



# **TRACKING PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENDAS, INCLUDING NEPAD AND OTHER SPECIAL INITIATIVES IN THE SUBREGION**

## **PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN: MDG 3**

UNITED NATIONS  
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*“There is no time to lose if we are to reach the Millennium  
Development Goals by the date of 2015. Only by investing in the  
world’s women can we expect to get there”.*

*Kofi Annan*

*Former Secretary-General, United Nations (2000)*

*Economic Commission ECA for Africa, 2012*

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## ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AWR	African Women's Report
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IT	Information Technology
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSD	United Nations Statistical Department
VAW	Violence Against Women



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Millennium Declaration, signed in September 2000 at the United Nations' Millennium Summit, is guided by a set of specific, quantified, and time-set key targets on the various dimensions of human development: poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. These targets are to be achieved by 2015, from their 1990 level (United Nations, 2000).
2. The Millennium Development Goal 3 calls for gender equality and empowerment of women through measurement of the ratio of girls to boys in education, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, and the proportion of seats held by women in national legislatures. The Goal specifically commits member countries "to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate development that is truly sustainable" (United Nations, 2000).
3. In view of the decisive role of women and the cross-cutting dimension of gender in achieving this goal, countries were reminded of the urgency to invest in women, if indeed the targets are to be met by the set date. With just less than one third of the time left to the end of the target period, it is important to continue to take stock of the progress made in achieving the MDGs. Existing evidence suggests that, whilst some strides have been made, lowering the incidence of poverty, progress on reducing hunger, child/maternal mortality, enhancing environmental sustainability, and progress towards gender equality have been limited.
4. Since the 1975 United Nations Conference on the Decade for Women, and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA), agreed upon in Cairo, great strides have been made in promoting gender equality, albeit the slow attitudinal change towards seeing women as victims due to cultural and societal bias. Despite progress made since

this global meeting, women continued to face discrimination and marginalization, which led to the Beijing Declaration (**Box 1**). As we are in the millennium, the relentless struggle for globalization with a human face, peace, and gender equality and empowerment of women becomes increasingly relevant.

### **Box 1: Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development**

*“Absolute poverty and the feminization of poverty, unemployment, the increasing fragility of the environment, continued violence against women, and the widespread exclusion of half of humanity from institutions of power and governance underscores the need to continue the search for development, peace and security and for ways of assuring people-centered sustainable development”. **Beijing Declaration (1995).***

5. Gender equality and empowerment of women featured on the agenda of the international community long before the promulgation of the Millennium Summit. Achievement of women’s socio-economic progress were spelt out in international and regional declarations such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1975), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), and the African Union 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA).
6. The Seventh African Regional Conference on Women, held in Addis Ababa in 2004, called for greater efforts in promotion of gender equality, and outlined several key actions to be taken, particularly in the crucial areas of health and education.
7. The Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) confirmed the cross-cutting nature of gender. Taking a major move to provide the necessary structures and frameworks for gender mainstreaming, ECOWAS established a Gender Development Center in 2003. These efforts were strengthened by the adoption of the gender policy document to mainstream gender in the subregion and empower women.

8. The scrutiny of MDG 3 in Africa in general, and in West Africa in particular, reveals an encouraging performance as countries continue to register overall progress in girls' net enrolment in primary education, although retention has been a major challenge. Only a few countries have succeeded to increase girls' enrolment in secondary education. With respect to tertiary education, paucity of data did not render it viable to report performance. Nonetheless, existing literature suggests that, due to social and cultural bias, girls' enrolment drops drastically as they move to higher schooling levels. Women's wage employment in the non-agricultural sector has not improved due to their low level of education and skills. Women continue to care for children, the sick, and the old, gather fuel and water, and prepare food. Women undertake unpaid household chores that are not recorded in countries' national accounts. The extent to which women's contribution continues to be ignored is reflected in their low level of employment in all sectors of the economy.
9. Since MDG 3 is at the center of all MDGs, from reducing poverty and mitigating hunger to improving health, extending education and lowering child mortality, ensuring environmental sustainability and improving partnership, the report argues that strengthening measures to achieve this particular goal are expected to enhance attainment of the other MDGs.
10. This report assesses performance towards achieving MDG 3 by examining relevant indicators and other cross-cutting dimensions of gender. The report relies on existing literature and secondary data. The report is not exhaustive due to paucity of data relating to some of the indicators. Therefore, the outcome is merely indicative, inviting member States to take measures to avail missing data, and more specifically sex-disaggregated national data, to allow for realistic assessment. To enrich the experience of learning from one another, glimpse of country experiences shall be presented.
11. The report is presented in four sections starting with this introduction whilst chapter two sheds some light on tracking progress under the various indicators. Chapter three shall identify some challenges

and steps towards achieving the goals, and chapter four ends with conclusion and the way forward.

## **II. TRACKING PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

12. The objective of MDG 3 is to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women through ensuring parity in education, employment in the non-agricultural sector, and participation in decision making. What is the situation in West Africa since the launch of the MDGs in 2000? Although periodic monitoring of implementation suggests considerable progress registered in attaining some of the indicators, and the potential in others, challenges still persist and could jeopardize meeting the set target date of 2015. The persistence of poverty, mainly due to lack of economic opportunities, is the root cause of all problems placing women in a vicious circle deepening the already critical access to health, education, and political participation.
13. Achieving the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women calls for elimination of gender disparity in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, parity in wage employment, and full political participation manifested by increased seats held by women in national parliaments.

### **2.1 Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education**

14. The ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education is defined as the ratio of the number of female students enrolled at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels in public and private schools to the number of male students. The indicator provides ratio of the number of enrolled girls to enrolled boys, regardless of ages.

15. As early as 1990, governments have committed to achieving universal primary education through the global declaration on “Education for All”, which was reinforced and reflected in two of the MDGs. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) confirms that education is a basic human rights, and is pivotal in achieving equality, peace, and development. As one of BPfA’s 12 critical areas of concern, education is the driving force to attain all the others. Inability to achieve the education target will jeopardize the chances of achieving other MDGs, as basic education is key to unlocking intrinsic human talent. Education empowers women to assert their rights, and enhances self-confidence. Evidence shows that an educated mother is more likely to avoid early marriage, apply family planning including spacing pregnancies, and reach out for medical assistance when needed.
  
16. While considering the link to achieving parity in education and gender equality, it is critical to address the specific obstacles that girls and boys face in accessing education, because girls face additional barriers specific to their gender. Although both girls and boys may drop out of school, the reasons differ and some are gender specific. Girls are more likely than boys to be called upon to take care of the family, sick relatives or younger siblings. Early pregnancy and the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS on the continent are some of the other factors contributing to girls’ high school drop-out rates. Towards minimizing barriers to girls continued education, some ECOWAS member countries introduced specific measures (**Box 2**) targeting girls.

