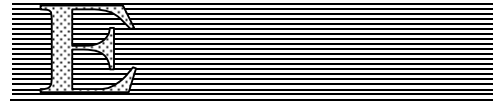




**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**



Distr: General

Original: English

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
African Centre for Gender**

Ninth Africa Regional Conference on Women
(Beijing +20)

Addis Ababa
17-19 November 2014

Twenty-Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) + 20

**Africa Regional Review
Summary Report
1995-2014**

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Acronyms

ACHPR	African Charter on the Human and Peoples' Rights
ADF VI	Sixth Africa Development Forum
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
AU	African Union
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM	Female genital mutilation
HIPC	Highly indebted poor countries
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICTs	Information and communications technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NGP	National gender policy
PoA	Programme of Action
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
VAW	Violence against women

Introduction

1. In 2015, Governments will assemble in New York, USA to review progress made in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), twenty years after its adoption. In this context, Africa, supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is reviewing its performance in delivering the outcomes agreed upon at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995 in Beijing, China as well as in subsequent reviews including the landmark Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women (Beijing +15), held in 2009 – in the Gambia.

2. The Beijing +20 review takes place against a backdrop of global and regional normative frameworks and milestones put in place to accelerate the implementation of the commitments to gender equality, equity and empowerment of women, which are central to the BPfA. At the global level, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolutions 1820 and 1888 in 2009 to strengthen the implementation of its resolution 1325 (2000), which calls on Member States to address the issues of gender, peace and security. At the regional level, the African Union (AU) has a gender policy designed to support the strengthening of national gender policies and to ensure a harmonized delivery framework in order to accelerate the implementation of gender equality commitments. Furthermore, the AU's Constitutive Act highlights the need to promote gender equality through the parity principle. Additionally, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA), adopted by the Third Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2004 strengthens African ownership of the gender equality agenda - in all socio-economic and political sectors - and keeps the issues alive at the highest political level in Africa. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Maputo protocol), which came into force in 2005, was a game-changer as it requires governments to integrate gender in legal and policy frameworks, strategies, programmes and development activities as they relate to the political, civil, social, cultural and economic rights of women. Furthermore, the African Union Summit of January 2009 declared that the decade commencing in 2010 will be the African Decade on Gender. At the sub regional level, the regional economic communities (RECs) have complemented the global and regional frameworks by integrating various resolutions and commitments into their policies and programmes of action as demonstrated by IGAD, ECOWAS, EAC and SADC instruments.

Background to the Beijing plus 20 review

3. The Fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995 resulted in the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) by 189 member States of the United Nations, which spelled out 12 Critical Areas of Concern to guide the mainstreaming of gender in laws, policies, strategies and programmes. The Declaration called upon member States to commit to the advancement of the goals of equality, development and peace for all women while reaffirming the fundamental principal that the rights of women and girls are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.

4. The accountability framework for the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action requires member States of the United Nations to meet on a five-yearly basis to review their implementation, at both regional and global levels, with a view to fine tuning, remapping progress and reactivating commitment, while taking into account prevailing global and local conditions. The 1999 (Beijing +5) review noted that progress had been made in the allocation of both financial and human resources to implement the gender equality agenda since the 1995 world conference¹. However, this had not

¹ UNECA.2009. *A fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Africa (BPfA) +15: From 1995-2009*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

yielded concrete results, as the number of people affected by poverty continued to increase, with women having the least access to food, health, education, training and employment opportunities – a situation posited in the CEDAW preamble. More targeted actions were therefore required to tackle poverty and violence, trafficking in women and girls as well as women’s participation in political decision making.

5. The 2004 review (Beijing +10) revealed that significant steps had been taken to establish policies and enact legislation to achieve gender equality. In particular, they focused on defining legal and policy frameworks for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women including the ratification of CEDAW and its Optional protocol by member States; the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol); the creation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as well as the Gender and Civil Society Sector within the New partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). At the national level, the formulation of national gender policies (NGPs) was seen as a step in the right direction for the attainment of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Although several countries had significantly increased the level of women’s representation in parliament (Rwanda – 49 per cent, South Africa and Mozambique exceeding 30 per cent), the continued low representation of women in decision-making, inequality in employment and access to economic opportunities, unequal access to social and economic resources was registered in a large majority of countries.

6. While the 2009 (Beijing+15) regional review revealed that governments’ implementation of various global and continental commitments on gender equality and women empowerment had led to positive changes in the lives of African women, this progress was insufficient to pull women out of poverty. The report further highlighted the lack of sex, gender and age disaggregated data which prevented governments from reporting increased gender differentials in several critical areas of concern, and informing appropriate policy actions. In response to this, an outcome document, “*The Banjul Declaration on the Strategies for Accelerating the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action*” was adopted. It identified 7 Strategic Areas of Focus for which a five-year follow-up strategy was formulated. This strategy spelt-out concrete actions to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), focusing on the seven strategic areas. A subsequent mid-term review carried out by UNECA in 2013 to assess the progress of implementation of the follow-up strategy showed significant improvement in five of the seven key strategic focus areas, with *Climate change and food security* as well as *Financing for gender equality* requiring special attention.

Beijing +20 Review

7. The current Beijing +20 review is happening within a changing global and regional socio-economic context and landscape. Despite global economic and financial crisis, Africa continued to register impressive economic growth (5 – 7 percent annual growth) over the last decade, even though a slow down to 4.0 percent was experienced in 2013. Positive prospects for a rebound are expected with projections of 4.7 per cent in 2014 and 5.0 per cent in 2015 (double that of the developing countries)². This conducive environment, characterized by: wealth creation; greater use of new technologies to promote innovation; growing population along with the emergence of middle classes, are critical factors for defining a new development model for the continent that is an African-driven and people-centered transformative model. This new model provides opportunity for greater targeted measures to empowerment women economically, socially and politically as set-out in the BPfA. In the same vein, the Common Africa Position (CAP) on the post-2015

² UNECA/AUC. 2014. Economic Report on Africa (ERA). *Dynamic industrial policy in Africa*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

development agenda calls for the elimination of all barriers to inclusive development and structural transformation as the pathway to the attainment of equitable, gender-responsive and sustainable development articulated in the recently proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This review is therefore an opportunity to bring women, girls and youth at the very centre of the inclusive and sustainable development agenda of the continent so as to achieve visible positive change in the lives of women.

Section One

Overview and analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995

Achievements

8. This analysis of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was informed by the national review reports submitted by 51 African countries. Only 3 countries – Equatorial Guinea, Libya, and the Central African Republic – did not submit country review reports due to various in-country constraints; making this review the most representative with a 94.4 per cent response rate.

9. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) envisioned gender equality in all dimensions of life, where every woman and girl had equal opportunities to access and/or benefit from economic development; had freedom to realize her rights for the attainment of new social outcomes; and had the ability to use their opportunities and capabilities to participate in decision-making. In this light, the declaration views gender equality both as a development objective in itself, and as a means to promote growth, eradicate poverty and promote better governance. Evidence from the Beijing +20 country review reports and other related documents demonstrate that great strides have been made across the board in enhancing the capabilities of women in the social sectors, namely education and health. Further, women's voice and agency has been enhanced, particularly in relation to power and decision-making in the political sphere. It is, however, noteworthy that negligible progress has been registered in the provision of adequate economic opportunities that would bring about transformative change in the life of every woman and girl.

10. An analysis of the education and training focus area is provided by the 2014 Millennium Development Goals Report which indicates that the primary school enrolment rate in developing regions increased from 83 per cent to 90 per cent between 2000 and 2012. While it is reported that North Africa, which had enrolment rates of 80 per cent in 1990, had almost achieved universal primary education by 2012, the greatest improvement was in sub-Saharan Africa, where the adjusted net enrolment rate increased by 18 percentage points between 2000 and 2012 with enrolment figures doubling from 62 million to 149 million.³ Furthermore, as at 2012, all developing regions achieved, or were close to achieving, gender parity in primary education. On this score, North Africa led with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 0.96 while sub-Saharan Africa stood at 0.92. Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal and Sierra Leone reported the greatest improvements in the region over the review period⁴.

11. The success in this critical area of focus is attributed to the implementation of various global and regional frameworks that have been adopted at country level including the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) education targets and the Education For All (EFA) framework with targets to be achieved by 2015. These have led to the introduction of free primary education/universal primary education in a large majority of African countries, as well as

³ United Nations. 2014. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2014*. New York, NY: UN.

⁴ Ibid

accompanying legal frameworks, policies and programmes with special measures to address girls' school drop-outs, school-aged girls affected by pregnancies, higher education affirmative action, and harassment in schools among others.

12. Despite the stellar performance at the primary level, mixed results were realized in the net secondary enrolment with Botswana, Cape Verde and Malawi achieving gender parity while only Algeria and Cape Verde are reported to have reached gender parity in the net enrolment figures for tertiary education at 1.46 and 1.29 respectively⁵. Additionally, an examination of gender-disaggregated data reveals that in sub-Saharan Africa, the male literacy rate stood at 68 per cent compared to the female's rate of 51 per cent, corresponding to a gender parity index of 0.74⁶. Despite this bleak picture, Botswana's 2012 AGDI report indicates the attainment of gender parity in the literacy rate of 15-24 year olds⁷. More targeted effort is therefore required to achieve gender parity at higher education levels in the continent.

13. The success in the education focus area was mirrored in women and health, which also recorded notable success - particularly with respect to a reduction in maternal mortality⁸. The MDG 2014 report indicates that the African region experienced remarkable declines in the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) between 1990 and 2013 with an overall decline of 45 per cent over the period. It is noteworthy that Equatorial Guinea has already achieved MDG 5, with a sharp 81-per cent decline in maternal mortality from 1990 to 2010, due to the improved proportion of births receiving assistance from skilled personnel, which rose from 5 per cent in 1994 to 64.6 per cent in 2000. Moreover, Egypt and Eritrea are on track to meet MDG 5 on improving maternal health; with noteworthy progress achieved in Algeria; Angola; Benin; Burkina Faso; Cape Verde; Comoros; Côte d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Ethiopia; The Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Liberia; and Madagascar. Some of the key measures undertaken by African countries to reduce MMR included: increasing the proportion of deliveries attended by skilled health personnel (rising from 56 to 68 per cent between 1990 and 2012); and increasing accessibility to four or more cycles of antenatal care during pregnancy from 37 per cent in 1990 to 52 per cent in 2012⁹.

14. Tremendous progress was also reported in the provision of antiretroviral therapy (ART) to pregnant women living with HIV. Over 90 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV received efficacious treatment regimes in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. Significant progress in this area was also reported in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe where over 75 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV received treatment or prophylaxis¹⁰. This has contributed to a reduction in the HIV/AIDS related deaths.

15. Almost all respondent countries institutionalized efforts to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, with countries having either a policy, a program, a strategy or a combination of these three instruments. This commendable achievement was accelerated by the partnership between governments, civil society organizations (CSOs) as well as the private sector. The ICPD Beyond 2014 report further expounds on the partnerships forged between governments and CSOs that were undertaken by 98.1 per cent of the countries in the region. These partnerships varied between regions with Eastern Africa registering 92.3 per cent partnerships while other sub-regions

⁵ United Nations. 2013. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2013*. New York, NY: UN.

⁶ UNESCO-UIS. 2013. *Adult and youth literacy: National, regional and global trends, 1985-2015*. Quebec, Canada. UNESCO-UIS.

⁷ Government of Botswana. 2012. *African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) Report – 2012*. Gaborone, Botswana.

⁸ United Nations. 2014. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2014*. New York, NY: UN.

⁹ United Nations. 2014. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2014*. New York, NY: UN.

¹⁰ UNAIDS. 2014. *The Gap Report – 2014*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS.

recorded up to 100 per cent partnerships. The partnerships were with national NGOs (88.2 per cent); international NGOs (47.1 per cent); youth groups (13.3 per cent); and academic/research centers (5.9 per cent)¹¹.

