work and contribution of women;
- Establish an open space for country experiences and best practices;
- Encourage and facilitate dialogue between women's organisations and networks that are users of GDD and data-producing agencies.

Workshop 6: Political Empowerment of Women

Facilitators: - Sylvia Tamale
- Linda Vilakazi - Tselane
Presenter: - Anthony Mawaya

The presentation pointed to several limitations in the preparation of the report. Firstly, not all national reports were available at the time of its preparation. Secondly, mostly English national reports were considered. Many countries which reports were not available provided complementary information on their situation during the workshop.

Following adoption of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, commitments were taken by:

- African countries by ratifying CEDAW, elaborating National Plans for Action, and adopting affirmative action and quota systems;
- The UN system by adopting quota systems;
- Subregional organisations, particularly SADC, which adopted a Declaration on Gender and Development endorsing its decision to establish, *inter-alia*, a quota system.

Constraints:

While several implementation activities took place, progress was slow. At times, it was difficult to measure impact. The limitations in the implementation of strategies included capacity and management problems, lack of disaggregated data, and inadequate methodologies and indicators to measure progress. Resources were inadequate and it was not easy to determine the sources or the amount allocated to the political empowerment of women. This, and lack of indicators affected mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.

Challenges:

Traditional/cultural barriers and the division of labour within the household should be addressed.

Recommendations:

To increase the political empowerment of women, the concept of political empowerment should be articulated and an overall vision with strategies and benchmarks adopted.

The workshop process: The workshop focused on the broader meaning of decision-making, within the public, corporate, and social sectors, stressing the need to build women's participation and leadership in all these sectors.

Reasons for slow progress:

Political

- Lack of political will among political leaders and parties;
- Absence of affirmative action;
- Lack of political and leadership training;
- Inadequate civic and voter education for the masses;
- Inadequate allocation of resources to women's structures;

- Absence of a critical mass of women in decision-making bodies; and
- Discriminatory laws and practices against women.

Structural

Institutional sexism;

- The patriarchal system that undermines solidarity among women;
- Low level of women's education

Cultural

Traditional and cultural barriers.

Social

- Capable women avoid the risks and exposure involved with political positions;
- Socialisation;
- Sexist attitudes and perceptions towards women.

Contextual

- Lack of effective monitoring mechanism at the national, regional and UN levels;
- Lack of resources;
- Need for sponsoring women to run for political positions;
- Lack of women role models;
- Lack of solidarity among women.

The lessons learned which need to be built on:

1. Quota systems and affirmative action work best when they are accompanied by capacity building and enforceable measures that are applicable to government and all political parties (such as the case with the ANC in South Africa).
2. There must be strong political will and commitment.
3. Countries with a background of political struggles seem to have made more progress in access than those that have been fairly “stable.”
4. Time frames and targets must be set for achieving equal representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.
5. Decentralisation programmes have enabled more women at grassroots level to enter into decision-making.

The indicators of women's political and decision-making empowerment

The following framework with quantitative and qualitative indicators developed by SADC was adopted for the purpose of elaborating indicators, challenges and recommendations. The framework covers the issues of:

- Access, which is a quantitative issue;
- Participation, which is qualitative;
- Transformation, which is qualitative; and
- Monitoring, at national, subregional and regional levels.

Indicators

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quotas ▪ Support for women candidates ▪ Voters ▪ Public support and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affirmative action ▪ Supportive networks ▪ Selection and recruitment policies ▪ Public awareness and support
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Representation of women in the decision- making structures of parliament (speaker, chairs of committees) ▪ On which committees women are represented ▪ To what extent women ask questions/debate/lobby ▪ Training ▪ Retention rate ▪ Knowledge and control of processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At what levels of the public/private sectors (directors, chief directors, DGs, permanent secretaries, etc.) ▪ In which ministries; in which areas of private sector (finance, human resources, etc.) ▪ Extent of influence ▪ Training and promotion policies
Transformation Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting times ▪ Child care ▪ Gender-sensitive language ▪ Gender-sensitive environment ▪ Attitudinal change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work times (flexible time) ▪ Child care ▪ Gender-sensitive language ▪ Gender-sensitive environment
Transformation External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of gender considerations into legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of gender consideration into policies and programmes
Access (Quantitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional/cultural/stereotypical attitudes ▪ Social barriers for married and single women ▪ The brutality, loneliness, machination associated with politics ▪ Lack of affirmative action ▪ Quota system has limitations ▪ Lack of commitment by governments ▪ Laws are not implemented ▪ Lack of training for leadership ▪ Lack of financial resources ▪ Conflict situations ▪ Inadequate attention to women with disabilities by women leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create awareness among different groups of population ▪ Increase women's participation in local elections ▪ Scrap all discriminatory laws and entrench the equality clause in all constitutions ▪ Endorse and entrench a quota system/mechanism in national and political party constitutions ▪ Review electoral systems and adopt those most conducive to women's participation (for example, proportional representation) ▪ Political parties should

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
		<p>adopt the principle of equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More women in political parties ▪ Target youth for leadership positions ▪ Identify women with leadership qualities, including from countries in conflict and disabled women, and increase their presence in regional and subregional fora ▪ Establish a fund at international, regional and national level to provide women with access to resources to stand for political positions ▪ Networks at national, subregional and regional level
Participation (Qualitative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional and cultural values ▪ Attitudes and behaviour ▪ Lack of affirmative support ▪ Women's multiple roles in society ▪ Conflict/war situations ▪ International embargoes ▪ Women are not aware of the risks involved with politics ▪ Limited knowledge and control over parliamentary processes ▪ Donors do not finance women ▪ Women lack confidence ▪ Lack of training and analytical skills for leadership and decision-making ▪ Low retention rate of women parliamentarians ▪ Need for more research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a gender-sensitive environment in the public sphere, e.g., accessible language, session/ meeting hours, child-care facilities ▪ Networks/linkages at national, sub-regional and regional levels ▪ Create training centres for women leaders ▪ Carry out training in analytical skills, including media and communication ▪ Electoral processes should avoid conflicts before and after polling days ▪ Promote inter-party caucuses/ networks among women parliamentarians ▪ Develop research