**Box 2: Some West African Countries Addressing the Special Needs of Girls**

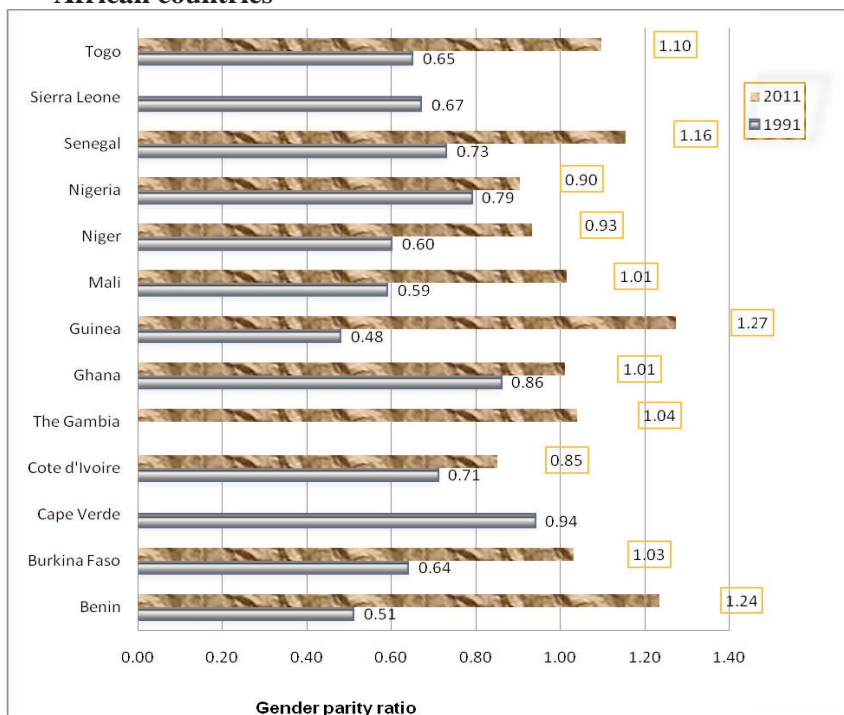
*Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Niger, and Nigeria target girls as a special group with specific needs to be addressed. These governments consider that no barriers should prevent pregnant adolescents from continuing their education, and therefore have plans in place to ensure achievement of this objective. Readmission of teen mothers is ensured after delivery, and some countries take protective measures to discount the pregnancy year from school records. In addition, laws related to the protection of minors are being amended and laws on the age of marriage are being harmonized with the international standards.*

*Source: ( UNECA, 2010)*

17. These measures contribute to guaranteeing girls' retention in schools, foster efforts towards eliminating illiteracy among women, and increase the ratio of girls in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, and thereby fulfill countries' global commitment to "Education for All". Long distance travel to learning establishments exposes girls to violence and fear. Gender-sensitive approaches are therefore necessary for achieving universal primary education, and include an analysis and recognition of the nature of the gender gap in schooling.
18. Despite those challenges, over the past few decades the 2011 Human Development Report reveals that access to education has shown remarkable increases across the board for both men and women. However, the gap is still significant in many developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa the gender gap has narrowed by 26 points, while in West African countries (including Liberia, Niger, and Togo) women have less than half of men's years of schooling. Several African countries report progress in reducing illiteracy levels, particularly among women. At primary school level, most African countries are expected to be on track to reach the target, although retention has been a major challenge.

19. According to a recent assessment of performance in primary education, 28 African countries have increased gender parity from 0.02 to 0.37 points. Out of these countries, Guinea and The Gambia have managed to reduce gender disparity the most, by 0.37 and 0.35 points, respectively (UNECA MDGs Report, 2010).

**Figure 1: Gender parity index in primary level enrolment in West African countries**



**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (updated in August, 2011)

Note : 1991 baseline data unavailable for Guinea Bissau, Liberia and the Gambia  
2009/2011 data unavailable for Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Data unavailable for Cape Verde and the Gambia – data used is for 2009

20. The analysis of the gender parity index at primary education level between 1991 and 2009 (**Fig. 1**) shows that of the 15 countries of West Africa with available data, eight countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Togo) have surpassed the



gender parity in primary enrollment, whilst Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, and Nigeria are very close to achieving the parity. Data was unavailable for Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone – most likely due to past uncertainties in socio-political conditions of these countries. The impressive achievement of West African countries is the result of implementation of key policies such as scholarships, provision of housing facilities and educational support to needy but promising students from rural areas.

21. Since Africa is beset with the lowest adult literacy rate in general, and with gender disparities disfavoring women, a number of countries have instituted measures including provision of meals, school supplies, and gender-sensitive facilities to reduce girls drop-out rates in primary education, which resulted in increasing the female literacy rates.

22. Although the trend in narrowing the gap between girls' and boys' primary enrolment is rather encouraging, this alone does not result in achieving the gender parity in education by 2015. More action is needed to ensure girls' retention. Failure to keep the "promise" to provide good basic education to each and every girl child is likely to undermine the chances of reaching the other MDGs, and thereby threatens to reverse the gains made so far towards gender equality and empowerment of women. Concerted effort must be undertaken to free girls and women from household chores, care giving responsibilities, and societal pressure for early marriage to enable them to participate in educational and other productive activities.

### **2.1.1 Ratio of girls to boys in secondary and tertiary education**

23. With respect to secondary and tertiary education, inadequate infrastructure problems added to cultural and societal bias on girls' education, and seem to exacerbate the problem resulting in a sharp decline in enrolment.

24. Whilst advances were made in girls' primary school enrolment,

secondary and tertiary enrolment levels remain low. Evidence shows that most countries fail to report on gender parity at the tertiary level, most likely due to many challenges including lack of baseline data. The margin of boys to girls ratio in secondary education shows even a wider gap in tertiary education, calling for practical steps to reverse the existing trend. The government of Ghana (**Box 3**) introduced groundbreaking measures to address the needs of girls and thereby enhance their enrolment in secondary schools.