16. In addition to the CSO partnerships highlighted above, success in this critical focus area is attributed to high-level political commitment to Maternal and Newborn Health by the African Union and its Members States through the development and implementation of a continental policy on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in 2005, and the Maputo Plan of Action in 2006. The subsequent launch of an AU initiative, the *Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal mortality in Africa (CARMMA)* in May 2009 added impetus to the success of this area. The campaign aims to reduce maternal mortality in most African countries by 75 per cent by the year 2015 (using 1990 figures as the baseline). To date, 44 out of 46 African countries (excluding North Africa) have successfully launched the implementation of CARMMA¹². Furthermore, the 2012 AU “*Roadmap on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for Aids, TB and Malaria*” has led to the employment of creative resource mobilization mechanisms to ensure sustainable funding by several African member States. Ethiopia, Malawi and Namibia have mainstreamed HIV funding with the requirement that different government entities allocate at least 2 per cent of their budget to HIV programming efforts; while Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia are in the process of establishing HIV trust funds. It is worth noting that Zimbabwe has instituted a National HIV/AIDS levy as part of the tax system over the last 12 years, and is currently exploring ways to tap domestic and informal sector contributions to this levy. Similarly, Nigeria’s President’s Comprehensive Response Plan (PCRP) goes a long way in providing HIV financing.

17. Another focus area where some progress was registered is that on women and the economy. The gender gap in economic participation and opportunities for women is reported to have closed by 60 per cent in 2014, up from 56 per cent in 2006¹³. All the 51 country review reports reported the implementation of various policies, programmes and projects whose objective is to accelerate economic empowerment of women in a wide variety of sectors. In keeping with the continent’s industrialization agenda, a large number of the countries reported major undertakings on the economic empowerment of women in agriculture, business development and finance.

18. These undertakings included projects to enhance women’s entrepreneurship through capacity development and financial assistance in several countries¹⁴. Morocco and Zimbabwe, in particular, have taken major steps to develop women’s entrepreneurship and encourage women-led trade by: enhancing women business ownership and entrepreneurship; facilitating women’s participation in key economic decision-making positions; ensuring employment equity; and assisting vulnerable women to participate in and benefit from informal and formal economic activities. Furthermore, a large majority of countries have launched credit schemes and financial initiatives to grant women better terms of lending by removing stiff collateral requirements, lowering interest rates or extending the loan repayment periods. Benin and Mauritania have gone a step further and backed these initiatives with institutional, legal and policy frameworks that outline the specific target groups and interventions in place. Moreover, the establishment of banks that target only female clientele, such as ENAT bank in Ethiopia, and similar institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia were created with a view to empowering women in business through tailor-made products.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² www.carmma.org/scorecard

¹³ World Economic Forum (WEF). 2014. *Global gender gap report – 2014*. Geneva, Switzerland: WEF.

¹⁴ Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

19. Achievement in this area has been met, in part, by the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in poverty reduction strategy plans (PRSPs), and in the medium and long-term economic development plans of the respondent countries. Additionally, the implementation of prudent fiscal policies and pursuit of appropriate macroeconomic policies has resulted in a reduction in interest rates making credit facilities more accessible to women¹⁵. Furthermore, a number of countries have made tremendous strides in the successful institutionalization of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) processes¹⁶ in annual budget cycles such as Ethiopia, Ghana, Mauritius, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Moreover, the implementation of women's economic empowerment programmes and projects received a significant boost from development partners, UN agencies and the private sector. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) is a case in point, where aid to Africa for gender equality and women's empowerment in economic and productive sectors (excluding sectors such as health and education) amounted to USD 4.6 billion on average per year in 2007-2008. This figure went up in 2011-2012 where a total of USD 24 billion was committed by DAC members to gender equality and women's empowerment/rights¹⁷. The resultant targeted actions were instrumental to empowering women economically including raising their incomes. Because women's resources trickle down to the family especially the children and the community, it is worth noting that those targeted interventions had multiplier effects to the society as a whole.

20. Representation and participation of women in key decision-making positions is catalytic to women's empowerment. In this vein, the period since Beijing plus 10 has seen the ascension of African women to key decision-making positions, including the election – and re-election of Africa's first female presidents. H. E. Ellen Sirleaf Johnson - the first elected female head of State in Africa - was elected President of Liberia as it emerged from conflict in 2005 and currently is serving her second term after re-election in 2011. Joyce Banda became President of Malawi in 2012 while H. E. Catherine Samba-Panza took over the Presidency of the Central African Republic in 2014. Moreover, the election of H. E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in 2012 was a milestone in its 50 year existence as no woman had previously led the organization.

21. These milestones were replicated at national level where an unprecedented level of women's representation in national parliaments was witnessed. At present, Rwanda is the global lead at 63.8 per cent, followed by Seychelles - 43.8 per cent, Senegal - 43.3 per cent, South Africa - 40.8 per cent, Mozambique - 39.2 per cent, Angola - 36.8 per cent, Tanzania - 36.0 per cent, Uganda - 35.0 per cent, Algeria - 31.6 per cent, Zimbabwe - 31.5 per cent, Cameroon - 31.1 per cent, and Burundi - 30.5 per cent, surpassing the critical mass of 30 per cent representation advocated for in the BPfA.

22. Success in this critical area can be traced back to the launch of the 50/50 campaign at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in the year 2000 that aimed at ensuring equal representation of women and men in decision-making globally. At the regional level, the African Union's adoption of a gender parity principle in 2002 was undertaken to increase women's representation and participation at all decision-making levels; while *women in decision-making* was selected as one of the ten themes for the AU's African Women's Decade (2010-2020). The SADC region followed suite with its adoption of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development in 2008. This Protocol stipulates that at least fifty per cent of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors be held by women by the year 2015; and could be

¹⁵ AfDB, OECD & UNDP. 2014. *African Economic Outlook-2014*. www.africaneconomicoutlook.org

¹⁶ Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) refers to the systematic examination of government budgets and policies for the identification of their differential impacts on women, men, girls and boys with a view to proposing interventions that advance gender equality outcomes.

¹⁷ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development>.

credited for the achievement in this critical focus area, since half of the twelve African countries with over 30 per cent female representation in national parliaments come from this region. Furthermore, the implementation of varied national-level legal and policy frameworks governing women's participation in politics through enactment of favorable election and political party laws accelerated this achievement.

23. All fifty one national review reports indicated the existence of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, accompanied by the formulation of either legal, policy or strategic frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. This was achieved through the establishment or strengthening of national gender machineries by: the creation of stand-alone ministries of gender and women's affairs; establishment of gender directorates under various ministries; creation of gender desks or focal points in key ministries; creation of gender secretariats, as well as Gender and Equality Commissions. Furthermore, the national review reports record substantive progress in the implementation of policy and programmatic actions aimed at achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. This information is corroborated by the findings of the ICPD Beyond 2014 report that registered the following statistics. Out of the 51 member States responding to queries on the progress in gender equality, equity and empowerment, 21.6 per cent had drafted/implemented at least one policy; 29.4 per cent had drafted/implemented a combination of at least one policy and program; while another 33.3 per cent had carried out drafting/implementation of at least one policy, one program and one strategy. Moreover, sub-regional variations were noted in the implementation of a combination of policy, program and strategy, with Central Africa lagging behind other sub-regions at 14.3 per cent. They were followed by East Africa and North Africa at 33.3 per cent each, Southern Africa at 36.4 per cent; while West Africa led the pack at 40 per cent.

24. Success in this area has resulted from public-private partnerships (PPPs) between governments and key stakeholders at national, regional and global levels, which have been instrumental in supporting and strengthening mechanisms for the advancement of women. These PPPs have worked particularly well in service delivery; awareness raising and social mobilization; education and training; advocacy and policy formulation; research and data collection; and monitoring and evaluation¹⁸. The implementation of key global frameworks such as the MDGs, Rio + 20 frameworks, Education for All (EFA) alongside regional initiatives including the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal mortality in Africa (CARMMA), NEPAD's African Peer Review Mechanism, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) have played a critical role in the achievement of success in this critical focus areas.

25. Another factor that played a catalytic role to these achievements is the establishment of regular dialogue between government and civil society organizations (CSOs). A number of countries have made particular effort to establish regular dialogue between government and CSOs through mechanisms that support the monitoring of national level implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

¹⁸ UNECA. 2013. *ICPD Beyond 2014 regional report: Harnessing the demographic dividend – The future we want for Africa*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

Box 1: Emerging best practices on government and CSO monitoring engagements

Uganda: In an assessment on Uganda's gender-responsive budget, AfDB (2013) note that Uganda's GRB initiative was started by a **caucus of female parliamentarians** led by the NGO **Forum for Women in Democracy**. This initiative had some positive gender impacts. Uganda increased budget allocations for maternal health – which led to a 4 per cent increase in deliveries in health units between 2004 and 2006 – and resulted in reduced maternal mortality. There are more women represented in employment and tendering for contracts in labour-intensive road building and maintenance.

Tanzania: Tanzania is a leader of gender responsive budgeting in sub-Saharan Africa. This status can, to a large extent, be attributed to an early civil society initiative undertaken by the **Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP)** working within a broad coalition of local NGOs (**FemAct**). In contrast to the situation in most other developing countries, this civil society initiative has managed to engage and work with the central government in what has become an ongoing collaborative effort to improve and expand GRB analyses and data.

Source: Rao, 2014.

26. This new push for dialogue has witnessed an exponential increase in government-CSO partnerships on the critical focus area of maternal health, particularly as it relates to HIV/AIDS. As reported in the country responses, these partnerships were effective in the following areas:

This new push for dialogue has witnessed an exponential increase in government-CSO partnerships on the critical focus area of maternal health, particularly as it relates to HIV/AIDS. As reported in the country responses, these partnerships were effective in the following areas: awareness raising and social mobilization (44 countries); service delivery (40 countries); education and training (35 countries); research and data collection (32 countries); advocacy and policy formulation (32 countries); design, planning, implementation and monitoring of HIV programs (27 countries); and monitoring and legal council (21 countries)¹⁹. Several major diversity groups have been targeted by the government and partners in HIV program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as shown in the table below.

¹⁹ UNECA. 2013. *ICPD Beyond 2014 regional report: Harnessing the demographic dividend – The future we want for Africa*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

Table 1

Targeted groups on HIV partnership activities

Targeted groups on HIV partnership activities		
Targeted groups	Number of countries	Percentage*
Poor people	8	15.4
Women	28	53.8
Children	22	42.3
Adolescents	27	51.9
Youth	29	55.8
Older persons	8	15.4
Persons with disabilities	9	17.3
Widows/orphans	5	9.6
Other ethnic or minority groups	1	1.9
Migrants	5	9.6
IDPs	3	5.8
Marginalized rural	6	11.5
Urban slum dwellers	7	13.5
Persons living with HIV	11	21.2
People who use drugs	5	9.6
People with a criminal record	3	5.8
Sex workers	6	11.5
Transgender people	3	5.8
Men who have sex with men	4	7.7
Other	45	86.5
*Total may not add up to 100 because of multiple responses		

Source: ICPD Beyond 2014 regional report, 2013.

27. A noteworthy initiative to integrate civil society organizations (CSOs) in the 20 year review of the BPfA was carried out in October 2014 through the organization of a CSO consultative meeting on the Beijing +20 review process for the Africa region. This CSO-led event brought together over 50 representatives of grass-roots women's organizations to deliberate on previous CSO engagement in monitoring the BPfA and their role in the post-2015 accountability framework. This meeting was convened under the auspices of UNECA and UN Women.

28. Another avenue that has been used by a number of civil society entities including women's organizations to conduct consultative processes and studies relevant to certain BPfA thematic areas is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). This has happened in Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique and Zambia, where useful data for the process has been offered to the country review missions. Similarly, in Uganda, the National Council of Women submitted written memoranda to the country review team for consideration and input to the process. The strengthened partnership between government and CSOs is evident in the establishment of inclusive National Gender Forums to monitor the implementation of the BPfA, as well as collaboration in the development of national, regional and international reports on the implementation of human rights covenants and conventions such as the CEDAW. The recently undertaken stakeholder consultations and validation of the Beijing +20 national review reports witnessed the engagement of CSOs in a number of countries.

Implementation challenges

29. A number of persistent challenges have hindered the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in the twenty year period since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The fact that no country in the world has achieved gender equality is a pointer that the challenges are indiscriminate, affecting both developed and developing countries.