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
<i>Transformation (Qualitative)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional/cultural attitudes and behaviour ▪ Gender perspective is not integrated ▪ Expectation and pressure for women in decision-making to act like men ▪ Women are not used to being in power positions ▪ Women leaders have no constituency ▪ Lack of solidarity among women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective communication and support networks at national, subregional and regional level ▪ Establish a dialogue between women and men leaders ▪ Revisit the role of women's wings/units ▪ Promote a gender-sensitive media ▪ Encourage effective self-regulating mechanisms in the media, to ensure positive portrayals of women in decision-making positions ▪ Interface of women politicians and women's groups at grassroots level ▪ Research patriarchy, sexual politics and power in contemporary Africa ▪ Transform institutional culture, through transformative leadership training ▪ Set up exchange programmes among countries to share experiences and best practices ▪ Target male politicians with gender-awareness programmes ▪ Women parliamentarians should make use of the Action Plan of the Inter-Parliamentarian Union (IPU) ▪ More involvement in parliamentary processes such as preparation of agendas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National - Sub-regional - Regional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of resources ▪ Lack of indicators ▪ Lack of a regional mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional and subregional institutions should take up the challenge of monitoring, i.e. mechanisms at the level of OAU and subregional institutions to monitor the

Issues	Women in Politics	Women in Public, Private, and Professional Sectors
		<p>implementation of national commitments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor the electoral process including registration of voters ▪ Monitor the use of money as a dominant factor in electoral politics ▪ Establish annual national review processes, and regular workshops and training on review techniques ▪ Monitor the use of national budgets ▪ Establish biannual subregional review processes ▪ Establish regular regional reviews ▪ Monitor the use of donor funds at international and regional levels ▪ Allow media to attend parliamentary sessions to cover debates continuously and expose those raising their voices against women's issues such as access to land ▪ Develop a database on women in leadership positions through UNIFEM's website

Workshop 7: Women's Health, Family Planning and Population

- Facilitators:** - Jane Kwawu
- Pap Syr Diagne
Presenter: - Daraba Saran Kaba

The summary of the report on health, family planning and population that was presented included the objectives of the African Platform of Action in these areas as well as the main findings of twenty national reports. These were submitted to the African Centre for Women (ACW) by ECA member States by July 1999. Since that time, more country reports have been received by ACW and the final regional report will be amended accordingly.

In implementing Beijing and Dakar Platforms of Action, many countries have revised their policies and reoriented programmes/activities to meet the challenges of the Platforms. But they have faced many constraints during the past five years. The main ones relate to inadequate financial, human and material resources and the high level of illiteracy. These constraints are all related to the widespread poverty situation at all levels: governmental and individual. Different objectives have been identified in the national plans of action, among which are: reducing maternal and infant mortality, improving health services, reducing HIV/AIDS and reducing sexually transmitted diseases impact, improving and facilitating access of family planning services to populations and improving social security.

Despite commitments made by governments at several meetings, including the meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women, the meetings of the Committee on CEDAW, the annual meetings of WHO, access to health services for women is still very limited for the majority of African countries. The women's health situation is, in some cases, even worse. The governments and NGOs are urged to take more aggressive actions to overcome the constraints they are facing. In that regard, health issues should be considered as crosscutting issues in the various sectoral programmes.

Summary of discussions

In elaborating the evaluation report, participants in the workshop drew lessons from different sources such as ICPD+5, as well as their own country experiences. In so doing, considerable achievements were reported in certain health sectors. However, The workshop observed that the evaluation report on *"improvement of women's health, including family planning and population-related programmes"* was not exhaustive.

In the area of reproductive health and reproductive rights, 39 countries have taken measures to improve the quality of care, which entailed extensive training of health-care providers including traditional birth attendants; expanded and improved facilities, revised protocols and procedures for health-care services; and undertook evaluation and monitoring of health-care services. The female condom is being piloted with success in several countries and is gaining popularity because it ensures an appropriate choice to women's reproductive needs.

Most countries reported on the urgent need to address the issue of adolescent reproductive health. Thirty-four countries have taken some measures to do so by adoption of national youth policies, and development of youth strategies and action plans. Others have launched new initiatives involving young people such as IEC/advocacy campaigns, youth-friendly services including peer education, counselling services and sexual health

programme that serve the needs of youth. However, much more remains to be done given the demographic size of this group.

Twenty-six countries noted that civil society including NGOs continue to play a major role in providing reproductive health services to members of the community including adolescents.

Several countries have also initiated or expanded programmes promoting male responsibility in reproductive health through advocacy campaigns and specific services to men. Some countries are conducting socio-cultural research to understand better how to address the reproductive needs of men. In a few countries, coalitions against gender violence have been formed to address gender violence. However, ongoing initiatives for promotion of gender equality were not sufficient.

Africa was reported to be the only continent where maternal mortality rates had continued to rise. All the causes were known, but the necessary political will to put appropriate emergency obstetric care in place was still lacking. This was an area in which Africa had to re-strategize in order to reduce maternal and infant deaths.

Despite the fact that the majority of African countries had made health the priority, women's health as a special area had not been given due attention, neither in advocacy programme development nor in resource allocation.

In particular, the life-cycle approach to women's health has neither been understood well nor implemented appropriately. This means, for example, that the health of elderly women is not addressed and the nutritional status of young girls and nursing mothers is not receiving the necessary attention.

It was also clear from the assessment that women's health was most often interpreted in terms of maternal health, which excluded women not of reproductive age. In particular, the concept women's sexuality as a legitimate health concern had not begun to receive attention.

Although several initiatives have started to combat violence against women, the lives of too many women still remain endangered, because these initiatives need to be institutionalised in the health sector. Likewise, initiatives against FGM and other harmful practices are still heavily being spearheaded by NGOs; although some governments have enacted laws against FGM, the consequences on women's health remain grave.

Another emerging threat, according to the assessment was from the tobacco industries, which had suffered marketing losses abroad and were now focusing their attention on Africa, targeting especially young people and women.

Finally, the assessment noted that HIV/AIDS remains one of the most devastating pandemics and a major health concern for Africa. Women in particular are not only vulnerable to the disease, but also provide almost all the long-term care for AIDS sufferers in their families and communities.