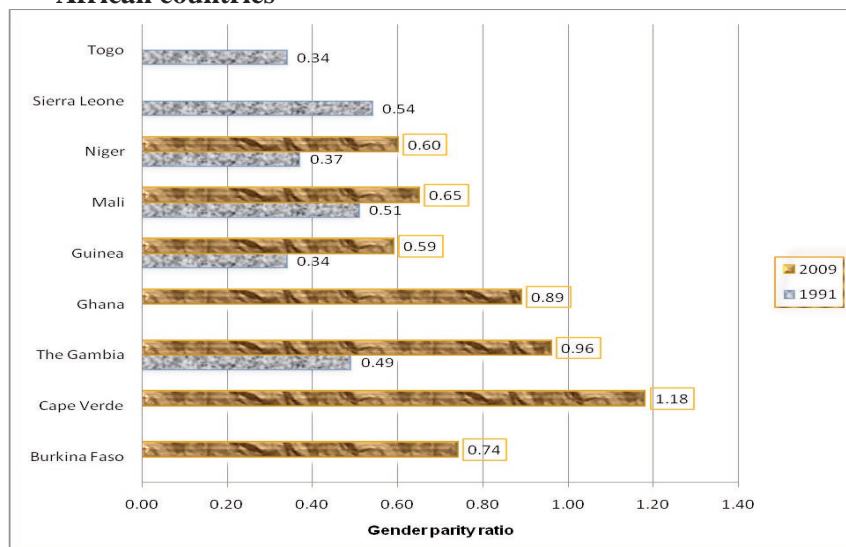
**Box 3: The Government of Ghana's Initiatives to Enhance Girls Enrollment**

*To make remaining in school attractive for girls, the Government of Ghana initiated efforts towards construction of women's dormitories in secondary schools, the provision of school supplies and uniforms to needy girls, the sponsoring of scholarships for girls, the opening of gender-friendly toilets and the offering of meals, including rations that can be taken home.*

**Source: UNDP, 2010, 'The Path to Achieving the MDGs'**

25. According to the 2010 ECA MDGs assessment, gender parity at secondary level education between 1991 and 2007 shows that 26 African countries have regressing parity indices, while the remaining 19 countries reduced gender disparity in the range of 0.03 to 0.04 points. According to the 2010 projection, the report reveals that The Gambia is the only West African country to reduce gender disparity the most, by 0.4 points (UNECA, MDGs Report, 2010).

**Figure 2: Gender Parity Index in Secondary level enrollment in West African countries**

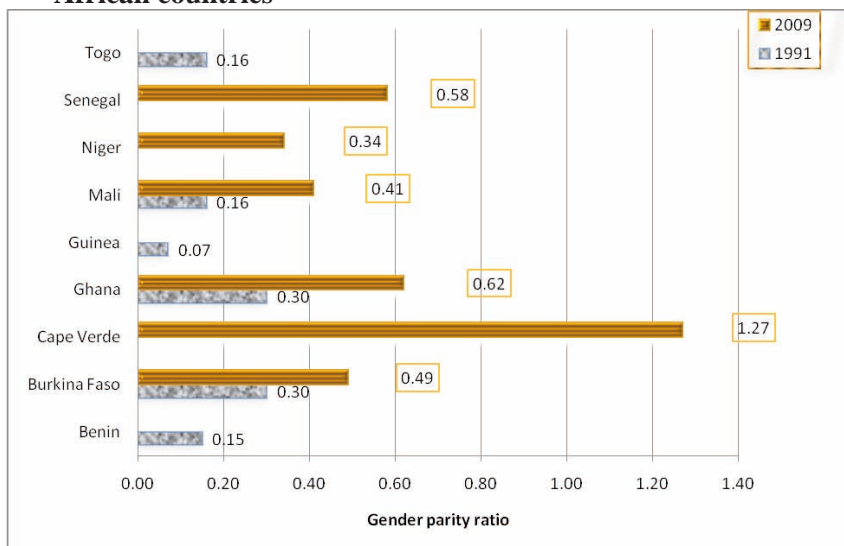


**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011)

**Note:** 1991 baseline data unavailable for: Benin and Cape Verde 2009 data unavailable for: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo.

26. The Gambia and Ghana scored close to gender parity at 0.96 per cent and 0.89 per cent, respectively, and Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Guinea and Sierra Leone registered slightly above 0.50 per cent (Fig.2). In the case of Mali, the low performance is partly attributed to increased spending on primary education, especially for girls and children in rural areas that resulted in the unintended effect of overtaxing the secondary school. Whilst the reasons of low performance for those countries emerging from conflict could relate to their socio-economic reconstruction, given the challenges in girls' enrolment in secondary education with less than 0.50 per cent gender parity in most of these countries, it is unlikely that West African countries will reach this target by 2015.

**Figure 3: Gender parity index in tertiary level enrolment in West African countries**



**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011)

**Note:** 1991 baseline data unavailable for Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone.

2009 data unavailable for Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo

27. Likewise, in tertiary education performance was low, with girls’ enrolment drastically declining, especially in the natural arts, science, and mathematics. Lack of gender disaggregated data for this indicator has been reported as a persistent challenge.

28. Tertiary education parity is the least reported on by most African countries and West Africa is no exception. The analysis between 1991 to 2009 (Fig. 3) for six of the countries revealed that Cape Verde is the lead country slightly surpassing the gender parity index (1.27 per cent). The performance of Cape Verde is consistent in this category in view of the achievement of near gender parity in primary and surpassing parity in secondary school enrolment. Ghana and Senegal scored 0.62 and 0.58 per cent parity respectively whilst Burkina Faso and Mali (0.49 and 0.44 per cent) respectively whilst

Benin, Guinea and Togo registered 0.15, 0.07 and 0.36 per cent respectively showing the low performance.

29. Notwithstanding less than gender parity performance, steps were taken in support of the 2004 Beijing Follow-up Conference, which urged countries to take necessary measures and also institute and strengthen affirmative action measures including scholarships at all levels for female students, establish distance and non-formal education and literacy programs for women. The 2009 Beijing Follow-up Conference held in Banjul also urged governments that progression of girls and boys from primary to secondary school levels requires further “subsidization of secondary and technical education”. (UNECA, 2010).
30. Whilst great strides have been made across the continent in improving the gender parity at primary education level, this success did not trickle down to enrolment at secondary and tertiary education. In view of the overall socio-economic performance of most of the countries and prevailing gender inequality, analysis of existing data with respect to this indicator reveals that chances of countries to achieve gender parity in secondary and tertiary levels by the set date are very unlikely.

## **2.2 Women’s share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector**

31. The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is the share of female workers expressed as a percentage of total employment. The non-agricultural sector of the economy includes industry and services.
32. Women’s participation in the non-agricultural sector is an important barometer of the economic empowerment of women, since the indicator measures the degree to which labor markets are open to women in the formal sectors. Their lower share in the sector affects not only equal employment opportunity for women, but also economic efficiency through inflexibility of the labor market.

33. The 2011 Human Development Report confirms that in sub-Saharan Africa full and decent employment remains a challenge for many women obliged to work in low-paying jobs. Women are poorly represented outside agriculture, with only 36 per cent of them working in non-agricultural sectors. Women constitute a disproportionate segment of the unemployed and the working poor (**Box 4**), thereby perpetuating the feminization of poverty, which in turn slows down human capital development of African countries.
34. Women's share of employment in the civil services and in the formal sector (public and/or private) is limited. They are mostly found working in small enterprises and the informal sectors, or as own account workers. Women are dominant in non-market activities and care economy, and this limits participation in the formal sectors. In most countries, the ratio of women in the non-agricultural sector invariably tends to be higher than men's. Literature review indicates that around 65 per cent of persons operating in informal sector activities are women who are engaged mainly in small businesses. Similarly, most West African women are cross-border informal trade operators, and they are largely involved in food processing. In view of their dominance in the informal sector, women are prime beneficiaries of the micro-finance institutions.