Resource challenges (Human and financial)

30. 30. Perennial under-resourcing of national gender machineries – both in terms of human and financial resources - as indicated in annual budgetary allocations, severely curtails their efficiency and effectiveness in advancing the gender equality and women empowerment agenda. According to the national review reports, the annual budgetary allocation (as a percentage of the national budget) directed to the national gender machineries in the last two years indicate that 14 countries²⁰ had allocations of 10 per cent and below. Only Chad reported a 20 per cent allocation from the national coffers.

²⁰ Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao tome et Principe and Togo.

Table 2

Percentage share of national budget allocated for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

No.	Country	Percentage of national budget
1	Chad	20%
2	Cameroun	10%
3	Guinea	10%
4	Cote d'Ivoire	<10%
5	Nigeria	<10%
6	Lesotho (2013/14)	5.9%
7	Botswana	5%
8	Namibia	2.9%
9	Burkina Faso	>2%
10	Sao Tome & Principe	0.5%
11	Mali	0.30-0.40%
12	Rwanda	0.24%
13	Liberia	0.23%
14	Congo Republic (2014)	0.20%
15	Togo (2013)	0.12%

Source: Compiled from the Beijing +20 national review reports.

31. Additionally, the global financial crisis of 2008 had a significantly gendered impact. Evidence from the April 2013 update of the World Economic Outlook suggests that 92 out of 133 developing countries have cut spending as a share of GDP to levels below that of pre-crisis spending. Early evidence suggests that the impacts of fiscal consolidation have been borne disproportionately by women²¹. In particular, staff and wage freezes, cuts and restrictions in care-related benefits and facilities, and scaling back of maternal health services including those focused on supporting survivors of SGBV, have had a negative disproportionate impact on women.

32. The current Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa has posed an unprecedented challenge in the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. The unpaid care work at household and community levels as well as the gendered division of labor has led to women bearing the brunt of the outbreak. UN Women²² reports that as many as 75 per cent of Ebola fatalities in Liberia and 59 per cent of those in Sierra Leone were women. It is reported that women's primary care-giving role in the household and community as well as their roles as nurses in healthcare systems elevated their risk of contracting the disease. This elevated risk was exacerbated by their performance of traditionally ascribed practices and rituals on the deceased which led to the inevitable infection.

33. In the same vein, reversals in the progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment have been fueled by a number of factors; chief among them the Ebola outbreak discussed above. UNDP²³ reports that significant reversals in economic gains accrued thus far in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone will be witnessed, due to the weakening of governments' ability to manage revenues, expenditures and public debts. This results from the balancing-act of meeting national health, social and development obligations without jeopardizing macro-economic stability.

²¹ Ortiz I. and Cummings M. 2013a. "The Age of Austerity: A Review of Public Expenditures and Adjustment measures in 181 countries". South Centre, IPD working paper. Washington DC.

²² UN Women. 2014. *Ebola outbreak takes it toll on women*. Accessed on 05/11/2014 from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/9/ebola-outbreak-takes-its-toll-on-women>

²³ UNDP. 2014. "Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak (EVD) is overstressing the fiscal capacity of Governments in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone". *UNDP Africa Policy Note, (I)3*, 24 October 2014.

Particularly biting is a revenue shortfall - as a share of GDP - from key sectors such as the extractive industries (mining), tourism and agricultural exports which stood at 0.77 per cent in Guinea, 1.26 per cent in Sierra Leone and 2.04 per cent in Liberia. This is expected to have major ramifications on the fiscal sustainability of the three governments, with a resultant disproportionate impact on women and children.

34. Another reversal arose from the increase in the number of African countries experiencing conflict and crises such as: South Sudanese, Somalia, Northern Nigeria, Northern Mali and Eastern DRC. Many of these countries have recorded reversals on previous achievements in the BPfA implementation in the following domains: human rights of women, women and armed conflict, women and health, violence against women, education and training of women, women and the economy as well as the girl-child. For instance a rise in maternal mortality was recorded in Somalia where the MMR in 1990 standing at 890, increased to 100 in 2010 as a result of the decades-long conflict that left more than 80 per cent of the population without basic health services by the year 2010. Further evidence on the substantive cost of war on maternal health is provided by a 2006 study in the DRC that found that maternal deaths were higher in the conflict-ridden east (1,175 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) than in the western part of the country (811 per 100,000)²⁴.

35. Furthermore, progress on poverty reduction – particularly in sub-Saharan Africa – is still sluggish despite a reduction in the percentage of the population living below the poverty line (\$1.25 dollars a day) from 56.6 per cent in 1990 to 46.8 per cent in 2011²⁵. Due to the acknowledged feminization of poverty, these statistics mask the differential impact of poverty on women and men; with women reportedly having a disproportionate disadvantage in access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment. Despite variations in the poverty ratio of women in African member States, the female burden of poverty is evident in all the respondent countries and is an obstacle to the attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Institutional and legal challenges

36. The limited data and statistics disaggregated by age, sex, gender and other relevant country-specific diversity parameters translates to difficulties in the formulation and implementation of targeted policy and programmatic interventions; and their subsequent monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This challenge appeared across the board as many member States were still enhancing the capacities of their national statistical offices.

37. Another key impediment cited by the country reports is the existence of pervasive structural, attitudinal and systemic challenges in both private and public spheres, which continue to fuel the discriminatory attitudes towards women. These include limited access to, control over and benefit from productive assets (such as land) as primary rights-holders due to traditional restrictions on women's property rights. The outcome of this is the obstruction of women's capacity for active participation in, contribution to and benefit from growth processes in ways which recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of growth benefits²⁶.

38. Moreover, several legal and normative frameworks (developed at the global, regional levels and domesticated at national level in varied degrees) have guided the implementation of interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. These include: the CEDAW, the AU's Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA, 2004), the United

²⁴ AUC. 2012. *Status report on maternal, newborn and child health*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: AUC.

²⁵ United Nations. 2014. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2014*. New York, NY: UN.

²⁶ OECD/DAC. 2011. *Women's economic empowerment*. Issues paper.

Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/67/146, banning FGM worldwide, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). Political will has however not translated into the domestication of the landmark Maputo Protocol, which has only been signed and ratified by 28 member States; signed only by 18 member States while 8 member States have neither signed nor ratified the protocol namely: Botswana, Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia.

38. Exacerbating this is the existence of plural legal frameworks – statutory/customary/religious – side by side with a number of contradictory tenets has negatively impacted the enjoyment of women's rights and consequently obstructed the advancement of women. This is particularly evident in key areas such as women's health (sexual and reproductive health and rights), economic empowerment of women (property and inheritance rights especially in relation to land rights), as well as political participation and representation in diverse countries - ranging from those found in North Africa, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa to post-conflict South Sudan.

Nexus between implementation of the MDGs and the BPfA

39. The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) gave impetus to progress in the BPfA implementation, across several of the critical areas of concern. While MDG 3 provided for direct gender equality interventions, other MDGs also influenced implementation of the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda, particularly MDG 5 on maternal health; MDG 1 - eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; MDG 2 – achievement of universal primary education (especially on the gender parity dimension); MDG 4 - child mortality (with the inextricable linkage to maternal mortality); MDG 6 – combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (women are disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS); MDG 7 – environmental sustainability (women's access to environmental resources and their crucial role in climate change mitigation and adaptation); MDG 8 - global partnerships for development.

40. In addition, the MDGs have played a critical role in supporting the provision of reliable and robust data by national statistical offices through the improvement of statistical capacity and data availability for the MDG monitoring framework. This data has helped in monitoring the implementation of the BPfA and holding governments as well as the international community accountable. Furthermore, the integration of the MDGs in national development and poverty reduction strategies has supported – to a large extent – the integration of gender concerns into government planning. Moreover, the extensive partnerships built around the implementation of the MDGs between governments, international development partners, the private sector and civil society organizations were instrumental in resource mobilization for the implementation of the BPfA and have led to a lot of the success in the achievements discussed earlier in this summary report.

Section Two

Progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2009

41. Major strides have been made in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the period after 2009 as a result of “*The Banjul Declaration on the Strategies for Accelerating the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action*” that was adopted at the close of the Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women held in November 2009 in Banjul, the Gambia. This outcome document called for the implementation of strategies that would accelerate the implementation of the BPfA is seven critical areas that were deemed critical for the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment. The current implementation status is discussed according to the 12 critical concern areas as follows:

Critical Area 1 - Women and poverty

42. In the last few years, Africa has delivered steady but slow poverty eradication. Poverty rates (proportion of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day) in Africa dipped below 50 per cent in 2008 (to 47.5 per cent) for the first time, with the rate falling to 46.8 per cent in 2011²⁷. However this decline in poverty masks significant gender disparities within the household due to differential power relations. In addition, although GDP in Africa has surged since 2000, structural transformation has been limited and has resulted in poor productivity growth²⁸. Women, who have historically been clustered in low productivity, have therefore benefitted less from the exponential growth in Africa.

43. With this backdrop, over 50 per cent of the countries reported having formulated and/or implemented national development strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) which include special provisions for women. These measures included enhancing women’s economic empowerment, promoting the selection of science and technological disciplines by women, facilitating women’s access to credit, and supporting development of female entrepreneurs. For example the Niger PRS includes the strengthening of social protection for “vulnerable groups”²⁹ and aims to promote food security for all Nigeriens³⁰. Kenya, Mozambique and South Africa reported similar social protection safety nets for vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly and persons with disabilities which have a critical cash-transfer component³¹. Algeria, (which has met most of the MDGs), has very few policies specifically focused on women, but rather relies on general social welfare programmes which cost 12 per cent of GDP³². Other countries which have adopted this approach are Angola³³, and the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe³⁴.

44. Some of the key challenges encountered include: the global economic downturn that has had a significant impact on women, since most government programs on poverty eradication are funded by development partners in the global north. This resulted in further entrenchment of women’s poverty as more women lost incomes and were forced to manage shrinking household incomes. Other challenges include: lack of comprehensive data disaggregated by gender, sex, and age to

²⁷ United Nations. 2014. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2014*. New York, NY: UN.

²⁸ UNECA & AU. 2014. *Economic Report on Africa: Dynamic Industrial Policy in Africa*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

²⁹ Niger report p. 4 2.1.2 tiret 2.

³⁰ Niger report p. 4 2.1.2 tiret 4.

³¹ Niger report p. 4 2.1.2 tiret 3.

³² Algeria report, p.2.

³³ Angolan report, p.16.

³⁴ Principe and Sao Tome Report, p. 18.

inform policy action due in part to their indicative nature which does not reflect gender-based inequities within households; absence of transformative poverty reduction strategies and interventions to pull women out of poverty.

45. In light of the above, sustaining progress in poverty reduction will depend on increasing the inclusiveness of the growth processes for women, as well as investment in social services, safety nets and infrastructure which support women's engagement in the economy. Furthermore, to cushion government programs on poverty eradication from funding deficits, governments are urged to undertake massive domestic resource mobilization and to establish public-private partnerships (PPPs) in-country. Structured and systematic national-level capacity building of statistical offices is required to ensure the provision of comprehensive age, gender and sex disaggregated data.

Critical Area 2 – Education and training of women

46. As one of the most powerful drivers of development, education is a critical instrument for poverty reduction, improvement of maternal and child health, attainment of gender equality and women's empowerment as well as the maintenance of peace and stability. Higher levels of education for girls and women have strong positive impacts on their employment and earning potential, as well as their ability to contribute to society's development. There is evidence to show that educated women tend to have fewer children and healthier families, which contribute to improved child and maternal health, higher immunization rates, good family nutrition, and the next generation's schooling attainment.³⁵ More so, education, for girls is seen as a preventive weapon against HIV/AIDS. In terms of wages, women receive higher returns to their schooling investment: their return, on average, is 9.8 percent, compared with 8.7 percent for men.³⁶

47. As indicated earlier in the report, North Africa had almost achieved universal primary education by 2012, while the greatest improvement was witnessed in sub-Saharan Africa, where the net enrolment rate increased by 18 percentage points between 2000 and 2012. The corresponding enrolment figures doubled from 62 million to 149 million³⁷. Particularly worthy of note is Niger which increased its enrolment from 53 to 62 per cent between 2009 and 2011, while Ghana and Mali increased their enrolment rates from 77 to 84 per cent and 64 to 67 per cent respectively during the same period. The gender parity index (GPI) for primary enrolment in Africa is on track. Out of 37 African countries with data, 27 had a GPI of 0.9 or higher in 2010 with 9 countries indicating an imbalance against boys, i.e. a GPI higher than 1.0. Impressive Gender Enrolment Rates (GER) were reported in the following countries for the period 2009-2014. In Botswana, the GER for girls increased from 89.1 per cent in 2010 to 98.7 per cent in 2014 (an annual growth rate of 2.25 per cent) while that of boys is 95.4 per cent at primary level. The secondary level witnessed an increase for girls from 65.6 per cent in 2010 to 68 per cent in 2014 compared to that of boys in the same period of 66.9 per cent to 68.2 per cent. In Ethiopia, at primary level, the GER for girls grew from 90.7 per cent in 2008/9 to 92.4 per cent in 2012/13. Moreover, there is a continuous decline in the gender gap in primary education: from 6.9 per cent in 2008/9 and to 5.8 per cent in 2012/13.