Constraints

Major constraints observed in the workshop include:

(a) Lack of sufficient skills among service providers particularly in the rural health facilities;

- (b) Brain drain of skilled health personnel to developed countries where their skills are utilised effectively and they are well remunerated;
- (c) Emphasis on medical treatment rather than prevention ;
- (d) Limited partnership in some countries among governments, NGOs, private sector, and civil society;
- (e) WHO recommendation on 10% allocation of the national budget to the health sector has not been followed by most countries;
- (f) Limited contraceptive choice in several countries;
- (g) War and internal conflict have devastated health systems and structures;
- (h) Lack of political will to support adolescent reproductive health and services;
- (i) Lack of reliable data on important aspects of women's health including maternal morbidity and mortality;
- (j) Inadequate indicators of programmes outcome, which makes it difficult to document successful programmes;
- (k) Lack of health insurance schemes, particularly for women working in the informal sector, coupled with the high cost of drugs are also major issues;
- (l) Infertility as a gender issue is not yet being addressed;
- (m) The health of disabled women – the blind, deaf, etc.- is completely ignored by health programmes, exposing them to the double tragedy of gender and disability discrimination and neglect; and
- (n) Globalisation, privatisation of health systems and servicing of the debt burden, have severely reduced the availability of resources, even at the level of women as consumers of health services.

Recommendations

HIV/Aids

1. Adopt policies of non-discrimination towards people suffering from HIV/AIDS;
2. Provide support and livelihood opportunities for people suffering from AIDS;
3. Adopt multisectoral approaches in addressing HIV/AIDS programmes and their resource allocation.

Reproductive health and family planning

1. Reinforce education of men about the importance of reproductive health and family planning;
2. Strengthen programmes in both urban and rural areas to address sexuality, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS;
3. Design programmes that address the needs of special groups such as the visually impaired, the deaf, and refugees, and take their programmes to scale.

Maternal mortality

1. Develop an Africa - specific strategy to address the rising rates of maternal mortality and develop mechanisms at regional, subregional and national levels to track the number of deaths, as opposed to maternal mortality rates.

Others

1. Develop global and integrated approaches to health issues;
2. Standardise data collection and availability to ensure that data is collected for and about women;
3. Adopt policies that block the designs of tobacco companies;
4. Increase the availability and coverage of social security programmes;
5. End traditional practices harmful to women's health;
6. Encourage collaboration between NGOs, governments and international organisations;
7. Enforce laws on domestic violence;
8. Increase government's commitment to the women's health objectives of the PFA, by increasing resource allocation to curtail the brain drain of health professionals and ensure expansion of current programmes;
9. Set mechanisms in place to reduce the debt burden of African countries in order to increase resource flows to the health sector and mitigate the effects of globalisation;
10. Ratify and implement the government commitments related to the health of women and use them as benchmarks for addressing women's health needs.

Conclusions

In spite of many achievements in the women and health sector, a great deal still needs to be done to implement the Beijing Platform of Action fully. Many challenges lie ahead which need recognition and re-addressing. The existing gaps in health policies, programmes, resources, and institutional arrangements are of concern both at regional, national and programme levels. More emphasis is required on non-discriminatory policies and practices and on multisectoral programmes to promote women's health, rights and equality, as well as community strategies for health care and male participation.

Of crucial importance is the need to recognise that five years after the Beijing Conference, Africa as a continent, has a peculiar need for women-specific-health strategies. These needs are underscored by the accelerating rate of maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS pandemic. As long as women continue to be vulnerable to the risk of mobility and death, either from pregnancy or HIV/AIDS, African women's opportunities for progress would be limited. These different issues which create an excessive burden of ill - health of women in Africa must be brought to the top of Africa's development agenda.

Workshop 8: Women and Peace

- Facilitators:** - Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika
- Khadidja Ladjel Aloui
- Presenter:** - Jean Kamau

The presenter began by providing a background on the governments commitments underscored in the African Platform for Action, adopted in Dakar in 1994. The Platform called for the representation of women in peace-negotiation mechanisms and supported the establishment of women peace networks accredited to the OAU, the United Nations and their national, subregional and international institutions. The Global Platform adopted in Beijing was influenced by the African Platform in calling for governments, the international community and civil society to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuses in conflict situations.

Governments were also called upon to make full investigation of all acts of violence against women committed during war, including rape, forced prostitution, and other forms of indecent assault and sexual slavery, as well as to prosecute all acts of violence and in particular to pay attention to rape.

Several governments made specific commitments in their action plans to undertake various activities to ensure the inclusion of women in the peace process. These initiatives included integrating women in peace talks, undertaking peace education and supporting peace initiatives. A review of government reports showed that some Governments kept their commitments to the Platforms for Action. Several governments took unprecedented action by supporting the destruction of arms in public, as a sign of commitment to peace.

The Federation of Women Peace Networks, through its members in various countries, has undertaken effective activities to influence alternative political solutions to conflict and war. Strategies have varied but the end result has demonstrated that women have useful and effective strategies in the resolution of conflict on the African continent.

Mechanisms for monitoring the inclusion of women in the peace process were outlined in the Platform for action. At the national level, responsibility lay with the governments, and at the subregional level with such intergovernmental structures as SADC, ECOWAS and IGAD. At the regional level, the key mechanism is the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which has undertaken key initiatives to include the participation of women in the peace process. The development of the African Committee for Peace and Development was a key achievement for the OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa. A lot of hope has been placed in this Committee, which should galvanise the real and effective participation of women in the peace process in Africa. It was noted that, at the international level, the global community was committed to safeguarding the rights of women, including in times of conflict. The recent establishment of the International Criminal Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was testimony to this commitment.

In conclusion, the presenter called for firmer commitment and action from governments to include women in the peace process. Governments should support peace education initiatives and promote women's participation in decision-making structures. The legal status of women should be reviewed to ensure that all forms of violence against women are prosecuted.