**Box 4: The Government of Burkina Faso on Vulnerability of Women Workers**

*In 2007, contributing family workers and own-account workers, regarded as the more vulnerable status in employment categories, accounted for 93.4 per cent of the total employment in Burkina Faso. Similar to the pattern of many other labor market indicators, the vulnerable employment rate was higher for women and young people, and higher in rural than in urban areas.*

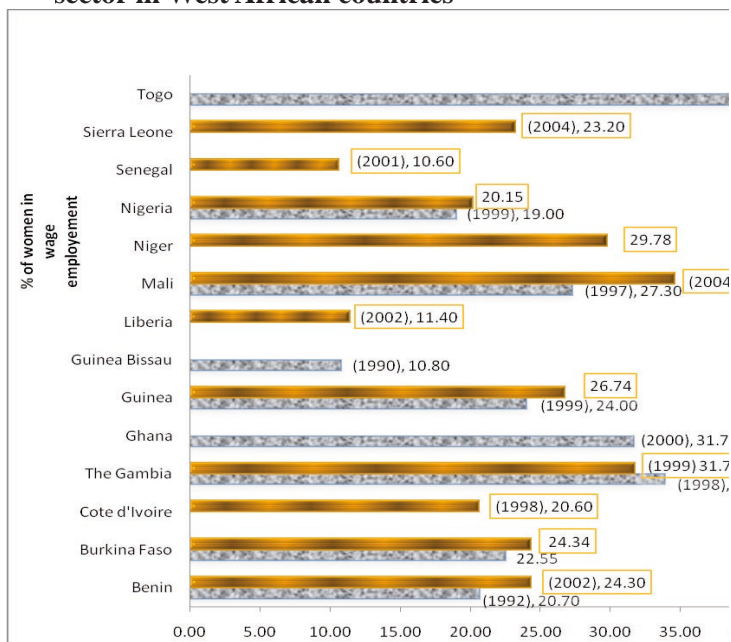
*Source ( ILO, 2011)*

35. The provision of decent employment for women empowers them, and helps them overcome all other challenges. A recent ILO report argues that gender inequality in the labor market persists in relative unemployment rates, occupational segregation, wage gaps, over-

representation in the informal economy, inadequate social protection, and economic insecurity (ILO, 2011a). Women are burdened with gender specific responsibilities relating to reproductive roles and domestic chores, which deprives them of opportunities to participate in formal employment.

36. The restricted number of women who succeed to join the labor market are marginalized because their rights in the labor market are violated. Women continue to face discrimination, although most of the countries have ratified international instruments forbidding the practice. Thirteen of the West African countries have ratified ILO Conventions 100 and 111 dealing with wage discrimination in employment and wage remuneration. Despondently, Mali is the only West African country that has ratified the ILO Maternity Protection Convention (#183). (ILO, 2011b).
37. The ILO report further suggests that policies to promote productive and quality employment must be strengthened, targeting the youth, women, and rural workers especially in the poorest regions of the world. This calls for measures and commitment by countries to promote and improve non-agricultural income-generating activities in rural areas, and promotion of youth and women's employment in urban areas (ILO, 2011b).
38. The last decade has witnessed some progress concerning the integration of gender perspectives into economic policy-making, and the promotion of women's participation in the non-agricultural sector. Countries are incorporating measures such as provision of training, access to finance,, and creating an enabling environment which have resulted in the progress being made in the number of enterprises owned by women at both formal and informal levels.
39. Governments and the private sector are taking encouraging measures to improve the legal framework and to strengthen capacities. Some West African countries where participation of women in the formal economy has improved are reporting some progress in employment in the non-agricultural sector.

**Figure 4: Share of Women in Wage Employment in non agricultural sector in West African countries**



**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011),

**Note:** 1991 baseline data unavailable for Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Niger, Sierra Leone and Senegal

2009 data unavailable for Cape Verde , Ghana, Guinea Bissau and Togo

40. According to the 2010 MDG review report, female employees in non-agricultural wage employment increased from 25 to 31 per cent between 1990 and 2006 in sub-Saharan Africa, while in northern Africa the proportion remained at 21 per cent during the same period (ECA, 2009).

41. This indicator has remained the most difficult of all to report on, due to data unavailability that made it impossible to track changes and make meaningful analysis with respect to the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector. The available information (**Fig. 4**) shows Mali (34 per cent), The Gambia (32 per cent), Niger (30 per cent), Guinea (27 per cent), Burkina Faso (24 per cent), Sierra Leone (23 per cent), Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria



(20 per cent, respectively), and Liberia and Senegal (11 per cent, respectively). Data was unavailable for Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, and Togo. In light of this low performance, West African countries need to exert efforts to increase the share of women in the non-agricultural sector.

42. Mali's highest performance is attributed, amongst others, to the government's partnership with the United Nations system and other development partners in supporting the informal trade organized by women in mango market. In The Gambia, where the economy is led by tourism, trading, and fisheries, women are involved in the informal sector. Notwithstanding the steps taken to boost women's participation in the non-agricultural sector, mainly in industry and services, there is need to make substantial progress since performance is far from success.

### **2.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament**

43. The proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments is the number of seats held by women expressed as a percentage of all occupied seats. This proportion represents an aspect of women's opportunities in political and public arena, and is therefore linked to women's empowerment, political participation, and decision-making.
44. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making, as stipulated in BPfA, will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society, and allows for a more just and democratic path of sustainable development. The social and economic status of women plays a decisive role in their participation in political institutions and legislative bodies. The progress in implementing democratic principles is enriched by adopting inclusive processes that ensure women's participation in politics.
45. The 2009 Banjul Conference (**Box 5**) called on member States to support women to access elected positions (municipal and

parliamentary), and to encourage leadership and capacity building programs especially for young women. This recommendation should be developed to enable women to exercise responsibility at all levels. The reorganization and revitalization of women's civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations need to be encouraged and supported. Most countries renewed their commitment to intensify resource mobilization efforts, improve national strategies, and enhance institutional, financial, and human resources towards increasing women's political participation. Whilst the BPfA adopted a 30 per cent minimum quota in national parliaments, the African Union calls for a 50:50 gender parity and representation in all structures. However, evidence points to the existing wide gap between commitment and delivery, and the perpetuated lag in attaining the BPfA minimum quota or the AU target, thus hampering women's political participation.