³⁵ World Bank .2001. *Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. OUP – USA.

³⁶ Psacharopoulos, G., and H. Patrinos. 2002. "Returns to Investment in Education: A Further Update." Policy Research Working Paper 2281, World Bank, Washington, DC

³⁷ United Nations. 2014. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2014*. New York, NY: UN.

48. The progress in net enrolment and gender parity in secondary and tertiary education in Africa has remained slow. Botswana, Cape Verde and Malawi reported achieving gender parity in net secondary enrolment while only Algeria and Cape Verde are reported to have reached gender parity in the net enrolment figures for tertiary education at 1.46 and 1.29 respectively³⁸. Further analysis of gender-disaggregated data demonstrates gender disparities in literacy rates for sub-Saharan Africa at 68 per cent for males compared to 51 per cent for females, corresponding to a gender parity index of 0.74³⁹. Botswana's 2012 AGDI report, however, indicates the attainment of gender parity in the literacy rate of 15-24 year olds⁴⁰.

49. Nearly all African governments have implemented actions to eliminate barriers that hinder girls' access to education in the following ways: introduction of free and compulsory primary education (Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Tunisia and Uganda); strategic plans for girls' education (Côte d'Ivoire); sensitization campaigns to reduce girls' school dropout rates and an increase in the education budget (Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Republic of Congo); gender analysis of education materials (Namibia); affirmative and other gender-responsive actions to increase female enrolment at tertiary level (Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Tunisia, Republic of Congo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe); special provisions for pregnant school-going girls (Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia, Zimbabwe); programs to eliminate the gender gap in functional literacy (Algeria, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Tunisia, Zambia); support and development of gender studies and researches to inform policy and programming (Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe).

50. Some of the highlighted challenges in this focus area include: low completion rates among female students reducing the number of girls who successfully transition from primary to secondary education; the adverse influence of the inequitable gender division of household labor on the poor educational performance of the girl-child; early and forced marriages; teenage pregnancy particularly in the Gambia and Botswana; inability of poor parents to pay school fees, book bills, development fund levies and other education costs; long distances from home to school; inadequate school facilities (classrooms, separate girls' toilets, adequate potable water supply, afternoon shifts caused by lack of adequate classroom space); lack of adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials in rural schools; an acute shortage of trained teachers; effects of HIV/AIDS such as illness and death of care-givers and the new role assumed by the girl child in taking care of the younger children in the family.

51. In response to the highlighted challenges, the country reports proposed the following remedial actions: implementation of strategies and programs aimed at improving access and quality of education in preschool, primary, secondary, technical, professional training and literacy teaching; implementation of transformative poverty eradication programs; formulation of specific provisions to cater to pregnant school girls; reduction of distances to school particularly in rural areas, targeted and systematic sensitization of the community on the importance of education for girls, enactment of policies that take care of the strategic interests of girl' education.

³⁸ United Nations. 2013. *Millennium Development Goals Report -2013*. New York, NY: UN.

³⁹ UNESCO-UIS. 2013. *Adult and youth literacy: National, regional and global trends, 1985-2015*. Quebec, Canada. UNESCO-UIS.

⁴⁰ Government of Botswana. 2012. *African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) Report – 2012*. Gaborone, Botswana.

Critical Area 3 – Women and health

52. Sustained economic growth is heavily dependent on the health and well-being of the general population and is central to economic progress and poverty reduction, as healthy populations live longer, are more productive, and save more.⁴¹ The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) spells out women's right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health resulting in a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

53. As indicated earlier in the report, the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) between 1990 and 2013 witnessed an overall decline of 45 per cent buoyed by the 17 countries that achieved a reduction of more than 50 per cent⁴². It is note worthy that Equatorial Guinea has already achieved MDG 5, with a sharp 81-per cent decline in maternal mortality from 1990 to 2010. This reduction is due to the improved proportion of births receiving assistance from skilled personnel, which rose from 5 per cent in 1994 to 64.6 per cent in 2000.

54. Good maternal health depends on access to effective reproductive health and family planning services. An example of this effective access is Kenya, which achieved a reduction in the total fertility rate from 4.9 children per woman in 2003 to 4.6 in 2008; increased knowledge of availability of any contraceptive method among women in reproductive ages (94.6 per cent); increased proportion of women who ever used any method of contraception (which rose from 64 per cent in 2003 to 73 per cent in 2008-09); increased proportion of women who ever used family planning (which rose from 64 per cent in 2003 to 73 per cent in 2008-09).

Table 3:

Progress of countries in reaching the goal on reducing maternal mortality

On track	Progress		Insufficient progress	No progress
Egypt Eritrea	Algeria Angola Benin Burkina Faso Cape Verde Comoros Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Republic of the Congo Ethiopia The Gambia Ghana Guinea Liberia Madagascar	Malawi Mali Mauritania Morocco Mozambique Niger Nigeria Rwanda São Tomé and Príncipe Senegal Togo Tunisia Uganda Tanzania	Central African Republic Djibouti Gabon Guinea-Bissau Kenya Sierra Leone Sudan Zambia	Botswana Cameroon Chad Congo Lesotho Namibia Somalia South Africa Swaziland Zimbabwe

Source: WHO et al., 2012.

55. MMR rates are exacerbated by HIV/AIDS prevalence and the effectiveness of the available medical care for pregnant women living with HIV. Africa has reported success on this front as over

⁴¹ <http://www.who.int/hdp/en/>

⁴² Equatorial Guinea, (81%), Eritrea (73%), Ethiopia (64%), Rwanda (63%), Angola and Madagascar (62%), Cape Verde (61%), Malawi (59%), Burkina Faso (57%), Benin (55%), Sao Tome and Principe (54%), Niger (53%), Mali and Togo (51%), Guinea and Gambia (51%).

90 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV received efficacious treatment regimes in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland. Significant progress in this area was also reported in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe where over 75 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV received treatment or prophylaxis⁴³.

Box 2: Best practices in diagnosis, treatment and prevention of HIV among pregnant women

There has been a scale up of integrated HIV services in **Malawi**. These services have been extended to 782 static and 322 HTC sites, 534 ART sites and 611 static ART sites. In addition, there are increasing numbers of pregnant women being tested for HIV and AIDS in order to prevent the transmission from mother to child. The survival of ART clients improved leading to 80 per cent of adults and 79 per cent of children staying alive 12 months after ART initiation.

In **Ethiopia**, the proportion of women aged 15 to 49 years, who have ever been tested for HIV and received their results in the 12 months before the survey rose from 2 per cent in 2005 to 20 per cent in 2011; while that of men rose from 2 per cent to 21 per cent in the same period. Knowledge of HIV is almost universal because 97 per cent of women 99 per cent of men had heard of AIDS in 2011. Similarly, **Ghana** reported almost universal awareness of HIV (98 per cent). HIV prevalence declined by 31 per cent in the period 2009 - 2010. The current median prevalence among pregnant women is 2 per cent.

In **South Africa**, the number of male condoms distributed rose from 8 million in 1994 to an estimated figure of 376 million in 2006. Female condoms were introduced in 1996, and in 2006 a total of 3.6 million female condoms were distributed. The government also scaled-up the free HIV and AIDS treatment program since 2003, making South Africa the world's largest HIV and AIDS treatment program.

Source: UNECA, 2013.⁴⁴

56. A raft of challenges has been cited in various reports, obstructing the achievement of this critical area of concern. They include: insufficient budgetary allocations to the health sector and specifically in the reproductive health domain including for treatment of the breast and cervical cancers; limited capacities for implementation of maternal health strategies and programs (including limited infrastructure and qualified human resources); poor implementation of the legal frameworks put in place to safeguard reproductive health rights; negative traditional and religious beliefs blockading the provision of information, education and communication particularly in rural areas; low literacy rates/level of education of women.

57. Recommendations put forth for this focus area include: intensification of efforts for domestic resource mobilization to support implementation of maternal health policies and programmes; expansion of reproductive health programmes to include treatment for infertility, cervical cancer, breast cancer, violence against women and the need to focus on expanding early detection to different regions of the country; the establishment of an information system on women's health; strengthening the gender mainstreaming capacities of planners and service providers in the health sector through tailor-made programmes; increase women's awareness of sexual and reproductive health and provide free access to condoms including female condoms; establishment and/or strengthening healthcare systems by ensuring countrywide access to health

⁴³ UNAIDS. 2014. *The Gap Report – 2014*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS.

⁴⁴ UNECA. 2013. *ICPD Beyond 2014 regional report: Harnessing the demographic dividend – The future we want for Africa*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

centers with trained personnel, adequate stock of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs, contraceptives and diagnostic kits; development of reliable data collection and information dissemination systems.

Critical Area 4 – Violence against women

58. It is widely acknowledged that violence against women and girls, affecting 1 in 3 women/girls (33 per cent) also hinders broader poverty reduction efforts and has inter-generational consequences. The United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality⁴⁵ recognized that ending violence against women and girls was one of seven strategic priorities needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and that violence hindered progress towards a number of those goals, including those on education, HIV/AIDS, maternal health and child mortality.

59. A key legal framework at the regional level, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), covers a wide range of women's rights. It reiterates the need to protect women from all forms of violence (including sexual and verbal violence) and reinforces the right to dignity, to life, to the integrity and security of the person. Above all, the protocol was the first to explicitly forbid FGM/C which is suffered by 130 million girls worldwide, the vast majority of them living in Africa. A 2013 report by the WHO and partners, authored by Garcia-Moreno et al. provides data on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) prevalence rates in Africa. Intimate partner violence of a physical nature had the following prevalence rates: Central Africa: 66 per cent; West Africa: 41.8 per cent; East Africa: 38.8 per cent; Southern Africa: 29.7 per cent; and North Africa combined with the Middle East had an average prevalence rate of 35.4 per cent⁴⁶.

60. All 51 respondent countries indicated the existence of various forms of legislations targeting the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls; with at least 15 African countries⁴⁷ having made strides in formulating legal frameworks aimed at eliminating VAW, since the 2009 Beijing+15 review.

61. To inform country-level programming in this area, the Africa UNiTE campaign was launched in 2010 as part of the UN Secretary General's UNiTE campaign whose six expected outcomes are to be achieved by 2015. These include: the adoption and enforcement of national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls in line with international human rights standards; adoption and implementation of multi-sectoral national plans of action that emphasize prevention and that are adequately resourced; establishment of data collection and analysis systems on the prevalence of various forms of violence against women and girls; establishment of national and/or local campaigns and the engagement of a diverse range of civil society actors in preventing violence and in supporting women and girls who have been abused; systematic efforts to address sexual violence in conflict situations and to protect women and girls from rape as a tactic of war, and the full implementation of related laws and policies: such as Resolutions 1325 and 1820 as well as the provision of safe public spaces for women and girls⁴⁸.

⁴⁵ United Nations, 2005, United Nations Millennium Project Task Force report on gender equality, New York.

⁴⁶ Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, C.Pallitto, K. Devries, H.Stockl, C.Watts, and N. Abrahams, 2013.*Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence*, World Health Organization, Geneva.

⁴⁷ Benin, The Gambia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Lesotho, Mali, Morocco, Kenya, Mauritius, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Egypt and Nigeria

⁴⁸ www.africaunitecampaign.org.