After drawing attention to the point of brevity in the debates so that the proceedings of the workshop could be completed within the time allotted, and also to the need for succinctness in the formulation of recommendations, the facilitator called upon the participants to focus on the following key issues:

Given that peace is not only the absence of war but also the presence of a situation in which people can enjoy the benefits of economic and social justice on an equal footing, and considering the close linkages between peace and equality of women and men on the one hand, and between peace and development on the other, what recommendations could be formulated so that African governments might continue to pursue equality between women and men, as part of development?

(a) In view of the dire consequences of strife and armed conflict on women and children in terms of increased responsibility on women heads of households and in terms of violations of the fundamental rights of women and young girls, the problems faced by women and children in conflict situations raise the following issues:

- How the rights and the roles of women and children can be protected in conflict situations?
- Are there any positive experiences in that connection that African countries can share *inter se*?
- How to benefit from these experiences in such a way as to be able to spread them further afield?

(c) Given that women are hardly involved in decision-making mechanisms relating to conflict prevention and resolution or to the launching of peace initiatives, how can the role of women in decision-making and conflict resolution be strengthened?

(d) In view of the commitments made by governments to the Dakar Platform for Action, and to take concrete measures to afford women and men the necessary training in the areas of peace negotiation and conflict prevention and resolution, the following areas of concern served as the basis for discussion:

- How to accelerate the implementation of the measures adopted?
- What examples of traditional forms of conflict prevention may be cited?
- How these could be integrated into regional decision-making and conflict- prevention mechanisms?

Overall, a number of key areas of concern emerged from the debates. The main issues are listed below:

- Violence against women in conflict situations;
- Violence against refugees and displaced persons;
- Lack of equality of access to decision-making bodies and mechanisms, and to material resources as well as education;

- Lack of a culture of peace, and of capacities for negotiation and the maintenance of viable peace;
- Harmful traditional practices and occult rituals;
- Genocide and the issue of its impunity;
- Women and children bearing arms;
- Poverty and the aggravation of food insecurity;
- The proliferation of small arms in conflict-ridden areas and neighbouring countries;
- Lack of perception or awareness on the part of women of their human, political and legal rights;
- Lack of interest in politics on the part of women;
- The role of the media in sensitising women;
- The need for implementation and broad dissemination of the provisions of international conventions;
- Governments not attaching due importance to issues relating to discrimination against women;
- Use of women and children as human shields, thus exposing them to grievous harm;
- Lack of knowledge concerning the dangers posed by mines and other injuries caused by weapons of war;
- Lack of solidarity among women themselves and also between women and the civil society;
- Inadequate attention given to the training of soldiers in the rules governing warfare;
- Adverse effects of sanctions on women and children;
- Domestic violence and dangerous attitudes;
- Rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants;
- Aggression against elderly or disabled women on the grounds of witchcraft;
- The need for lobbying against the manufacture and sale of arms, as well as the purchase of arms;
- The need to sensitise women in other parts of the world to eradicate the sale of arms and establish a network of solidarity with them.
- Inadequate access of women to education and training;

- Inequitable handling of conflicts by the international community; and
- Laws for the protection of women and children.

Recommendations

In view of the concerns itemised above, and the key issues described, the workshop formulated the following recommendations:

Government actions towards greater equity and equality between women and men should:

Ensure women's access to decision-making bodies, education and training, and to property ownership

- a) Ensure greater participation of women in decision-making, appointing more women in decision-making positions at the national, regional and global levels (in government, parliament, and in subregional, regional and international organisations). In that connection, the quota system should be supported when it is to the benefit of women, without abandoning application of the principle of competition between men and women;
- b) Promote the adequate representation of women in military establishments by increasing the numbers of women officers and sub-officers;
- c) Promulgate laws that actualise the veritable will of governments to involve women in decision-making, and above all, ensure the strict application of those laws;
- d) Modify school curricula to include a unit for children, on the culture of peace (i.e. respect for property, tolerance, acceptance of differences, etc.). This unit should be based on the cultural reality of each country;
- e) Promote teaching of the principles of human rights and the provisions of international conventions on peace in schools, rural areas and refugee camps, in order to counter the indoctrination of young people in particular;
- f) Significantly boost resource allocations to education and training, and promote equality of access to education for men and women;
- g) Promote literacy programmes for women to make it easier for them to internalise their role in development;
- h) Promote the teaching of African geography in primary schools and the preparation of IEC programmes on solidarity of African countries;
- i) Concrete measures should be taken by governments to promote the equitable distribution of national wealth by guaranteeing women's access to property ownership. To that end, laws and regulations should be adopted to promote women's access to land ownership, financial resources and income-earning opportunities;
- j) Encourage and promote the participation of women in debate and consultations for peace. In that connection, all laws and traditional practices that are discriminatory

and pose obstacles to the involvement of women in any process of debate or consultation should be abrogated;

- k) Establish programmes designed to create awareness among women about their rights as guaranteed by the laws and norms obtaining in each country.

Protection of the rights and roles of women and children in conflict situations

- a) Promulgate laws designed to protect women, children, refugees and displaced persons against:
- All forms of violence in conflict situations (e.g. rape, forcible recruitment into armed groups, destruction of property, physical mutilation, etc.);
 - Traditional practices that exclude women from peace processes; and
 - The hazards posed by mines.
- b) Strengthening the role of women in decision-making and conflict resolution; and
- c) Speeding up implementation of the commitments made by governments under the Dakar Platform for Action, to take concrete measures to ensure women and men's necessary training in peace negotiation, as well as conflict resolution and prevention.

Workshop 9: Women and the Environment, and their Role in Natural Resources Management

Facilitators: - Naomi Ngwira
- Dorthy Gordon

Presenter: - Solange Goma

The document prepared by ECA on the linkages between women and the environment, and their role in natural resources management, was presented to the workshop to delineate the scope of its deliberations more clearly.

The evaluation of the progress made internationally since the Dakar and Beijing Conferences showed some streamlining of methodologies and progress towards better understanding of the management of ecosystems. At the regional level, this evaluation takes into account the profile and level of deprivation, methodology-related results in sector-specific research, and the management of water-distribution systems. The dynamics of integration in the mining sector and the status of subregional programmes were at the Centre of the evaluation at the subregional level. At the national level, several issues such as discriminatory traditional laws and practices, land-use patterns, strengthening support agencies, the situation of women in employment and operational integration were re-examined.