**Box 5: The Banjul Declaration on Implementation of Affirmative Action**

*Adopt and implement affirmative action measures, notably quotas for gender parity, and set up institutional mechanisms supported by adequate resources to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies, as provided for in international, regional and sub regional instruments, and underpinned by constitutional guarantees and legislative provisions on gender parity. (Banjul Declaration, Fifteen-year Review of the implementation of the Dakar and BPfA).*

**Source:** “*Banjul Declaration (2009) - From Commitment to Action*”.

46. In Africa, women's voices in decision-making and participation in the political sphere remain at a relatively low level except for very few countries that have achieved the 30 per cent minimum level, mainly boosted through the quota system in electoral systems. Rwanda remains the only African country to have registered 56.3 per cent parliamentary seats, whilst Mozambique, South Africa, and Angola surpassed the minimum quota of seats (IPU, 2011). The 2010

ECA assessment of the MDGs observed the striking resemblance among the four high-performing countries: they emerged from internal conflict and civil war. This could imply, in some way, the amenability of post-conflict societies to acknowledge the continued participation of women in view of their demonstrated contribution during the war (UNECA, MDGs, 2010).

47. Despite some modest gains made, challenges reinforce each other and relegate women's participation to the lower levels. One significant hurdle is represented by the African societies' propensity not to acquiesce to their political participation. To this day, most African political parties are biased towards women's election and appointment to "men's preserves". Women's economic disempowerment is correlated to their low political participation since campaigns for parliamentary seats and political positions are costly undertakings, not to mention the limited time available to women who are usually overburdened with gender-specific responsibilities.
48. To increase women's representation in decision-making bodies, the Banjul Conference called upon member States to introduce measures, as provided for in international, regional, and sub regional instruments underpinned by constitutional promulgation and legislative provisions on gender parity. Adhering to this requirement, African countries, with the exception of Sudan and Somalia, have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, compliance has been far from satisfactory because implementation is hindered by important reservations, particularly on Article 2 (equality of men and women in national constitutions), and Article 16 (addressing matters related to marriage and family relations).
49. As a regional instrument, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted in July 2003, reaffirming women's rights in all spheres of life, including political participation. The commitment was renewed with the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), which was adopted by the African Union Heads of State

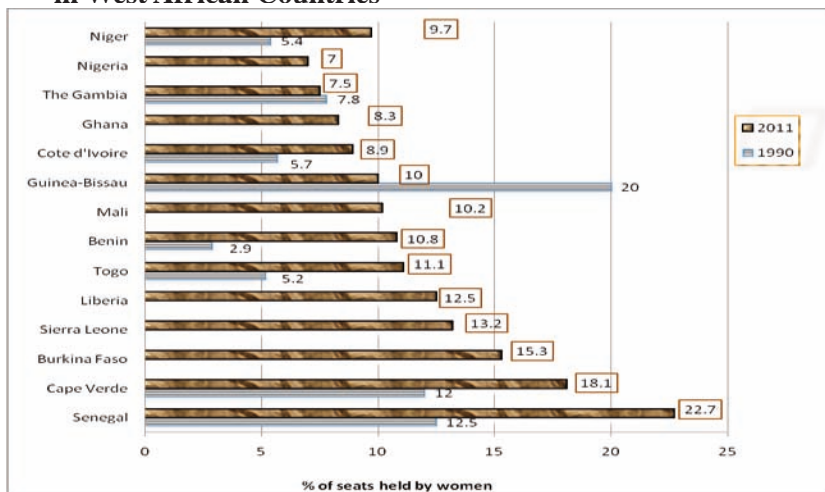
and Government in 2004. The SDGEA is an engagement to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, and to strengthen Africa's ownership of the agenda, and witnesses of its commitment at the highest level.

50. The steps taken by some countries included the scaling up of effective involvement of rights-based, non-governmental organizations that has led to the promotion of women's political participation. Also, with support from the United Nations system, the academia, and civil society organizations, some countries have embarked upon research to identify ways and means to promote women's political participation. The general trend indicates that, compared to previous years, countries have registered commendable increase in the number of women in parliament. In the past decade, African women have been gaining prominence in holding high political positions as a President, Vice President (Liberia and The Gambia, respectively), Prime Minister, and other senior portfolios traditionally held by men.
51. Whilst encouraging results have been registered, gender equality and equity principles are yet to be fully integrated and articulated into democratization and decision-making processes, to ensure full and effective representation of women in national parliaments. This relates to other aspects of women's access to decision-making, especially in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace-building, since at times of conflict women suffer the most (in addition to bearing the impacts of war, they are also victims of violence). When peace is regained, it is imperative to involve women in the decision-making process.
52. The experience of Latin America, where quotas for women in the legislature are now widespread and increasingly exceed those of men, demonstrates that empowerment requires a more comprehensive approach (Dahlerup 2006). This includes efforts to improve women's access to resources such as credit, entrepreneurial training, advocacy, and respect for their inheritance and land rights. Such approach includes, for example, anti-discrimination and anti-

gender-based violence legislation, gender-aware justice systems, and adequately resourced government machineries that are mandated to improve gender equality. It also requires an ongoing articulation between women’s civil society collective action and formal political representatives, if women’s voices are to have a sustainable transformative impact (Jones, Holmes and Espey, 2010)

53. In view of cultural and societal bias against women participation in politics, tremendous efforts still are needed to increase the proportion of seats held by women parliamentarians, as these are entry points to their political participation in achieving women’s rights. Equally important is the capacity of women elected to political positions to contribute to policy analysis and debate. Caution is recommended because the mere number of seats held by women does not guarantee the effective women’s participation. It is imperative to ascertain the number of women chairing important committees and commissions in parliaments.

**Figure 5: Proportion of seats held by Women in national parliaments in West African Countries**



*Source: Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011.)*

**Note:** 1991 baseline data unavailable for Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. 2009 data unavailable for Guinea

54. According to the 2011 Inter-Parliamentary Union report, the Nordic countries registered the highest performance scoring 42.3 per cent, whilst sub-Saharan Africa with 20.4 per cent improved performance ranked very close to the Americas and Europe (20.5 per cent).
55. As illustrated in **Fig. 5**, data for 2011 for 14 West African countries is available, except for Guinea. Senegal (22.7 per cent) is the best performer in the sub-region, followed by Cape Verde (18.1 per cent). Burkina Faso registered 15.3 per cent, while Sierra Leone and Liberia scored 13.2 and 12.5 per cent, respectively, an encouraging progress in view of the countries' emergence from conflict. With 10 per cent and less, Togo, Benin, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, The Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, and Guinea performed much less than the minimum quota. Senegal, the best performer, amended the electoral law to include a mandatory requirement that all candidates' lists for legislative, regional, municipal, and rural elections comprise equal number of male and female candidates, which is an important move to attaining the parity. The improved performance registered by the government of Cape Verde is the result of its close partnership with "One United Nations Programme" to address major gender-related challenges including political participation of women and decision-making.
56. In most African countries, women's participation in politics in general, and in particular in the executive, the judiciary, and traditional or professional associations and other public spheres is still very low. The low performance calls for strict adherence to the institutionalization of the minimum quota of women parliamentarians to boost the proportion of seats held by women.