62. Following-on from this, remarkable progress has been achieved in data collection, with twenty African countries having established a violence prevalence benchmark⁴⁹ – one year where data has been recorded (Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa, Tunisia, and Zambia.) Other countries have 2 year points so that data can be compared (Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe). Countries without baseline national statistics include conflict affected countries – Somalia, South Sudan, Mali, but also include – Angola and Congo Republic. Moreover, other countries that have conducted specific large-scale studies on domestic violence to inform targeted policy interventions include Algeria, Botswana, Cape Verde, the Congo, the Gambia, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger and Tunisia. All this data has reinforced advocacy efforts, informed policymaking and planning in various countries with varying degrees of success. Specialized centres for studies on gender-based violence have been established in Angola and Egypt with the aim of providing up-to-date and reliable data. This has enabled policy-makers to make critical connections between increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS infection as a result of VAW; and the correlation between economic vulnerability and vulnerability to violence against women.

63. From the responses provided by the countries, it is evident that multi-sectoral initiatives have been formulated and are under implementation for the prevention and response to VAW. It is however note worthy that very few countries have put in place measures to ensure the physical safety of survivors or would-be victims of VAW through the establishment of shelters/safe houses/rescue centers despite the high prevalence rates for IPV, sexual violence and FGM. Provision of economic support to survivors has been neglected by the large majority of countries yet it is a critical ingredient for securing economic autonomy of the survivor in their re-integration into the community. This is a key response component, particularly when the perpetrator of the violence is an intimate or conjugal partner. On this score, Algeria, Botswana, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Zimbabwe are acting jointly with NGOs to open shelters and allocate operational budgets to them. While Lesotho and Uganda have only recently started to work in this area, Tanzania and Namibia have reported an increase in the number of operational shelters which – unfortunately - are limited mainly to cities, leaving many rural populations without protection. Furthermore, only slightly below 40 per cent of the respondents had put in place a comprehensive response to VAW that included economic empowerment for the survivors.

64. Even though the phenomenon of human trafficking is becoming a scourge on the continent, little or no action has been undertaken by African countries to translate policy to practice. Efforts to combat this have been noted in Algeria and Namibia who have signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Human Trafficking. Similarly, Equatorial Guinea reports having a law that makes trafficking of emigrants and trade in persons illegal. The country has also conducted information and awareness workshops on trade in persons targeting the youth, national security forces and government officials. At the sub-regional level, the SADC Secretariat has supported 10 member States (Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to formulate and implement Trafficking in Persons (TIP) legislations aimed at curbing the practice, particularly where women and children are concerned. Furthermore, the Secretariat is implementing a four year Regional Political Cooperation (RPC) programme (2013-2017) with the European Union whose primary objective is “*Achieving raised awareness, cooperation and action against trafficking in persons, especially of women and children in the SADC region*”.

⁴⁹ Collected through National Demographic Health Surveys.

65. Some of the key challenges indicated for this section are: very weak enforcement of national laws on preventing and responding to VAW which has led to impunity by the perpetrators; key responses to VAW, such as provision and guarantee of the physical safety of victims of VAW and economic support to victims are still lacking; lack of comprehensive data on VAW to inform targeted policy responses; slow and sporadic implementation of the UN SCR 1888 on the protection of women and children, from all forms of sexual violence in conflict.

66. The recommendations proffered include: the need to prioritize effective enforcement of the laws addressing and punishing all forms of VAW through adequate resource allocation and targeted capacity building of law enforcement agencies; the need for a well coordinated, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder response to VAW that includes provision of efficient gender-responsive medical services, safe spaces for physical safety and security, legal/judicial response, psycho-social support, economic empowerment initiatives in-order to reduce vulnerability by enabling autonomy and self-sufficiency; meaningful engagement of men and boys in policy and programme formulation and subsequent implementation.

Critical Area 5 – Women and armed conflict

67. In alignment with the BPfA, statistical evidence from various studies reveals the interplay between armed conflict and gender inequality; where conflict is known to exacerbate gender inequality while conversely, gender inequality fuels conflict⁵⁰. In the former case, women experience the double burden of productive and reproductive labor, larger numbers of dependents (including the injured and orphaned), and increases in gender-based violence (GBV)/VAW, disease, and malnutrition; while in the latter case, patriarchal gender norms which lie at the heart of gender inequality also fuel conflict and violence, particularly where militarized notions of masculinity are prevalent such as in communities that practice the bride price system⁵¹.

68. The recognition of this interplay in the BPfA and other frameworks informed the push for the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (SCR 1325) in the year 2000. The resolution calls on Member States and all actors in a conflict to protect women's rights, to take into account of their specific needs in conflict and post-conflict situations and to involve them in the entire process of re-establishing peace and stability through their participation in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. This resolution is complemented by UN SCR 1888 which urges Member States to take effective steps to halt the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war.

69. With this blue-print for implementation, progress has been made in the operationalisation of SCR 1325 through the development of National Action Plans (NAPs). To date, 14 African countries have developed (NAPs) to implement the SCR – Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda. South Sudan has begun the process of the development of a national action plan. Additionally, 3 regional action plans on UN SCR 1325 have been developed; one in the Great Lakes Region, the second in the Mano River region of West Africa and the third at the IGAD secretariat for its member States.

⁵⁰ Wright, H. 2013. *Gender peace and security and the post-2015 framework*. Mexico city: UN Women & ECLAC.

⁵¹ Ibid.

70. This progress has however not yielded significant change in increasing the participation of women in peace negotiations. Available data indicates that women are conspicuously under-represented at the peace table, where crucial decisions about post-conflict recovery and governance are made⁵² from the period after 2000.

Table 4:

Women's participation in peace processes in Africa (1992-2011)

No	Country	Women signatories	Women lead mediators	Women witnesses	Women in negotiating teams
1	Sierra Leone (1999)	0%	0%	20%	0%
2	Burundi (2000) – Arusha	0%	0%	-	2%
3	Somalia (2002) – Eldoret	0%	0%	0%	-
4	Côte d'Ivoire (2003)	0%	0%	0%	-
5	DRC (2003)	5%	0%	0%	12%
6	Liberia (2003) – Accra	0%	0%	17%	-
7	Sudan (2005) - Naivasha	0%	0%	9%	-
8	Darfur (2006) – Abuja	0%	0%	7%	8%
9	DRC (2008) - Goma - North Kivu	5%	20%	0%	-
10	DRC (2008) - Goma - South Kivu	0%	20%	0%	-
11	Uganda (2008)	0%	0%	20%	9%
12	Kenya (2008) – Nairobi	0%	33%	0%	25%
13	Central African Republic (2008)	0%	0%	0%	-
14	Zimbabwe (2008)	0%	0%	0%	-
15	Somalia (2008)	0%	0%	10%	-
16	Central African Republic (2011)	0%	0%	0%	-

Source : UNWomen, 2010.

71. Despite the dismal representation at the peace-table, women in conflict situations have found creative ways to have their voices heard. Women have been reported to have run parallel sessions in close collaboration with CSOs such as in Burundi; when locked out of the rooms where

⁵² UNWomen. 2010. *Women's participation in peace negotiations: Connections between presence and influence*. New York, NY: UN Women.

decisions are made, women have pushed their position papers and their recommendations through the gaps under the doors; they have barricaded meeting rooms till a decision is made – as in Liberia.

72. Legal frameworks have been developed to mainstream gender in peacekeeping operations. For instance, in 2012, Benin developed a national policy to promote a gender-responsive approach to peacekeeping operations and ensure the full participation and representation of women in peace processes including the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction. In similar fashion, Burundi has established greater equity in the recruitment of female soldiers into the military by the issuance of a decree promoting the recruitment of women in the army. With this measure, the enlistment rate for women increased from 0.0 per cent to 10 per cent (1993-2014). In addition, the existence of a gender integration strategy in the Ministry of National Defense and War Veterans (MDN WV) (2011-2012) led to the development of a booklet for guiding gender mainstreaming in the ministry. Moreover, various forms of incentives are under implementation in Ethiopia, Lesotho and South Africa to promote the recruitment of women in the uniformed forces.

73. In spite of the progress made in some of the indicators on women and armed conflict, a number of challenges persist, namely: the dismal representation and participation of women in formal peace-talks; slow and somewhat ad-hoc implementation of SCR 1325 NAPs; consistently high rates of violence against women and girl in conflict situations; lack of resources (financial and human) and the general capacity of national machineries to adequately fulfill their mandates in conflict and post-conflict situations; implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs that are not gender-responsive.

74. Recommendations targeting this focus area have been proposed as: placing gender experts in strategic positions within formal peace talks, including at the technical level of the mediator's office, the facilitator and the negotiating parties' delegations, or establishing a system by which they stay informed about the process and are able to feedback women's recommendations to all parties in the talks; well resourced and coordinated multi-stakeholder implementation of the NAPs; mainstreaming gender into DDR programs from the outset; taking decisive action at national, regional or global level against perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations; earmarking funds for gender equality and women empowerment in post-conflict reconstruction.

Critical Area 6 – Women and the economy

75. Recent evidence shows that investing in women and girls and reducing barriers to more efficient allocation of women's skills and talents have strong multiplier effects on productivity, efficiency and sustained economic growth.⁵³ Research demonstrates that providing girls with an extra year of schooling can increase individual wages by up to 20 per cent while also lowering birth rates by almost 10 per cent, resulting in a profound economic impact. Increasing the number of women with secondary education by 1 per cent on the other hand will increase annual per capita economic growth by 0.37 per cent, clearly demonstrating that investing in women and girls is smart economics⁵⁴. Furthermore, increasing women's economic opportunities and gender equality has been linked to higher gross domestic product growth, higher income per capita, and greater competitiveness⁵⁵.

⁵³ UNECA. 2013. *African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) regional report*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNECA.

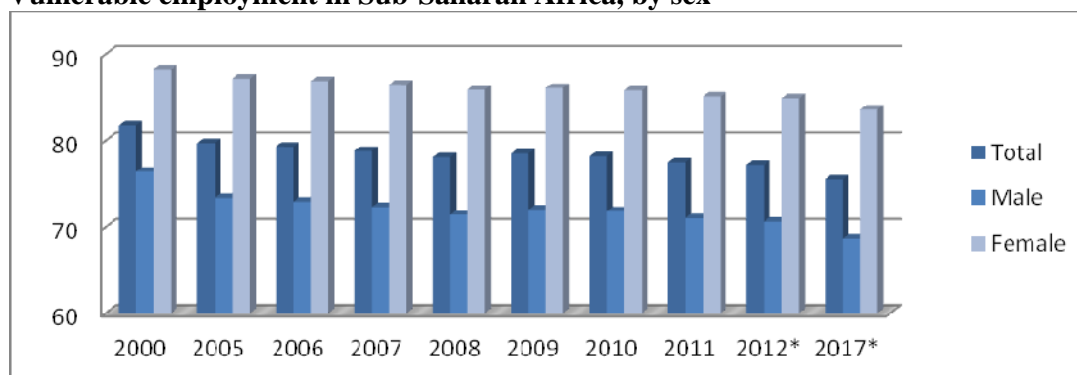
⁵⁴ World Bank (2012), *Smarter economics: Investing in girls*, The World Bank Group, Washington DC

⁵⁵ CIDA. 2014. *Women's economic empowerment: A guidance note*. CIDA.

76. The two decades of fast and sustained economic growth (5 - 7 per cent annually) in Africa have failed to translate economic gains into meaningful gender equality outcomes for women. For instance, in 2012, 84.9 per cent of women in Africa were employed in vulnerable employment against 70.6 per cent of men⁵⁶. Cultural impediments and limited economic opportunities continue to constrain women into informal and vulnerable employment. This is in large part due to the abundant labor supply in Sub-Saharan Africa and the absence of social safety nets, which makes it difficult for many low skilled workers (particularly women) to exit the labor markets as they have no alternative means of survival. Indeed, while often seen as a coping mechanism and the first step towards higher wages, vulnerable employment is most likely to trap people into poverty, due to a lack of opportunities for skills development⁵⁷.

Figure 1

Vulnerable employment in Sub-Saharan Africa, by sex



Source: UNECA, 2013.