Concerning the adequacy of resource allocation and the effectiveness of the existing mechanisms and approaches for resource mobilisation, the discussion focused on the difficulties encountered in representing specific resource allocations by development agencies and institutions. Nonetheless, the importance of co-financing between institutions was underscored.

From the debate that followed the presentation, it emerged that owing to the lack of well-defined follow-up indicators, the progress made since the Dakar Conference could not be effectively measured, therefore their development within national mechanisms was imperative. The workshop further stressed the need for a clearly defined conceptual framework for the linkages between gender and the environment in view of the crosscutting nature of both gender and the environment. In addition, the workshop drew upon best practices such as the establishment by some countries of environmental plans of action and national mechanisms integrating the gender dimension.

Summary of the debate

The discussions were mainly focused on the following issues:

1. The need to enhance the level of awareness among women concerning the legal provisions in force;
2. Constraints connected with application of the pertinent conventions as a result of a lack of sustainable alternatives for African communities in general and the poor in particular; an example here is the dissemination of information concerning the use of renewable energy sources such as solar energy;

3. The need to enhance the level of awareness among decision-makers concerning environmental questions;
4. The weak representation of women in high-level decision-making organs over all, despite decentralisation efforts;
5. The inadequate financial resources allocated to natural resource-management development programmes;
6. The lack of gender-disaggregated data on the one hand, and gender-integrative statistical data on the other;
7. The search for relevant follow-up indicators has culminated in the compilation of a list of variables that can be streamlined by the statistical services of member States with the assistance of ECA and its regional partners;
8. The promotion of functional literacy on environmental problems;
9. Human and institutional capacity building through the development of technical training with a view to improving women's access to scientific culture in general and environment-related knowledge in particular;
10. Strengthening the role of NGOs in the areas of training, information, sensitisation, and financing. Cooperation among local, subregional and international NGOs should be encouraged to that end;
11. Abandonment by women, over time, of certain environment-friendly traditional practices for modern practices and technologies that cause pollution;
12. The adverse effects of population movements on the environment;
13. The negative effects, in the short term, of structural adjustment and stabilisation programmes on the environment.

Recommendations of the workshop

In sum, the workshop formulated the following recommendations for effective implementation of the programmes of action:

1. Ensure the ratification and application by States of international conventions on the environment, and particularly the Convention on combating desertification and the Bamako Convention on waste;
2. Strengthen coordination at the regional level for better natural resource management and a more active exchange of information among the various stakeholders;
3. Establish focal points charged with the follow - up of the linkages between various sectors such as health, education, the environment, and so on;
4. At the national level, strengthen coordination among the various government departments involved in the implementation of the Platform for Action at the national level;

5. Carry out systematic reviews of policy orientations with a view to integrating the gender dimension into the pertinent budgeting and implementation processes;
6. Protect women's and community knowledge from improper appropriation by multinationals through patenting, in accordance with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements;
7. Examine the possibilities of optimising the utilisation of debt-for-nature swaps as a financing mechanism;
8. Establishment by States, with the support of regional and international financing institutions, of a support fund for rural women for the management of natural resources;
9. Establishment of an African "women-and-environment" observatory, managed by the State(s) that is (are) competent in that area;
10. Encourage the use of environmental information systems (EIS) so that they can be developed in line with user needs;
11. In the context of policies and projects, ensure that environmental impact studies, after initial diagnosis, take into account the gender dimension; conditionalities can be instituted at the national level to ensure that the women-and-the-environment dimension is taken into account in investment projects, and particularly in the rural areas;
12. Train extension personnel who originate from rural areas to ensure better dissemination of extension programmes;
13. Develop "gender and natural-resource-management" training programmes by national, subregional and regional training institutions;
14. Disseminate information on renewable energy sources and alternative energy sources;
15. ECA should, through ACW and in close collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development and other key partners, extend its technical support to African women in the preparation for Rio + 10, in order to ensure that their interests are duly taken into account.

Conclusions of the workshop

The workshop recognised that significant progress had been made in the implementation of the Dakar Platform, but that it was necessary to maintain, at the national level, the process of identification of indicators initiated at the workshop.

The workshop also recognised the need to promote the large-scale utilisation of environmental-conservation technologies if they are to have a significant impact on natural resources management at the national level.

It underscored the need to coordinate the follow up of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms with those of Rio in view of the importance attached to gender in Agenda 21, the World Food Summit, Habitat II, and the International Conference on Population and Development.

It also noted that any action towards the implementation of environment-related platforms for action was bound to face difficulties if it did not integrate poverty-alleviation parameters.

Workshop 10: Institutional Mechanisms

Facilitators: - Ms. Jacqueline Odhiambo-Oduol
- Dr. Ellen N. Kornegay

Presenter: - Anthony Mawaya

The interest in the topic was affirmed by the participation of approximately 46 countries, three subregional bodies, regional NGOs and international organisations.

Among the specific actions defined as a basis for meeting the Dakar and Beijing commitments are:

- (a) Vesting the responsibility for advancing the status of women in the highest possible levels;
- (b) Developing strategies and methodologies for mobilising resources;
- (c) Empowering women through research, information, education, training, lobbying and advisory services;
- (d) Co-ordinating various actors at the national, subregional, regional and international levels;
- (e) Monitoring impact;
- (f) Building capacity for gender analytic research;
- (g) Leading the collection of disaggregated data; and
- (h) Providing leadership regarding the concerns of women for gender equality.

National machinery

The national machinery refers to a single or combination of structures established by a country to advance gender equality. These machineries are usually created by governments and managed by public-sector officials and the wider civil society, NGO and private-sector structures.

Different characteristics of the national machinery

There are varying structures, such as:

1. Those at the level of the Presidency, functioning through gender focal points and in partnership with civil society;
2. Clearly defined Ministries of Women's Affairs;
3. National machineries located within a particular department;

Two countries reported having commissions as fully integrated structures of the national machineries.