### **III. CHALLENGES AND STEPS REQUIRED IN ACHIEVING MDG 3**

57. As noted earlier, gender equality and the empowerment of women are crucial for achieving the other MDGs. In light of this recognition, women's empowerment has received greater visibility on global, regional, and country level development agendas. For sub-Saharan Africa, this has resulted in the introduction of various programmes to address gender discrepancies and, as a result, modest and uneven progress has been made in some countries towards the attainment of MDG 3. Despite this uneven progress, women have not been fully involved in policy formulation processes in many countries, and where this has been done, commitments are not translated into action and this affects implementation. With less than five years remaining to the MDGs target date of 2015, there is need to identify areas that need further effort in order to accelerate progress.
58. The need to enhance implementation of already existing policies and programmes, including CEDAW and BPfA, as suggested by John, Holms and Espey (2010), is logical in order to strengthen areas where gains have already been made and address those that are lagging behind. In addition to this approach, focusing on five areas: education and training, economic empowerment, eliminating violence against women, enhancing political participation and addressing discrimination, and strengthening institutional mechanisms for effective gender mainstreaming can accelerate progress towards MDG 3.

#### **3.1 Education and Training for Women**

59. The Beijing Declaration recognizes education as the center of achieving all other critical areas. In view of the direct correlation of education with poverty alleviation, improvement in health, employment, and women's rights, access to basic and higher

education levels to women and girls is an important ingredient in enhancing their economic empowerment, political participation, combating gender-based violence, and eradicating discrimination.

60. Cognizant of the dividends of education and commitment to universal calls like “Education For All”, countries improved access to education. Some of the measures adopted were, amongst others, the policy of free and compulsory education at the primary level, in which Africa registered substantial progress especially in primary enrolment. In addition, most countries have introduced important measures to reduce illiteracy among adult women, enhance enrolment in primary, secondary, and tertiary education through affirmative action, scholarships, and by establishing distance special learning facilities to accelerate gender equality in education.
  
61. However, whilst most African countries are likely to achieve gender parity in primary enrolment by 2015, challenges persist in retention due to, amongst others, social and cultural bias. Girls handle household chores, and are at times coaxed into early marriage due to traditional and cultural practices, and therefore are forced to abandon schooling. As a result, the ratio of girls declines drastically at the secondary and tertiary levels. Further, fewer girls enroll in natural sciences, mathematics, and technology classes, and this results in fewer women taking up careers in these areas. The high illiteracy rate amongst women limits the types of vocational and skills training they could access, and girls’ enrolment in vocational training is lower than boys’. Low educational qualifications and the lack of training amongst girls and women result in accepting low-paying jobs that disempower them economically. As a result of these low level jobs, women are prone to poor income levels, ill health, and could be exposed to gender-based violence. The vicious circle of poverty is created as the girl child is deprived of education and is married off at an early age.



62. The correlation highlighted above requires that countries open education opportunities to women strengthen actions to introduce innovative steps for the provision of financial support to economically disadvantaged students, and address gender based violence against the girl student.

### **3.2 Economic Empowerment of Women**

63. Economic empowerment is one means for reducing poverty and inequality, and to promote economic growth. Therefore, it is key for achieving gender equality. Notwithstanding women's limited participation in wage employment and the formal sector, they are largely represented in the micro and small enterprises, agriculture, and the informal sectors, and play an important role in the economies of African countries.
64. The existence of unequal economic power relations between women and men is the major stumbling block to the empowerment of women. The economic empowerment of women is measured through their share in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector. Owing to low level of education and lack of skills, their share in the sector is small, and women dominate the informal sector and other low-paying jobs thereby perpetuating the feminization of poverty. Women's low level of participation has a direct link to their economic, cultural, and social discrimination. Studies indicate that women have higher labor burden than men, and are engaged in household chores, taking care of the children and the sick. As noted earlier, illiteracy among women limits access to the types of vocational and other skills training required to access better paying jobs.
65. Limited access to credit due to lack of collateral hinders the expansion of women's small enterprises. The lack of capital and weak infrastructure are hurdles that reinforce each other in limiting the economic expansion of women. In addition, women's lack of access to productive resources such as land, the primary means of production in agriculture, due to traditional and religious norms and inheritance systems deprives women of their rights and results in

economic disempowerment. The continued reliance of the majority of women on men for their livelihood perpetuates gender inequality and feminization of poverty.

66. Governments need to speed up implementation of international policies and programmes that focus on effective participation of women in economic activities. Women form the majority of the poor and vulnerable groups, thus any programme targeted at the poor should have a specific focus on women in order to have an impact. As observed in the African Women's Report, "the institution of the MDGs is a development catalyst based on a multi-dimensional definition of development and the realization of fundamental economic and social rights" to which women are entitled to.
67. In addition, the substantial undertakings of unpaid work done by women in the care economy are a major omission from national accounts of countries. Actions to incorporate this contribution need to be designed. Governments need to seize the MDGs momentum and take action in implementing policies and programmes that target women by removing barriers to their economic rights, including land inheritance, access to credit and access to formal and vocational training. These policies and programmes can boost women's employment in the non-agricultural and formal sectors.

### **3.3 Eliminate Violence Against Women**

68. Gender-based violence is a major obstacle to the achievement of equality, development, and peace. Women and girls continue to be seriously affected by gender-specific violations of their human, sexual, and reproductive rights at times of peace, and worse still, during internal conflict and civil war. In times of war, women and girls are victims of rape. Rape, impregnation of women with children of the "enemy", sexual slavery, forced termination of pregnancy, forced prostitution, and various other types of sexual violence are used as a "weapons of war". Violence against women, including rape and domestic violence, are still rampant, particularly in conflict and post-conflict zones.

69. The persistent discrimination, stereotyping, domination, and violence are serious impediments to women's advancement. In the absence of full protection of women against physical and psychological dangers, advancement in the socio-economic arena and the achievement of MDG 3 would be arduous tasks.
70. The prevention of violence against women is linked to the achievement of all other MDGs in view of its gender dynamics that cut across the other Goals. Taking appropriate measures to curb violence will enhance countries' chances to get closer to the Goal of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.
71. The principles of gender equality have been incorporated into the constitutions of many countries, and steps to changing or repealing discriminatory laws have been undertaken. In countries where the law was incorporated, enforcement has been a major bottleneck due to lack of commitment and capacity building. With respect to the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, although African countries and sub regional intergovernmental bodies such as ECOWAS have adopted policies, declaration, and guidelines, and have enacted legislation, enforcement still remains at a very low level. Moreover, implementation of policies and laws to protect the rights of women and girls are challenged by the coexistence of customary and religious norms mentioned earlier.
72. Through the SDGEA, the African Union was called upon to "give visible attention to the African Women's Protocol as the reference point for the implementation of the gendered aspects of other regional African initiatives, such as NEPAD, by setting high standards of reporting and monitoring of commitments on its provisions" (African Women's Report, 2009).
73. As noted earlier, governments should scale up efforts to ensure access to education for women and girls. This has wide-ranging effects on the advancement of societies towards the realization of women's rights, and empowers them to protect themselves against violence.