77. Moreover, female unemployment is on the rise as evidenced by Egypt where female unemployment rates have risen increasing from 18.7 per cent in the last quarter of 2006 to 22.7 per cent in the last quarter of 2009, while the unemployment rate among males decreased from 5.9 per cent to 5.1 per cent during the same period. The same scenario is played out in Cape Verde, where the unemployment rate is higher among young women (20 to 24 year olds), than young men with a 6 per cent point- differential (37 per cent for women vs. 31 per cent for men). The proportion of unemployed women with better educational attainment (post-secondary) is higher than men's showing that the improvement in educational attainment of women might not, on its own, result in greater access to the labor market.

78. All is not lost however, as all respondent countries indicated the existence of several policies, programmes and projects to accelerate economic empowerment of women in various areas, with a strong focus on agriculture, business development and finance. Kenya and South Africa stand-out for successfully implementing public procurement programs where a quota of 30 percent of any government procurement has been set aside for women and youth. Furthermore, several country reports indicated the established of special funds to support women enterprises in the small and medium size enterprise (SME) category. These countries include: Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria and South Africa.

⁵⁶ UNECA. 2014. Economic Report for Africa (ERA): *Making the Most of Africa's Commodities: Industrializing for Growth, Jobs and Economic Transformation*, Economic commission for Africa, Addis Ababa

⁵⁷ UN. 2013. *The MDG Report 2013: Assessing Progress in Africa Toward the Millennium Development Goals*, United Nations, New York

79. A number of countries have implemented – with a high degree of success – engendered value-chains in the agricultural sector, where almost 70 per cent of women are found. This necessitated an understanding of men’s and women’s access to productive resources and opportunities both as individual and group enterprises; gender-based division of activities; and, how the interaction between gender and power relations, regulations and trade impact the distribution of value along the value chain. These successes were recorded in cassava value chains in Ghana and Cameroon, rice and sorghum in Mali, rice in Senegal, maize in Burkina Faso and the horticultural sector in Kenya.

80. The engendering of various national development plans in Africa has opened-up previously closed spaces for women to thrive economically. Ethiopia’s Growth Transformation Plan (GTP- (2010/11-2014/15) is a case in point that has resulted in the organization of an estimated 5 million women into small and medium enterprises, and provided access to affordable credit. The number of women that benefited from saving and credit services increased from 610,789 in 2009, to 1,457,339 in 2010; 4,098,313 in 2012 and 6.9 million in 2013. On a different tangent, the Malawi AGDI report (2011) indicated wage parity in agriculture, civil service, formal and in informal sectors. However, gender inequalities in opportunities for employment between women and men in non-agriculture sectors still persist.

81. To address the constraints of women’s access to collateral and credit due to high interest rates, many countries have launched credit schemes and financial initiatives to grant women softer terms of lending as well as remove the requirement for loan collateral. Countries such as Benin and Mauritania have backed these initiatives with institutional, legal and policy frameworks that outline the specific target groups and interventions in place. The first women’s commercial bank in Ethiopia, ENAT and similar institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia were created with a view to empowering women in business.

82. Projects for enhancing women’s entrepreneurship through capacity development and financial assistance are in place in several countries⁵⁸. Morocco and Zimbabwe, in particular, have taken major steps to develop women’s entrepreneurship; facilitate women’s participation in key economic decision-making positions; ensure employment equity and assist vulnerable women to participate in and benefit from informal and formal economic activities.

83. Ethiopia and Mali have instituted programmes aimed at strengthening women’s competitiveness and diversification in agriculture. Multifunctional platform projects⁵⁹ are also expanding in several West African countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, whose economies are largely agriculture-based. Furthermore, poverty reduction programmes in a large majority of the countries are catalyzing efforts towards economic empowerment of the most vulnerable groups - women farmers, women in the informal sector, migrants, women with disabilities. This is the case in Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Morocco and Sudan, where special collaborative programmes are in place.

⁵⁸ Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

⁵⁹ The Multifunction Platform (MFP) is a concept and structure developed by UNDP and deployed in a number of West African countries and in Tanzania and Zambia. The idea was to place an MFP driven by a diesel engine in a village to power devices such as pumps, grain mills and generators. The MFP has greatly impacted women’s work by reducing daily drudgery and opening up new opportunities for them.

84. The emergence of a globalized knowledge based economy has turned information and communications technologies (ICTs) into a fundamental tool for facilitating business development and entrepreneurship worldwide and contributing to the economic empowerment of women. Countries such as Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mauritius and Sudan are developing programmes to hasten the expansion of ICTs and leverage the immense opportunities they hold.

85. Despite progress towards gender equality in areas such as education and health, a significant economic gap persists between women and men as a result of the following key challenges: institutional constraints such as biased legal environments that limit women's ability to own or control assets and productive resources, or to engage in paid work; lack of sex-disaggregated information and data on women's participation in the informal sector as well as engagement in unpaid care work limiting time devoted to paid work; women, particularly those working in agriculture and living in rural areas, have difficulty in obtaining the same specialized knowledge and skills as men, accessing equivalent business and financial services, inputs, and technologies; and linking up with profitable markets⁶⁰.

86. To ensure that women participate and benefit equally from Africa's economic growth and development, several recommendations need to be taken on board. They include: the formulation and implementation of non-discriminatory legal frameworks that support women's economic empowerment, economic security, and rights; widening economic opportunities for women by providing gender-responsive sector-specific support services in business, agriculture, the extractive industry; the development of gender-aware value-chains that have the potential to pull large numbers of women out of poverty in the agricultural and extractive industries; strengthening women's agency by building their ability to identify and act on economic opportunities, define, influence, and make economic decisions; and challenge social and cultural norms⁶¹.

Critical Area 7 – Women in power and decision-making

87. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is clear in its assertion that the goals of development, equality and peace cannot be achieved without meaningful participation of women and the incorporation of their perspectives at all levels of decision-making. The implementation of this area of concern has witnessed the attainment of several milestones such as the election of 3 females heads of state, 2 of whom are currently in power namely: H. E. Ellen Sirleaf Johnson (Liberia), H. E. Catherine Samba-Panza (the Central African Republic) and Joyce Banda (Malawi). Moreover, H. E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma election as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in 2012 was a ground-breaking event as she was the first female at the helm of the organization, 50 years after its founding.

88. These milestones were replicated in national level parliamentary elections where women in 12 countries secured elected positions in various houses of parliament as follows: Rwanda - 63.8 per cent (leading global rankings), Seychelles - 43.8 per cent, Senegal - 43.3 per cent, South Africa - 40.8 per cent, Mozambique - 39.2 per cent, Angola - 36.8 per cent, Tanzania - 36.0 per cent, Uganda - 35.0 per cent, Algeria - 31.6 per cent, Zimbabwe - 31.5 per cent, Cameroon - 31.1 per cent, and Burundi - 30.5 per cent. The latest updates on representation of women at the local governance level - above the 30 per cent threshold proscribed by the BPfA - included: Benin-60 per cent; Lesotho- 49 per cent; the Gambia – 42 per cent; Mauritius – 37 per cent; Ethiopia – 33 per cent; Nigeria – 33 per cent; Mauritania – 30 per cent; while countries with more than 30 per cent female representation in senior cabinet positions and the judiciary are: Burundi, Egypt, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda. Several countries that have witnessed increased female participation in

⁶⁰ CIDA. 2014. *Women's economic empowerment: A guidance note*. CIDA.

⁶¹ Ibid.

decision-making despite missing the threshold are: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar, Morocco, Namibia, Tunisia, Togo, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan.

89. These successes have largely been as a result of a combination of strategies including: affirmative action through designated quotas; review of legal frameworks governing elections and political party representations among others. Countries like Gabon, DRC, the Gambia, Mauritius, Cameroon, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, have enacted laws and amended electoral processes to advance women's participation in politics and decision making. Similarly, quotas for local governance positions have been put place in Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Gabon, the Gambia, Kenya, Mauritius, and Uganda. Political party regulations have been reviewed in Algeria, Cape Verde and Sudan, while financing for political parties according to the number of elected women is underway in the DRC and Morocco.

90. The reforms undertaken by different countries to address critical issues related to women's participation in politics and decision making have facilitated implementation of the Beijing commitments. However, there are gaps that still exist, particularly in elaborating and implementing strategies that ensure 50 per cent representation of women in all decision-making positions as per the AU's 50/50 campaign. These gaps include: socio-cultural practices which reinforce patriarchal notions of the incapability of female leadership; perpetuation of violence against women during the electoral cycle; difficulties in access to resources by women for electoral campaigns; inadequate capacity to discharge duties by newly elected women with no previous leadership experience; gender-insensitive work environments.

91. A raft of remedial measures have been proposed by the national review reports as follows: effective implementation of legal frameworks in punishing perpetrators of VAW during the electoral cycle; reinforcement of political training, advocacy, national awareness campaigns in order to equip women for leadership in the public sphere; creation of gender-sensitive work environments that allow women to carry-out their dual leadership and reproductive roles; provision of financing for female candidates who may lack the requisite funds.

Critical Area 8 – Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

92. The existence of a well-functioning and adequately resourced institutional mechanism at national level is a pivotal precondition for ensuring progress in the implementation of all the other critical areas of concern. All country reports indicated the existence of national gender machineries prior to 2009 in various forms: as stand-alone ministries of gender and women's affairs; gender directorates under various ministries; gender units/desks or focal points in key ministries; gender secretariats; as well as gender and equality commissions. Only Zambia reported the existence of a newly created ministry of gender and child development in 2012; while the Kenyan national review report indicated the 2013 replacement of the ministry of gender, with a gender directorate hosted in the Presidency, under the ministry of devolution.

93. An overwhelming number of respondents (all of them – 100 per cent) indicated that they had taken measures to integrate gender perspectives in legislations, public policies as well as in various programmes and projects (particularly those related to economic empowerment).

Table 5

Measures undertaken by national gender machineries for the advancement of women

Action taken	Beijing +20 (51)
Countries put in place institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender issues	45
Countries took measures to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women	51
Countries took specific actions to promote women's participation in the economy	51

Source: Beijing +20 national review reports, 2014.

94. The key challenges highlighted by the reports in the effective functioning of national gender machineries include: woefully inadequate budgetary allocation for the implementation of their mandate (*see table 1 for selected country budgetary allocation for national gender machineries as share of national budget*); insufficient human resources, which when present records a high turn-over rate; inadequate skills to undertake effective gender mainstreaming across different line ministries; marginalization of gender focal points that have been assigned to support the gender mainstreaming actions in various line ministries.

95. Key recommendations in support of the national gender machineries' (NMGs) strengthening include: government commitment to allocate adequate financial and human resources; the need for government to explore creative domestic resource mobilization strategies in order to cover the funding needs of the NMGs; proactive NMGs that seek out public private partnerships (PPPs) to support their mandate; regular refresher courses on sector-specific gender mainstreaming.

Box 3: Emerging best practice in institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

Various Ugandan Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) have recruited resident gender experts to support gender focal points in the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all legislations, policies, programmes and projects. As a result, participatory gender audits which were combined with hands-on capacity building workshops were conducted in a majority of the MDAs. These has been useful in providing a baseline for the implementation of gender mainstreaming interventions and informing key recommendations for scaling up gender mainstreaming in the respective MDAs. As a result of this and other trainings, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) routinely collects data on gender and women's empowerment in the Uganda DHS, Census and other surveys that have provided crucial input in the design of gender-responsive policies and programs.

Source: Beijing +20 Uganda national review report, 2014.

Critical Area 9 – Human rights of women

96. Recent years have witnessed renewed commitment - at the highest political levels - towards promoting the human rights of women, through the signing, ratification, and domestication of various global and regional frameworks on women's rights. This political will is evidenced by the scheduled reporting of 26⁶² African countries to various human rights treaty bodies in 2014. This accountability framework at the global level is crucial in supporting the upholding of human rights at the national level. One such reporting requirement is tied to the implementation of the landmark

⁶² Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda and Tanzania.

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), commonly referred to as the international bill of women's rights, which came into force in 1979. To date, 52 out of the 54 African countries have ratified CEDAW, with two exceptions - Somalia and Sudan. Much like the BPfA, CEDAW urges member States to take "all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men".