Prerequisites for an effective national machinery

Most national machineries have been formalised in the post-beijing era. The beijing platform of action was emphatic about their establishment as a means to implementing the twelve critical programme areas of concern. Given their different locations and status, they have varying degrees of effectiveness and impact. Despite their differences, these

national machineries have been serving as the primary anchor of the national gender programmes. There was consensus that for national machineries to be effective it was critical that they:

- Be clearly defined, with specific roles and authority;
- Be located in the highest office that can influence all other Ministries and organs of civil society;
- Are able to enforce gender mainstreaming;
- Be funded principally by national governments and supplemented through external funding;
- Have adequate financial and human resources with substantive knowledge and skills;
- Develop partnerships with civil society as an integral part of their programme implementation;
- Recognise organs of civil society as integral structures of the national machinery.

Goals of the national machinery

Taking national and subregional differences into consideration, three generic goals were proposed for national machineries:

1. Develop programmes of action to create equality for women as participants, decision-makers and beneficiaries in political, civil, social, economic and cultural spheres;
2. Prioritise the needs of marginalized groups;
3. Transform all institutions (public, private and civil society) by mainstreaming and integrating issues of women's empowerment and gender equality into their work.

Functions of the national machinery

Among their specific functions are to:

- Manage policy development and advocacy relations with other institutions, and network information among the stakeholders ;
- Ensure that all stakeholders adopt planning procedures, structures, programmes and resource allocations that reflect the needs of women, and address gender inequality;
- Set appropriate priorities, targets, time frames and performance indicators;
- Act as a catalyst for action by all institutions and build capacity for effective gender mainstreaming; and
- Co-ordinate the implementation of gender-equal policies and monitor and evaluate programmes.

Issues raised

Although some government machineries had made successful efforts to link up with all stakeholders, most were still in the evolutionary stage. A great many machineries were still operating with limited financial, human and skills resources. Thus, their ability to provide the intellectual leadership and co-ordinate programmes was extremely limited.

Many countries still lack decentralised structures to reach the rural communities effectively. Capacity building in gender analysis, planning and mainstreaming was therefore seen as vital to the effective performance of national machineries. Systematic partnership and consultation with NGOs and civil society on the strategies for implementation of the Platforms for Action was also necessary.

The shift in government priorities due to economic crisis, and the recurrent conflicts and outbreak of hostilities in Africa had also been major obstacles to the effectiveness of the national machineries. Relevant government departments should make budgetary allocations to reflect the gender-equity concerns and needs of the national machinery. Monitoring mechanisms to ensure timely implementation of commitments should also be established.

In many countries, the macro-indicators and mechanisms for monitoring progress have not been fully articulated. There was a need to ensure a minimum threshold of gender mainstreaming capability and capacity. Placing the machineries in the highest political office would give them political clout and authority, and political will was imperative to ensure co-operation and advancement on gender programme. In fact, it should be noted that some machineries were assigned extra responsibilities to implement the Platforms without the requisite increase in capacity and resources.

In some countries, machineries also suffered from lack of autonomy and authority to influence policy and operate independently and effectively. In countries where national action plans were formulated in consultation with NGOs to identify priority areas, resources were not directly or specifically allocated. There were also no time bound targets or benchmarks.

Lack of information and poor sensitisation of policy and decision-makers, together with the low-level of training for staff and gender focal points make implementation difficult. There is a need to decentralise to local levels for increased popular participation.

Some countries have started to develop tools and methodologies for statistical research on gender. However, the general cost of monitoring, training, maintaining databases, reporting, and carrying out evaluation and research was expensive for African economies, even without considering the question of mainstreaming gender.

Recommendations

Key recommendations were:

1. Recognition of national machineries as the co-ordinating and consultative mechanisms for the whole national process of implementing the Platforms for Action.

2. Establish a gender management system for co-ordination and collaboration, with strong NGO input and clear terms of reference for all components.
3. Duplication of efforts, parallel responsibilities, and unco-ordinated interventions should be avoided at all levels through systematic and participatory planning.
4. Government and NGOs are partners in development and should not work as opponents.
5. National machineries should be strengthened through appropriate legislative and policy support, and human, technical, material and financial resources.
6. National machineries should be placed at the highest level of government and have full authority to make decisions.
7. They should have the capacity to provide technical expertise on all matters relating to the advancement of gender equality.
8. National machineries should ensure that gender focal points are appointed in all line ministries, agencies and programmes. These gender focal points should be at levels that give them access to policy formulation and decision-making.
9. Gender focal points should be provided with clear terms of reference, training and information.
10. Undertake gender audit of all sectoral activities at all levels- national, provincial and district levels.
11. Training in gender analysis and gender auditing should be provided to the staff of national machineries and all gender focal points.

National machineries should prioritise the development of gender-sensitive indicators to facilitate their monitoring function. Such indicators should be qualitative and quantitative in nature and include measures for:

- Political will and support;
- Degree of institutionalisation of policies, structures, and resources;
- Clear objectives and targets for national machineries at all levels;
- Existence of an inclusive national policy on gender and the advancement of women.

It was also suggested that each Head of State appoints an Advisor on Gender and that an Act of Parliament should be passed to enable the national machinery to play its co-ordinating role, and allocate the resources it needs to implement the Platforms for Action for the Advancement of Women. National machineries should depend mostly on government funding or locally mobilised funds. External assistance should only be supplementary. Women Ministers and Members of Parliament should form strong networks and support structures to carry out advocacy for strengthening the machineries.

In the context of regional integration and promotion of an African renaissance, statutory subregional groupings should develop subregional plans of action and political and legal frameworks that could serve as additional tools for reinforcing action at the national level. Concerted efforts should be made to engender the proposed Pan - African Parliament.

Regional assessments should be regularly carried out by OAU and ECA to ensure that each member country is carrying out its commitments and responding to gender equality needs.

Workshop 11: Women, Communication, Information and Arts

Facilitators: - Beldina Auma
- Yahya Diabi

Presenter: - Hoda Mejri

This workshop reviewed the general progress made in this area, not only as a specific priority area, but also as a crosscutting vehicle that could be used to link all the other critical areas interactively, in an effort to achieve the advancement and empowerment of women in Africa. Media was seen as one sector that could and did play a major role in promoting women by integrating the gender perspective and respecting the dignity and value of the human person.