Raising awareness, counseling, and the provision of medical and psychological assistance rank top on the agenda to assist girls and women victims of violence, to ensure their reintegration into the society, and enable them to live free of fear and trauma.

### **3.4 Political Participation of Women and Discrimination**

74. Women's participation in politics is a manifestation of their political empowerment. Yet gender discrimination still exists, and women continue to be marginalized. The share of women in parliaments, for instance, is an entry point towards their political participation. However, due to persistent discrimination against women, their representation in national parliaments remains at a very low level, except for a few countries that achieved the target.
75. Those few African countries that surpassed the quota or registered gender parity succeeded through quota system, affirmative action, and other legislative mechanisms to boost women representation in parliament. Whilst these countries have registered modest progress towards improving political participation, women remain underrepresented at all levels of decision-making owing to cultural and societal bias against them. Most countries have enacted laws and adopted affirmative action to enhance the participation of women in decision-making. Despite the ratification of international and regional instruments, gender discrimination still persists in many countries. As observed earlier, the implementation of policies and laws on the participation of women is challenged by the coexistence of customary and religious norms.
76. As called for by the BPfA, governments should create and strengthen mechanisms to monitor women's access to senior levels of decision-making, and encourage efforts by non-governmental organizations, trade unions, and the private sector.
77. Countries should also honor their commitments to CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, and the African Union SDGEA thereby promoting women's participation. Adherence to the BPfA minimum quota of 30

per cent seats held in parliaments and the AU 50:50 gender parity in all structures are moves in the right direction to eliminate gender-based discrimination.

### **3.5 Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms for Effective Gender Mainstreaming**

78. Important steps have been undertaken by governments since the first BPfA conference and the adoption of ECOSOC Resolution (E/1997/100), calling for gender mainstreaming into national development policies and poverty reduction strategies. Many countries raised the portfolio of women's institutions to the level of Ministries. Other countries designed national gender policies and engendered their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) mainstreaming gender into sectoral issues such as education, health, environment, and agriculture. The establishment of gender machineries and appointment of gender focal points are encouraging steps towards advancing gender mainstreaming. However, evidence suggests that implementation in most countries is still very slow. Although the Addis Ababa and Banjul meetings on gender urged governments to take measures to strengthen these institutions expected to serve as conduits to mainstream gender in all spheres, challenges still persist and delay the implementation of policies and programmes to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women.
79. There is a clear lag in translating commitments into action. One of the major problems affecting these institutions is the lack of transparency and marginalization with respect to planning and preparation of the national budget. The concept of gender budgeting is still new to many countries and where some recognition exists, resistance has been a stumbling block. As a result, most national budgets are far from being engendered. Almost all of these institutions are plagued with inadequate financial resources and staffing of trained gender specialists. Lack of coordination and the political will to effectively structure such mechanisms is another impediment to the work of the institutions.

80. Countries should take measures to engender the national budget, develop and implement capacity building programmes, allocate adequate budget, and strengthen coordination mechanisms for the institutions in general and the gender machineries in particular. Strengthening partnerships and tapping into resources of development partners need to be considered, especially with respect to capacity building. Dissemination of knowledge through sharing of good practices needs a regional approach. Also effective involvement of the private sector, civil society organizations, academia, and the United Nations System would contribute towards addressing some of the challenges. The concrete actions should be time-bound to show steps undertaken and allow timely reporting of progress against the MDGs' target date.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD**

81 Although the lack of comprehensive sex-disaggregated data at country-level prevented detailed country-by-country analysis, the findings in this report enable us to extract generalized recommendations. At best, West Africa needs to scale up efforts towards the attainment of MDG 3. The report recognizes progress made by member States and also identifies challenges with respect to gender equality and empowerment of women in West Africa.

82. Low retention levels of girls in primary education and declining enrolment rates in secondary and tertiary education point to the need for urgent action by most countries to address this anomaly.

83. Women's economic disempowerment remains high due to their low level of education and general lack of skills. Women are relegated to agricultural work and the informal sector.

84. The representation of women in the legislative, judiciary, and

other public arenas remains insignificant. In a nutshell, violence against women, traditional values, and prejudice continue to pose serious challenges to achieving gender equality.

85. The following recommendations are presented for consideration as a way forward:

**86. At member States level, countries are invited to:**

- Take measures to translate international, regional, and sub regional commitment to gender equality into actions, especially towards economic empowerment of women, through skills development and creation of employment opportunities for women;
- Increase efforts to ensure availability of data, and more specifically sex-disaggregated data, to allow progress assessment; Engender the national budget and strengthen gender mainstreaming in line ministries and government structures;
- Provide adequate resources and strengthen the capacity of national gender machineries and gender focal points;
- Introduce specific and targeted measures to increase enrolment and retention of girls in secondary and tertiary levels, especially those enrolling in mathematics and science courses;
- Enhance the role of stakeholders, including traditional and religious leaders, to participate in sensitization efforts to change cultural views of the girl child and women to eradicate customs and norms that hinder women's empowerment;
- Strict adherence to minimum quota and application of affirmative actions to increase the representation of women in politics and other influential positions;
- Raise awareness on gender-based violence among illiterate/literate women and girls through audio/visual and other programs (plays/drama/media); and
- Enhance capacity building of the police and judicial institutions and other law enforcement institutions to provide timely, professional, and adequate support to victims of violence.

**87. At ECOWAS/UMOEA and Other Intergovernmental Organizations Level:**

- Enhance capacity building of member States by closely working with continental institutions such as the AU, AfDB, UNECA, and others working in the areas of gender issues by providing an opportunity for periodic sharing of experiences to facilitate peer learning;
- Strengthen internal capacity to be able to provide technical assistance to member States to address challenges related to gender equality and empowerment of women;
- Introduce mechanisms to help member States to conduct regular follow-up on implementation of international and national commitments, including strengthening their statistical capacity;
- Strengthen collaboration with all stakeholders, development partners, and funding institutions to design strategies and programmes for resource mobilization to assist member States in implementing their national gender policies.