97. A self-assessment on the implementation of the CEDAW convention by 13 African countries using UNECA's AGDI – African Women's Progress Scoreboard provides an insight into the successes and challenges encountered by member States in the promotion of women's rights.

Table 6:
African Women Progress Scoreboard on women's rights - CEDAW

	Law	Policy commitment	Development of a plan	Targets	Institutional mechanism	Budget	Human resources	Research	Involvement of civil society	Information & dissemination	Monitoring & evaluation	Capacity Enhancement	Accountability/ Transparency	Total	%
Botswana	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18	69
Kenya	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	18	69
Gambia	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	21	81
Zambia	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	10	38
Malawi	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	17	65
Togo	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	12	46
Côte d'Ivoire	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	14	54
Senegal	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	22	85
Mali	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	18	69
DRC	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	13	50
Congo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	12	48
Cape Verde															
Djibouti															
<i>Source: UNECA Regional AGDI Report, 2013 (to be published).</i>															

From the table, it is clear that majority of the countries struggled in the implementation aspect of the promotion of human rights - CEDAW (art 2) - due to human and financial constraints, which by consequence hampered the NMGs ability to disseminate its contents through awareness raising campaigns. Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks are correlated to weak transparency and accountability mechanisms, which inevitably lead to poor application of the legal frameworks. Persistent human rights violations are the end product of the poor application of laws, coupled with the need for the capacity-building of NMGs.

98. Regionally, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Maputo protocol), which came into force in 2005, captured comprehensively the notion of women's human rights, and went a step further in committing African governments to integrate gender in legal and policy frameworks, strategies, programmes and development activities as they relate to the political, civil, social, cultural and economic rights of women. Presently, it has been signed and ratified by 28 member States; signed only by 18 member States while 8 member States have neither signed nor ratified the protocol namely: Botswana, Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Sao Tome and Principe, South Sudan, Sudan and Tunisia.

99. In operationalizing the domesticated legal frameworks, a number of precedent-setting court rulings reversing discriminatory legal frameworks against women have been documented in the period after 2009 in Egypt, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Uganda and are sampled below.

Box 4: Landmark rulings on women's human rights

Swaziland – Property rights

Mary-Joyce Doo Aphane took the Swaziland government to court where she argued that the provisions of Section 16(3) of the Deeds Registry Act not only undermines her dignity but is also discriminative of her and other women married in community. Section 16(3) of the Deeds Registry Act prevented women married in the community from registering immovable property in their names. This piece of legislation further allowed the husband to be the sole administrator of the property. Aphane further asserted that this piece of legislation is against the provision of Section 20 of the Constitution, which states that everyone is equal before the law while Section 28 awards women equal rights to men in political, economic and social activities. On the 23rd of February 2010, Justice Qinisile Mabuza ruled in Aphane's favour and gave women married in community of property the right to register property in their names and have equal partnership with their husbands in its administration.

Nigeria – Right to documentation

On June 1st 2009, Women in Nigeria won a major legal battle when a Federal High Court sitting in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, declared as unconstitutional the administrative policy of the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), which compelled a married Nigerian woman to produce a letter of consent from her husband as a condition for issuance of international passport. In his judgement, presiding judge, Justice G. K. Olotu, said the requirement was not only a violation of section 42 (1) (a) of the 1999 constitution but was also against Article 18 (3) of the African Charter on People's Human Rights which disallows discrimination on grounds of sex. Dr. Priye Iyalla-Amadi, wife of renowned author, Elechi Amadi filed the case against the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) and its director-general, Chukwumah Udeh after she sought a replacement of her international passport and was told by Immigration Officials in Port Harcourt that she needed a written permission from her husband first.

Source: African Women Right Observatory (AWRO), 2014.

100. Along the similar lines, several countries reported the enactment of various legal frameworks for the protection and promotion of women's human rights in the period after 2009. Mozambique passed a Law on Domestic Violence against Women (29/2009), while efforts are underway to revise the Penal Code through the elimination and /or amendment of discriminatory provisions against women such as the land laws. The creation of legal literacy among regional and local authority councilors, traditional leaders and school teachers was carried out in Namibia in 2012 through legal literacy workshops conducted to a total of 228 participants (119 female and 109 male). Along the same lines, Mauritius launched a program on "*Lifelong Learning for Women's Empowerment*" where various laws relating to family, marriage and divorce are widely disseminated to women's centers in the country, including through the use of text messages; while

Ghana and Namibia have engaged in intensive capacity building of national agencies on various human rights frameworks.

101. The revision and /or adoption of various national – level legislative frameworks to align them with international and regional human rights frameworks (especially in relation to domestic violence, human trafficking and female genital mutilation) has been undertaken in Botswana, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Mali, Kenya, South Africa. On this score, Uganda has gone a step further and developed a *Checklist for compliance with human rights* in policies, bills, budgets, government programmes and all business handled by Parliament.

102. The country reports revealed that the power of rights and laws to increase women's agency is limited by four main factors, namely: persistent discrimination in many formal statutory legal systems, particularly around marriage, inheritance, the age of majority and control of productive resources; customary and religious laws that are equally enshrined in 'formal' legislation and the Constitutions of many African countries wielding the most influence in family law creating ambivalence around the concept of women's rights; slow implementation and enforcement of the promulgated human rights laws; and social norms which impact negatively on the effective exercise of rights for women⁶³.

103. The challenges encountered in the implementation of women's human rights instruments could be remedied in the following ways: the need for political commitment to translate into concrete actions on the ground in the promotion of women's human rights through adequate allocation of human and financial resources; need for the formulation of strengthening of existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks in order to track implementation progress with a view to informing policy; the need of the enhancement of statistical capacity to collect robust and comprehensive data for programme planning.

Critical Area 10 – Women and the media

104. A 2006 study carried out by the Association of Women Journalists (Association des femmes journalistes – AFJ) on news coverage of women and women's issues in 70 countries revealed the extent to which negative programming reinforced women's traditional roles - which in most cases influenced the limiting of women's participation in socio-economic and political activities. This large-scale study spanning 70 countries reported that only 17 per cent of stories quoted women; one in 14 women was presented as a victim (compared to one in 21 men); and one in five women was shown in the context of her family (compared to one in 16 men). Women in the news are more likely to be featured in stories about rape or other forms of domestic violence than in stories about their professional abilities, expertise or talents.

105. In the period after the study, much progress has been witnessed by government, media houses and the private sector in increasing women's participation in and access to decision-making in the media and ICT. Several countries have put in place legal frameworks and strategies to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through the media. Significant progress in this sector has been registered in 22 member States namely: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda. Additionally, the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport calls on Member States to ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all information, communication,

⁶³ WDR 2012, op cit, p. 157.

and media policies, programmes, laws and training; in accordance with the Protocol on Culture Information and Sport.

106. In order to track the progress in maximizing media use for the advancement of women, Burundi conducted an inventory of the nature and place of radio programmes for women. According to data provided by the National Communication Council (NCC) and the Burundian Association of Broadcasters, twenty-one radio stations and eight television stations broadcast varied programmes on women and development, health, demography, peace, and elections. Post-conflict Somalia has witnessed very rapid media growth in the recent past. In the capital (Mogadishu) alone, there are over 10 independent radio stations, more than 20 privately owned newspapers and more than 30 Somalia websites on the internet. However, more needs to be done to propel women to leadership positions in this sector, which is male-dominated. In contrast, Guinea's liberalization of the media saw the operationalisation of 37 private radio stations; 23 rural and community radio stations; over 30 private newspapers and more than 50 online information sites. Furthermore, gender parity has been met, with female journalists making up 50.33 per cent of all journalists nationally. Additionally, women own 35.2 per cent of 17 rural and regional radio stations resulting in greater coverage of women issues; while the rise in a number of female sports journalists has increasingly feminized the journalism/media world in Guinea.

107. Gender stakeholders in Namibia implement a multipronged approach whereby intervention programmes target current media and journalism industry, alongside future career journalists and media personnel via critical entry points (tertiary institutions). Efforts have been made towards successfully mainstreaming gender into journalism and media education, as is the case in Lesotho.

108. The wide-spread proliferation of ICT in Mauritius, led to the introduction of an e-Government Strategy (2013-2017) to "adopt a more citizen and business centric approach" taking into consideration women and gender related issues. The e-Government Strategy aims at increased participation of citizens, including women in decision making, increased transparency and accountability. The strategy, while promoting legal literacy, information and education on women issues and concerns, also enables the reporting of cases of alleged gender based domestic violence electronically. The Central Information Bureau (CIB) is also networking with the Ministry of gender equality, child development and family welfare of Mauritius to set up the domestic violence information system.

109. Moreover, the use of mobile phone technology as a platform for providing information to poor and remote areas has considerably advanced women's empowerment. Initiatives like M-PESA in Kenya allow for safe management of micro-credit loans, and has been expanded to facilitate savings for pre and post-natal care (with Mamabika); while fand rapidSMS in Rwanda which provides women and health workers information about pre and post-natal care have significantly reduced gendered information asymmetry. Furthermore, a mobile application that is engaging women politically in Senegal is in current use.

110. Some of the key challenges emerging from the country reports revolve around the following. Dismal representation of women in leadership positions in audio and print media results in gender insensitive programming. Moreover, the negative and degrading projection of women in media via electronic, print, visual and audio still persists; as does the concentration of female journalist reporting on "soft issues" such as social welfare, fashion, home-making or women's issues (children and health) rather than on "serious" issues – on conflict, foreign affairs, or economics. This perpetuates gender stereotypes in the media.

111. In light of the above, the emerging recommendations include: the need to hold journalists, editors and directors of media houses to account in translating commitment to gender sensitive reporting to concrete action; gender responsive media programming be tracked and assessed; the inclusion of gender equality measures in media-style guides; establishment of reward mechanisms to recognize promotion of gender equality in the media; the need for government to harness technology in the provision of greater and more equal access to services, such as the use of mobile phones to provide information to the under-served rural and the poorest populations living in remote hard-to-reach places.

Critical Area 11 – Women and the environment

112. The BPfA recognizes that environmental conditions have a different impact on the lives of women and men due to existing gender inequality. In particular, lack of access to clean water and energy, environmental degradation and natural disasters disproportionately affects women in terms of health, unremunerated work and well-being. Furthermore, the Beijing Platform for Action stresses that women's role in sustainable development is hampered by unequal access to land, financial resources and agricultural information and technologies; unequal access to formal training in professional natural resources management; and limited involvement in policy formulation and decision-making in natural resources and environment management.

113. It is important to note that the participation of women in environmental decision-making, particularly at higher levels, remains limited, thus restricting the integration of women's issues and gender perspectives into policy-making on the environment⁶⁴. For example, a survey on gender mainstreaming among 17 environment ministries conducted in 2006 showed that women made up 41 per cent of the entire staff of the ministries but only 27 per cent of managerial positions. This trend of negligible participation of women in high-level decision making persists to this day at all levels – global, regional, national and local levels. A case in point is the membership of the current composition of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) boards and bodies, which are explicitly mandated to target gender balance, especially via Decision 23/CP.18.

Figure 2

Women in high-level decision-making positions in UNFCCC boards and bodies



Source: Women's Environment Development Organization (WEDO), 2014

⁶⁴ UNDESA.2010. *The Worlds Women – 2010: Trends and statistics*. New York, NY: UN

114. It is this scenario that informed the Rio+20 outcome document which reaffirmed “the need to achieve economic stability, sustained economic growth, the promotion of social equity and the protection of the environment, *while enhancing gender equality, women’s empowerment* and equal employment for all, and the protection, survival and development of children to their full potential, including through education”. The Africa Regional Implementation Meeting (Africa-RIM) of Rio + 20 held in 2012 reaffirmed the central role women play in food and nutrition security, the need to build partnerships to empower women as change agents, and to harness their potential and knowledge in climate adaptation and mitigation.