In this regard, the workshop reviewed four key issues, namely:

- Major achievements;
- Lessons learnt;
- Key partners and their roles; and
- The enhancement of women's access to transformation of information, communication and the arts within African States.

To guide the discussion, a background evaluation report entitled "*Women, Communication, Information and the Arts*" was presented to the workshop. This report focused on the need to use communication and information to counter gender stereotyping and provide equal opportunity for women to participate in communication systems, particularly the media. The key issues reviewed included the summary of the Platforms of Action, some of the background problems in media and communication as related to gender-blind policies, illiteracy, poverty, unequal opportunities, the follow-up mechanism within the United Nations system, follow-up at the African level, and synthesis of the regional and country-level progress achieved thus far. It also examined the prospects and the areas that need to be strengthened over the coming five years.

The report identified major constraints and gaps, namely: shortage of resources, high illiteracy rates, little ownership of radio/TV and newspapers, poor state of communications and lack of monitoring and evaluation systems. While ambitious and commendable initiatives had been taken in countries and subregions, they were scattered and isolated and further action was still necessary.

Assessment of steps taken and results achieved after the Beijing Conference

The set benchmarks/indicators for measuring progress in actions at the national level could either be quantitative or qualitative. Some of the key ones identified were:

- Number of women in decision-making, management and control of media production, as a sign of ownership and readiness of the national media to respond to women's concerns.
- The salary level of women in the media and communications in comparison with that of their men counterparts. This indexes the level of incentives available for women to join the profession and remain sufficiently motivated to do their jobs.
- Scholarship allocation to women trainees in the areas of media production and communication.

- Increase in the number of programmes devoted to women issues as a sign of determination to ensure a widespread attempt to correct media bias against women.
- Measure of the number of women journalists as a percentage of the total number of journalists in the country. This indicator measures the balanced representation in the coverage of issues of importance to women, among others.

The workshop agreed that it was still necessary to have national commissions responsible for ensuring that the process continued to develop in a balanced and positive way. The media has to play a key role in the process of empowering women.

Examples of country-level achievements included:

- Provision of free airtime for the discussion of women issues in the national electronic media – as in the case of Namibia and South Africa, as opposed to commercial media productions that marginalize women.
- Introduction of talk shows in place of the use of magazines, as a way of increasing the audience for women's programme broadcasts. This was also implemented in Cameroon.
- Renaming of women's programmes, for example, from a title such as "*Fem-Line*" to a more inclusive one such as "*Women and Development*" as a strategy for capturing higher audience interest, as done in Cameroon.

The key partners and their role in transforming the information and communication sector for the empowerment of women

The key partners identified were: governments and governmental agencies, legislative bodies, the private sector, international organisations, civil society, religious leaders, training institutions at national, subregional and regional levels, NGOs, media watchdogs, pressure groups, men and the general public. The identified partners would assist in strengthening the local organisations, both public and private, that are associated with advancing the cause of women by mobilising resources, elaborating adequate legislative and policy framework, as well as promoting their activities where possible.

Recommendations

The key areas of focus of the recommendations were public policy and adequate institutional mechanisms, resource mobilisation and development, training and capacity building, involvement of the private sector and development networking.

Public policies and the role of government:

- Higher priority should be given to the critical area of women, information, communication and arts. Since it is of a crosscutting nature, governments should make it a priority in their national plan of action.
- Government should endeavour to minimise or totally remove all the fiscal distortions and high tariffs that tend to make communication materials very expensive and unaffordable.
- National policies should provide regulatory frameworks that assure discipline and balance in the broadening of media production on women issues.

Resource mobilisation and development

Because resource mobilisation constitutes a major constraint impeding women's access,

- Government should allocate adequate resources and ensure a more efficient utilisation of these resources.
- International organisations and donor agencies are called upon to increase their financial and technical assistance to women communication organisations, networks, and gender-sensitive media.
- Free airtime for women programmes should be discretely realigned to be sensitive to most women's schedules.

Training and capacity building

Training is imperative in transforming information, communication and arts for the advancement of women. As such, the recommendations were the following:

- Training of NGOs and other organisations that use the media in order to assure more efficient utilisation of the facilities and resources available to them.
- Training is strongly needed for the media, as well as for the legislative bodies to ensure a better understanding of the gender approach. This may take the form of issue-oriented training to enable the media to achieve better coverage of issues.
- Incentives should be provided to professionals already in media production to allow them to increase the number of national languages used in communication in order to reach a larger portion of their local and rural population.

Involvement of the private sector

- The legal framework and fiscal incentives should be extended to the private sector to encourage its involvement in facilitating women's developmental issues.
- The female private sector should seek opportunities to invest in women-related media production.

Development networking

The recommendations in this area require collective effort and constant exchange of ideas and inputs:

- Creation of fora and networks among the producers of information and communication as a way of monitoring the state-of-the-art technology and its utilisation;
- Continued maintenance of communication among media professionals including exchange of programmes related to women's issues.
- Maintenance and use of a list of regional media experts.

Workshop 12: The Girl-Child

Facilitators: - H.E. Janat Mukwaya
Mrs. Florence IHEME
Presenter: - Khadjata Lo Ndiaye

The girl-child as a special category: Experiences, interventions, methods, approaches and tools put in place that must be strengthened and replicated

There were three areas of focus:

1. Education
2. Health
3. Legal Rights

1. Education: Achievement / Progress

- Overall improvement in the enrolment and school attendance of the girl-child due to compulsory universal primary education;
- Establishment of non-formal education, literacy programmes and life skills training for girls;
- Introduction of policies, which allow girls that drop out of school due to pregnancy to return to school after a certain period.

Constraints included:

- Inadequate resources, political will and lack of information/awareness of the importance of the education of the girl-child;
- Lack of early childhood educational systems (pre-school) in most countries;
- Lack of motivation from poor parents who would prefer to have their girl-child work rather than go to school; and
- Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM).

2. Health: Achievement / Progress

- Establishment of multisectoral health programmes involving Ministries such as Health, Youth, and Education, as well as NGOs, for the establishment of community-based programmes;
- Reduction of teenage pregnancy through the inclusion of sex education in the school curricula as well as in the media;
- Establishment of national bodies to advocate the abolishment of FGM;
- Establishment of 24-hour child-lines for abused children; and
- Efforts made to prevent prostitution.

Constraints included:

- In the context of poverty, sex is becoming a coping mechanism for the survival of young girls. This has a negative impact on girls' health with regards to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS.
- The spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic has brought a new health challenge for the girl-child.

3. ***Legal Rights: Achievement / Progress***

Many countries reported that:

- Their governments have ratified the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC), on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the ILO Convention on the Employment of Children.
- Laws aimed at preventing and severely punishing perpetrators of FGM, sexual harassment, rape and the corruption of minors have been adopted.
- National campaigns for the application of legal rights have been implemented.
- Alliances have been established, for example, two NGOs working groups have established an International Network for Girls to contribute to the follow - up of the commitment made by governments and international organisations.

Constraints included:

- Inadequate application of laws and conventions on the rights of the girl-child;
- The emergence of new forms of violations through exploitation of child labour and child slavery;
- Abuse of the girl-child by internal as well as trans-border child-trafficking networks;
- Overburden of household responsibilities of some girls resulting from the spread of armed conflicts;
- Armed conflicts render girls vulnerable to rape, and other forms of sexual violations.

Additional resources and technical expertise are required to ensure that the gains made are not lost

So far only UNICEF had participated in this respect; therefore, there was an urgent need for support from other UN Agencies to implement and follow up national plans of action.

Reasons for mainstreaming the girl-child as a special and separate area of concern and as a separate category

Education:

The girl-child is the woman of tomorrow and should therefore be protected and empowered in view of the disadvantages she faces.

Health:

- Vulnerability to sexual harassment, HIV/AIDS and victim of negative cultural practices such as FGM and of cultural beliefs that encourage old men to defile young girls as a cure for diseases.
- Future generations depend on the survival of the girl-child

The special needs of the girl-child for integration into the programmes for empowerment of women

- Develop girl-child-specific policies;
- Put in place multisectoral approaches;
- Continue the sensitisation and advocacy of the rights of the girl-child at all levels.

Benchmarks and indicators for measuring progress in addressing the special needs of the girl-child

Indicators:

Countries should have baseline data against which achievements can be measured, including these qualitative and quantitative indicators:

1) Education

- The extent of sensitisation of parents and the community at large on issues of the girl-child, such as education, early marriage and FGM.
- The extent to which guidance counsellors form part of school administration.

2. Health

Implementation of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes targeting the girl-child through sex education seminars, media and peer alliances.

Establishment and strengthening of girl-friendly adolescent reproductive health services.

Sensitisation of parents on reproductive health issues.

3. Legal protection of the rights of the girl-child

- Setting up of national committees to put in place institutional structures that supervise and review the implementation of laws;
- Setting up of community-based child panels at district levels;
- Translation of laws protecting the rights of the girl-child into local languages, especially in the rural areas;
- Mainstreaming of girls' concerns in all related areas/sectors, not only in women's affairs departments.

Sexual violence, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, as well as early parenthood have a devastating effect on children's health and girls tend to be more vulnerable than boys.

The most important indicators that should be used to highlight the plight and conditions of young girls

- Statistics have to be disaggregated by sex and age;
- Rate of STDs and HIV/AIDS infections by sex and age;
- FGM prevalence and its consequences;
- Share of the public budget devoted to problems associated to the girl-child;
- Sensitisation of mothers on the harmful effects of differential socialisation of girls and boys.

Approaches to ensure girls' access to better health and education

Education:

- Compulsory and free primary school (at least 9 years of schooling);
- Financial support for poor families to send girls to school beyond 9 years;
- Social mobilisation community campaigns and advocacy for parents to maintain girls at school;
- Development of alternative educational experiences with vocational training.

Health:

- Provision of free medical health services for the girl-child;
- Payment of special attention to the needs of the refugee girl-child;
- Introduction and development of school curricula on sexual and reproductive health and drug abuse.

Country-level actions to accelerate implementation of the Platform to address the special needs of the girl-child

- Adoption of an active participatory approach by reflecting the needs of the girl-child in development plans and programmes and by encouraging the participation of the youth in national and international events;
- Establishment of children's parliament and community-based child panels to serve as appropriate frameworks for sensitising children to the issues of gender discrimination and rights;
- Sensitisation of the media, civil society, stakeholders (including religious leaders and community leaders) and mobilisation of influential national leaders for the promotion of children's rights as fundamental human rights;
- Lobbying for ratification and application of Conventions and laws which protect the girl-child;
- Promotion of laws against sexual violence and harassment of the girl-child and establishment of structures to support victims, including legal support;
- Amendment of Criminal Codes to reflect the severity of sex-related and other violent practices such as FGM;
- Establishment of 18 years as a minimum age for marriage;
- Mobilisation of resources for programmes targeting the needs of the girl-child, such as the 20//20 initiative; and
- Development (with stakeholders, including trade unions) of tools and mechanisms for assessing the impact of the plans of action.

Strategic actions that can be adopted in light of the experiences of the last five years

Partnerships among stakeholders in improving the situation of the girl-child at the national, subregional and regional levels are highly recommended for action at all levels.

The group recommended the following actions at the sub-regional, regional and international levels:

ECA, UNFPA, UNICEF and other relevant agencies should provide support to governments for the implementation of the plans of action;

Resources from UN agencies should be mobilised to assist civil society in the implementation of the Platform at the national level;

More NGOs should be active in the International Network for Girls to give heightened visibility to girls' issues in the work of the United Nations, in particular, that of the Commission on Human Rights, and to promote and implement international conventions at the country level; and

ECA / OAU should be involved in regional and subregional programmes and should set up structures that help in eliminating violence against the girl-child.

Recommendations to foster inter-generational relations within families and communities

- Eliminate cultural attitudes that forbid open discussions on topics related to sex ;
- Encourage education programmes, which include parent-child workshops, to encourage the girl-child to participate in debates on issues of interest to her.

Finally, the critical area of concern of the girl-child should be considered in a holistic form. It goes beyond the three areas of education, health and legal rights, as it is also a crosscutting issue in all other areas of the Beijing Platform for Action.