## ANNEXES

### **Annex I: The Millennium Development Goals - Eight Goals for 2015**

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

ANNEX II

**Table 1** : Gender Parity Index in Primary level enrollment in West African countries

Country	1991	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2011
Benin	0.51	0.67	0.69	0.71	0.73	0.74	0.77	0.8	0.83		0.87	0.88	1.24
Burkina Faso	0.64	0.7	0.71	0.73	0.74	0.75	0.79	0.8	0.82	0.84	0.87	0.89	1.03
Cape Verde	0.94	0.96	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.94	0.93	
Cote d'Ivoire	0.71	0.74	0.75	0.76	0.74	0.8			0.79	0.79	0.79	0.81	0.85
Guinea	0.48	0.64	0.69	0.72	0.75	0.77	0.79	0.82	0.84	0.86	0.85	0.86	1.27
Guinea Bissau		0.67	0.67										
The Gambia		0.85	0.87	0.9	0.9	0.97	1	1.02	1.04	1.04	1.06	1.04	
Ghana	0.86	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.95	0.98	0.95	0.97	0.99	0.99	0.99	0.99	1.01
Liberia		0.74	0.72							0.91	0.9		
Mali	0.59	0.71	0.74	0.73	0.75	0.76	0.77	0.78	0.8	0.81	0.83	0.84	1.01
Niger	0.6	0.68	0.69	0.69	0.7	0.71	0.71	0.72	0.73	0.74	0.78	0.8	0.93
Nigeria	0.79	0.8	0.8	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.83	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.85	0.88	0.90
Senegal	0.73	0.82	0.86	0.88	0.9	0.92	0.95	0.96	0.98	1	1.02	1.04	1.16
Sierra Leone	0.67			0.68									
Togo	0.65	0.75	0.78	0.79	0.81	0.82	0.84	0.85	0.86	0.86	0.88	0.94	1.10

Source: Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011) <<http://mdg.un.org/un/mdg/Datas.aspx>> accessed February 11, 2012.

**Table 2 : Gender Parity Index in Secondary level enrollment in West African countries**

Country	1990	1991	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Benin			0.46	0.47	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.48	0.57				
Burkina Faso			0.62	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.69	0.7	0.71	0.73	0.73	0.74	0.74
Cape Verde					1.04	1.04	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.15	1.18	1.1	1.18
Cote d'Ivoire			0.54	0.54	0.55	0.56							
Guinea		0.34	0.37	0.38	0.4	0.42	0.46	0.46	0.51	0.53	0.57	0.59	0.59
Guinea Bissau				0.55									
Ghana			0.8	0.82	0.84	0.85	0.85	0.84	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.89	0.89
The Gambia		0.49										0.94	0.96
Liberia			0.63	0.71									
Mali		0.51	0.53	0.55			0.54	0.59	0.61	0.61	0.65	0.64	0.65
Niger		0.37	0.59	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.61	0.61	0.63	0.63	0.61	0.6	0.6
Nigeria			0.88	0.82	0.81	0.74	0.76	0.78	0.81	0.81	0.77		
Senegal			0.64	0.65	0.66	0.67	0.69	0.72	0.75	0.76	0.77	0.79	
Sierra Leone		0.54			0.68								
Togo		0.34	0.4	0.45	0.46	0.48	0.49	0.51	0.53	0.54	0.53		

**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011) < <http://mdg.un.org/un/mdg/Datas.aspx>> accessed February 11, 2012.

**Table 3 : Comparison of Gender Parity Index in Tertiary level enrollment in West African countries**

Country	1990	1991	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Benin		0.15	0.25	0.25	0.25								
Burkina Faso		0.3	0.3	0.3	0.35	0.35	0.3	0.3	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.5	0.49
Cape Verde				0.98	0.99	1	10.8	10.8	1.02	1.08	1.2	1.24	1.27
Cote d'Ivoire			0.37	0.39						0.49	0.5		
Guinea		0.07					0.19	0.19	0.24	0.28	0.34	0.34	
Guinea Bissau			0.18	0.18	0.18								
Ghana		0.3							0.56	0.53	0.54		0.62
The Gambia			0.29	0.29				0.23					
Liberia			0.24	0.74									
Mali		0.16	0.46	0.47	0.49	0.49	0.51	0.53	0.53		0.45	0.45	0.41
Niger							0.3	0.3	0.33	0.29	0.32	0.34	0.34
Nigeria			0.77				0.53	0.53	0.7				
Senegal										0.46	0.53	0.54	0.58
Sierra Leone				0.77	0.38	0.38							
Togo		0.16											

**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011) < <http://mdg.un.org/un/mdg/Datas.aspX> > accessed February 11, 2012.

**Table 4 : Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector in West African countries**

Country	1990	1991	1992	1995	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Benin			20.7									24.3				
Burkina Faso	23			22.1	23.1		22.6	23.2	23.3	23.2	23.6	24.8	25.4	26.5	26.5	
Cape Verde								38.9								
Cote d'Ivoire						20.8										
Guinea							24	24.2	25.2	25.2	25.6	26	28.5	28.7	28.8	28.5
Guinea Bissau	10.8															
Ghana								31.7								
The Gambia						33.9	31.7									
Liberia										11.4						
Mali					27.3							34.6				
Niger													25.4	27.2	30.4	36.1
Nigeria							19	18.6	19.3	20.1	20.8	21	21.1			
Senegal									10.6							
Sierra Leone															23.2	
Togo	41															

**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in July, 2011) < <http://mdg.un.org/un/mdg/Datas.aspx> accessed February 11, 2012>

**Table 5: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament in West African countries**

Country	1990	1991	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Benin	2.9		7.2	7.2	7.2	6	6	6	6	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	10.8	10.8
Burkina Faso			3.7	9	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	11.7	11.7	11.7	11.7	11.7	15.3	15.3
Cape Verde	12		11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	1.11	1.11	1.11	1.11	15.3	15.3	18.1	18.1
Cote d'Ivoire	5.7		8.3	8	8			8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.9	8.9
Guinea			7	7	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	19.3	19.3	19.3	19.3	19.3	19.3	1
Guinea Bissau	20		10	10	10		7.8	7.8	7.8		14	14	14	14	10
Ghana				9	9	9		9	9	9	10.9	10.9	10.9	10.9	7.9
The Gambia	7.8		2	2	2	2	2		13.2	13.2	13.2	13.2	9.4	9.4	9.4
Liberia			5.7				7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	5.3	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5

**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011) < <http://mdg.un.org/un/mdg/Datas.aspx> accessed February 11, 2012>.

**Table 5: (Cont'd.) Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament in West African countries**

Country	1990	1991	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Mali			2.3	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	12.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2	10.2
Niger	5.4		1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4	12.4
Nigeria							3.4	3.4	3.4	6.7	4.7	6.4	6.1	7	7
Senegal	12.5		11.7	11.7	12.1	12.1	12.1	16.7	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	22	22
Sierra Leone			6.3			8.8	8.8	8.8	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	13.2	13.2
Togo	5.2		1.2	1.2	1.2		4.9	4.9	7.4	7.4	6.2	7.4	8.6	11.1	11.1

**Source:** Compiled from UNSD data (Updated in August, 2011) < <http://mdg.un.org/un/mdg/Datas.aspx> accessed February 11, 2012>.

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