115. As a follow-up to the commitments made at the Rio +20 Conference and the Africa – RIM meeting, gender responsive measures in environmental management and conservation have been introduced in Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. For instance, Egypt, Kenya and Tanzania have taken measures to increase women’s participation in environmental decision-making through the establishment of quotas (30 per cent for Kenya) in water management boards and other environmental boards; while Cote d’Ivoire has set up gender units at the Ministry of Environment as well as the Ministry of Water and Forest resources to support gender responsive policy and programme development, implementation and monitoring. Adequate staffing levels have been instituted at the gender units, with the unit at the Ministry of Environment having 100 personnel – 70 of whom are female. Furthermore, the UNFCC National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs) for Malawi and Zambia recognize women as important agents in climate change adaptation activities.

116. Common challenges indicated in the national review reports include the following: government policies, laws and regulations that address environmental concerns including climate change are segmented into various sectoral laws spread out in various ministries, making their implementation ad-hoc and uncoordinated; chronic under-representation of women in high-level decision-making bodies; lack of reliable gender disaggregated data and information to inform key policy making on the environment (with specific reference to climate change); insufficient resource allocation to the line-ministries for the implementation of gender-responsive policies and programs; lack of access to clean and renewable energy technologies-particularly for women and girls.

116. Key recommendations proposed by the national reports to remedy the situation include: the urgent need to build adequate capacities in environmental ministries to integrate gender concerns into policy making and programming for sustainable development; multi-stakeholder coordination by government, private sector, CSOs and development partners to guarantee access to clean and renewable energy technologies to all (with specific emphasis on women and girls who bear the consequences of societal division of labor); introduction of affirmative action on the representation of women in high-level decision-making spaces; adequate resource mobilization by government from non-traditional sources including the domestic markets.

Critical Area 12 – The girl-child

117. According to the BPfA, available indicators from a majority of the countries show that the girl child is discriminated against through-out the life cycle - from the earliest stages of life, through her childhood and into adulthood. The persistence of harmful attitudes and cultural practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, violence against women and girls, sexual exploitation and abuse, child labor, gender-biased educational processes (including curricula, educational materials and practices, teachers' attitudes and classroom interaction) reinforce existing gender inequalities.

118. The cross-cutting nature of this critical area means that some key elements have been addressed in other areas of focus such as education, health, violence against women and girls, human rights, armed conflict, the media and the environment. This section will therefore limit itself to harmful cultural practices such as FGM and child marriage.

119. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons⁶⁵. It is largely performed on young girls between infancy and 15 years, with current estimates indicating that more than 125 million girls and women alive today have undergone the practice globally, while 91.5 million girls and women above 9 years old in Africa are currently living with the consequences of FGM in 29 countries in Africa where FGM is concentrated⁶⁶. Several factors influence FGM prevalence rates including preservation of virginity, family honor, and enhanced fertility. African Countries with very high prevalence - over 70 per cent - include Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. However, there is great variation in prevalence across countries, reflecting ethnicity, tradition, and socio-demographic factors⁶⁷.

120. Renewed impetus to combat FGM at the global level saw the adoption of the UN General Assembly (UN GA) Resolution A/RES/67/146, banning FGM worldwide. The resolution calls on all countries to address FGM through “all necessary measures, including enacting and enforcing legislation to prohibit FGM, to protect women and girls from this form of violence, and to end impunity”. At the country-level, a renewed call to action (particularly after the 2014 Girl Summit held in July) is underway in the 21 African countries where legal and normative frameworks on FGM are currently under implementation namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda.

121. Another harmful practice – child marriage – is defined as the formal or informal union of a child or adolescent before the age of 18⁶⁸; where the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. There are 41 countries worldwide with a child marriage prevalence rate of 30 per cent or more, and of these, 30 are in Africa as follows: Zimbabwe (31 per cent), Senegal (33 per cent), Congo (33 per cent), Gabon (33 per cent), Sudan (34 per cent), Sao Tome & Principe (34 per cent), Benin (34 per cent), Cote d’Ivoire (34 per cent), Mauritania (35 per cent), Gambia (36 per cent), Cameroon (36 per cent), Tanzania (37 per cent), Liberia (38 per cent), Nigeria (39 per cent), Democratic Republic of the Congo (39 per cent), Ethiopia (41 per cent), Zambia (42 per cent), Somalia (45 per cent), Uganda (46 per cent), Eritrea (47 per cent), Burkina Faso (48 per cent), Sierra Leone (48 per cent), Madagascar (48 per cent), Malawi (50 per cent), Mozambique (52 per cent), Mali (55 per cent), Central African Republic (61 per cent), Guinea (63 per cent), Chad (72 per cent) and Niger (75 per cent)⁶⁹.

122. Legal and policy guidance to address these two harmful practices at the regional level is contained in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) - Children’s Charter as well as the Maputo Protocol. As at January 2014, all member States of the AU had signed the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). Only 6 countries

⁶⁵ WHO. 2014. *Female Genital Mutilation*. <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/fgm/overview/en/>

⁶⁶ UNICEF. 2013. *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A statistical overview and exploration of the dynamics of change*. New York, NY: UNICEF.

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ UNICEF. 2001. *Early Marriage: Child Spouses*. Innocenti Research Centre, Florence.

⁶⁹ UNFPA. 2014. *Household surveys (Demographic and Health Survey and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) completed between 2000 and 2011*. UNFPA

have not ratified it thus far, namely: Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, South Sudan and Tunisia. Furthermore, all country reports indicated the existence of legal and policy frameworks for the protection of the girl-child at country level in the form of a Children's Act; Education Act; Violence against Women and Children laws; Child labour laws; and laws against Human trafficking.

123. The national reports indicated the existence – at country-level - of adequate legal and policy frameworks in various sectors to protect the girl-child. The lack of sufficient progress in this area was blamed on poor and haphazard implementation of the said frameworks as a result of: inadequate human and financial resource allocation in the key line ministries as well as the national gender machineries; persistent poverty at household level that perpetuates awarding of scarce developmental opportunities to boys at the expense of the girl-child; lack of adequate capacity of the law enforcement agencies and judicial systems to implement the legal frameworks; persistent harmful cultural practices fanned by unjust societal norms.

124. The policy recommendations put forth included: the need for harmonized action plans for the implementation of policies across various line ministries such as ministries of gender, education, youth affairs, sports, social services to avoid ad-hoc and piece-meal implementation of key laws and policies on the girl-child; need to adequately engage religious leaders, medical personnel, traditional leaders, men and boys in policy formulation and program implementation of girl-child projects; need for adequate capacity building of law enforcement agencies and judicial systems to deliver their mandate on the legal front; need for the implementation of adequate social protection floor programs by governments in-order to address household poverty that determines which family members will have access to developmental opportunities.

Section Three

Data and statistics

125. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) underscored the importance of collecting high-quality, reliable, comparable, sex, age and gender-disaggregated data to inform targeted evidence-based policy and programme development on gender equality and women's empowerment. This section provides a synthesis of the responses from the national review reports on the current status of national-level data collection, compilation and dissemination.

National Core Indicators

126. Twenty two (22) countries (Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leon, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zambia) reported the establishment of a core set of national indicators for monitoring progress in gender equality; even though many countries indicated the absence of sufficiently disaggregated data.

127. Furthermore, seventeen (17) countries (Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo and Uganda) indicate that they have begun data collection on the minimum set of indicators for gender equality that were adopted by the UN Statistics Commission in 2013. Several other countries indicated that data collection was underway in specific sectors as follows: Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Kenya – education, health; Mali – education, health, family status, labor-force characteristics, decision-making.

128. In light of the above status review on data and statistics, the national review reports described some of the plans under national-level implementation aimed at improving the collection of comprehensive gender-related data. Benin has adopted the use of UNECA's African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) to support their data collection efforts, while several countries have integrated the minimum set of gender indicators into their household and demographic & health surveys (DHS), welfare monitoring surveys, labor-force surveys, as follows: Angola, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. Djibouti and Tanzania have reported the use of the AGDI in monitoring their progress in gender equality outcomes.

129. Although Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gambia, Malawi, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe reported the lack comprehensive gender disaggregated data that fulfill the UN minimum set of indicators, they indicated the existence of programmes and projects that collect this kind of data, which are currently underway.

130. Seven (7) countries - Angola, Guinea, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia - have begun the collection and compilation of data on the nine indicators on violence against women, as adopted by the UN Statistics Commission in 2013.

131. The key challenges in the collection of comprehensive gender-responsive disaggregated data as indicated by the review countries included: inadequate capacity to integrate the minimum gender and VAW indicators into their demographic, household and health surveys, family welfare surveys and other large-scale data collection initiatives; inadequate material and human resources at the national statistical offices or central bureaus of statistics to support the data collection, compilation and dissemination initiatives.

Section Four

Emerging priorities

132. The national review reports indicated a shift in government policy direction to focus on a bold mix of public policy that supports women's access to, and control over a wide range of economic opportunities in various sectors through actions that promote: a) industrialization; b) regional integration; c) entrepreneurship; d) the building of nation-wide and community resilience to shocks. These are explained in the following paragraphs.

133. Buoyed by current "*Africa rising*" discourse on the continent, a large number of countries are putting in place policy frameworks to support the continent's industrialization agenda aimed at bringing about transformative change. The focus of many of these policies is in the key productive economic sectors of agriculture, agri-business and the extractive industries where forward, backward and lateral linkages with other economic activities are expected to yield the dividends of inclusive and equitable development. Leveraging this opportunities to economically empower women, through meaningful insertion into the value-chains is seen as an opportunity to advance the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda at the national level. This requires up-scaling of women's capabilities through appropriate capacity building on all aspects of entrepreneurship, access to technology and equipment, finances and credit facilities, market research information, tax incentives, and facilities that take care of the reproductive and hygiene needs of women including child-care facilities.

134. Progress towards Africa's regional integration agenda including the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) has resulted in the review and/or establishment of policies and programmes to enhance the free movement of people, goods and services across borders, in a bid to

boost intra-Africa trade by member States. Cross-border trade opportunities for women engaged in formal and informal trade (including subsequent formalization) are envisaged as boosters of women's economic empowerment that will lead to improved gender equality outcomes.

136. African governments have embarked on the formulation of policies aimed at creating employment opportunities for the youth and women to address the increasing unemployment crisis witnessed in many of the countries. The strengthening/establishment of programmes aimed at making the youth and women self-sufficient is on the rise in the form of: youth and women enterprise funds, targeted skills training, provision of comprehensive entrepreneurial training packages for entry into the formal sectors as well as aligning education systems to labor market requirements.

135. African member States in the Sahel and horn of Africa regions are putting in place policies and programmes to build their resilience to food-system stresses in order to tackle the recurring problem of food insecurity in Africa. Governments are seeking avenues for strengthening the role of women in the formulation and implementation of these programmes since they are disproportionately affected by the impact of food insecurity.

136. Containing the spread of the current Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) out-break in parts of West Africa is an immediate priority for the countries worst hit by the virus – Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. As such, all efforts are directed at providing efficient medical care and other social services to the affected populations, and commencement of the post-crisis reconstruction process. The opportunity to integrate gender perspectives in this process is vital and should not be lost, because women and men differ in how they experience, respond to, and recover from disasters.

Conclusions and recommendations

137. Building on the current momentum in the implementation of the BPfA, member States recommended the need to invest in programs that bring about measurable change in women's lives. The above assessment provides a mixed picture, with remarkable progress made in many areas while demonstrating that important challenges still persist. This calls for innovative approaches aimed at greater and targeted actions to translate the momentum and gains into concrete/visible changes in the lives of women and girls.

138. In this vein, it is critical to position the gender equality and women's empowerment in the current discussions for the adoption on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post – 2015 development agenda. The member States called for the formulation of a stand-alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, while also ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in all the other proposed goals as has happened in the current proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This victory needs to be guarded as negotiations get underway for the finalization of the goals SDGs in the coming year.

139. The implementation of the above recommendation fell into three broad categories: the **facilitation of institutional frameworks** through the formulation and effective implementation of non-discriminatory legal frameworks that support gender equality and women's empowerment in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres; **expanding economic opportunities for women** by providing gender-responsive sector-specific support services in business, agriculture, the extractive industry; **strengthening women's agency** by building women's ability to identify and act on economic, social and political opportunities, and challenging harmful social and cultural norms that impede their ability to fully participate and benefit from the current impressive economic growth at national level.

140. Effectively harnessing these three categories will ensure that the interplay between opportunities, capabilities and empowerment of women will yield the gender equality and women's empowerment envisaged by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA).