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**Strategies for Accelerating the Implementation of the Dakar
and Beijing Platforms for Action**

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I. BACKGROUND

1. The United Nation Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), through the African Centre for Gender and Women Development (ACGS) Division was mandated to follow up and support the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action. As a follow up to this mandate, ECA/ACGS in collaboration with DAW undertook to conduct a regional review of the progress Africa was making in addressing gender equality and empowerment of women. The regional review focused generally on the 12 thematic areas of concern around which the BPfA revolves and, more specifically, on the key outcomes of the 1999 and 2004 regional review process. The BPfA and subsequent reviews are not isolated commitments and events. However, by virtue of their focus on gender, equality and development they are linked and associated intrinsically to a number of other developments and initiatives, so it was inevitable to conduct a holistic review including assessing progress on the various instruments as well.
2. First to be noted in this case is the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA), agreed upon in Cairo in 1994, together with its subsequent reviews of 1999 (ICPD +5), 2004 (ICPD +10) and 2009 (ICPD +15). Issues and concerns of the ICPD +15 outcomes fed into and shape those of Beijing +15. A key outcome of the former process was the need for African governments to invest more in the reproductive health and rights of women, with emphasis on reduction of maternal mortality and the gendered impacts of HIV/AIDS, and on improving the economic and political status of African women.
3. Other commitments that also occupied the centre stage of the Africa Beijing +15 review, included: the Millennium Declaration and the targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000); United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889, which relate to women, peace and security; World Summits on the Information Society (2003 and 2005); the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Women (2006), and the launching of the related global campaign.
4. The Beijing +15 review process was guided by the 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the African Women's Protocol); the 2009 Gender Policy of the African Union (AU); the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (2004); and the Africa-wide campaign to end Violence Against Women (VAW), an outcome of the African Development Forum (ADF, 2008).
5. At subregional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted a Protocol on Gender Equality, while the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has instituted a gender policy to guide its member States in gender mainstreaming in policy design and implementation. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are also complementing these global and regional frameworks at subregional levels by integrating various resolutions and commitments into their policies and Plans of Actions (PoAs).
6. A total of 47 countries (representing 87 per cent of the 53 member States) actively participated in the review through responses to the questionnaires and provision of other qualitative information.
7. To crown the review process, the Eighth African Regional Conference on Women was held in Banjul, the Gambia from 16-20 November 2010 to undertake a specific examination of continent-wide progress within the time frame of 2005-2009. The regional review revealed that there have been several positive changes in the life of African women as a result of

implementation of various global and continental commitments made by governments on gender equality. While progress has been made on several fronts, it is still not enough to elevate African women to the desired level. More remains to be done if the status quo is to change. Hence, it is very critical to support the existing efforts and enhance capacities of member States in the field of women empowerment, women's human rights and gender equality. It is important to also note that, the outcome of the Eighth African Regional Conference which constituted Africa's contribution to the global Beijing +15 review in March 2010, re-affirmed the need for urgent and strategic intervention, undertakings at regional level to address the slow progress in achieving both the MDGs and the Beijing commitments, in Africa.

8. At the conclusion of the Regional Conference on Women, an outcome document called "the Banjul Declaration on the Strategies for Accelerating the Implementation of Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action" was adopted. The Declaration identified the following seven strategic areas of focus for Africa:

- (a) Economic empowerment of women through poverty reduction, employment creation, social protection and use of information and communications technology;
- (b) Peace, security and development;
- (c) Violence against women;
- (d) Representation and participation of women in all areas of decision-making;
- (e) Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS;
- (f) Climate change and food security; and
- (g) Financing for gender equality.

9. The above therefore are the main areas of focus for Africa intended to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as other regional and international commitments during the post Beijing + 15, and this is the basis of this follow up strategy. The follow up strategy also proposes the roles of key players at national, subregional and regional levels, and on monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategic interventions and the levels of implementation at the national level.

A. Rationale for development of the Follow-up strategy

10. The year 2009 marked the regional reviews of both the ICPD and Beijing agenda's (ICPD +15 and Beijing +15 respectively), serving as opportunities to reflect on past achievements and to chart new paths towards meeting the goal of gender equality. The Beijing +15 review outcome specifically identified persisting gaps and challenges in the achievement of gender equality, as well as new recommendations for action to accelerate implementation. The agenda setting of the commitments complemented and makes justification for this strategy, thus.

The Beijing Platform for Action

11. The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) (1995) remains a relevant guideline for development programming. It provides “an agenda for women’s empowerment” signed by all governments that is seen as “a necessary and fundamental pre-requisite for equality, development and women’s empowerment.” The Beijing PFA furthermore provides a blue-print for women’s empowerment that is exceptionally clear, straightforward and actionable. The document includes gender analysis of problems and opportunities in twelve critical areas of concern, and clear and specific standards for action to be implemented by governments, the United Nations (UN) system and civil-society, including where appropriate by the private sector. Several of these critical areas of concern clarify the potential for each of the areas agreed upon in Banjul as Focus Areas to contribute to women’s empowerment¹, in Africa

12. It is of significance also to note that the PFA provides the first global commitment to gender mainstreaming as the methodology by which gender equality and women’s empowerment will be achieved. In implementing the suggested actions “an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes should be promoted, so that before decisions are taken an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.”²

13. **The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** The MDGs consolidated previous agreements, including those on women’s rights, women’s empowerment and gender equality (see below), into a single set of core goals, targets and benchmarks for the development community. The Millennium Declaration in which they were first set out took a clear position, which has since been elaborated and confirmed in multiple documents³, that gender equality is both a goal in itself (MDG-3), and a condition for the achievement of the other goals.

14. The explicit commitment by governments in Africa as well as the AU and its regional offices, the subregional agencies in understanding and addressing women’s needs and contributions in their specific contexts, as essential dimension of MDG achievement, underlies this strategy and continued commitment by African member States.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979)

15. This legally-binding treaty, to which all countries in the region are States Party, provides a comprehensive rights-based framework to guide all actions for gender equality, including that of UNDP⁴. Under this treaty gender inequality is understood to be the result of

¹ For example, the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; ending gender-based violence (GBV); the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict on women; inequality in economic structures and policies in all forms of productive activities and in access to resources; inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels; lack of respect for and inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women; and gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment.

² Beijing PFA, paragraphs 79 education; 105 health; 123 violence against women; 141 conflict; 189 power and decision-making; 202 institutional mechanisms; 229 human rights; 238 media; 252 management of natural resources; 273 children and youth. . The methodology for gender mainstreaming was elaborated and defined by ECOSOC shortly afterwards. The full definition is provided in Annex I.

³ Including, for example, the Millennium Project report on Education and Gender (2005), and in the UK Department for International Development (DFID) *Gender Equality Action Plan 2007-2009*.

⁴ Also important here is the Declaration on the ending of violence against Women (DEVAW) (1993). CEDAW did not explicitly include GBV, a gap that was rectified by DEVAW, which clearly defined GBV as a form of discrimination, thus bringing it unambiguously within the purview of CEDAW.

discrimination against women. This discrimination must be removed by legal and other means if women's rights are to be realized and full national potential released.

16. CEDAW calls for equality of *outcome* rather than simply equality of opportunity. Thus it is not sufficient that anti-discrimination laws are put in place: the state has the obligation to take all necessary steps to ensure that women enjoy equality in their daily lives. CEDAW defines discrimination and the range of steps that states must take toward its elimination. It provides for women's rights in specific areas⁵, and makes provision for ratification, monitoring, reporting and other procedural matters.

17. It is the responsibility of States Party to CEDAW to apply its provisions in ways that are meaningful to their own local context, always ensuring, whatever that context, that women are in full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms. RBEC is committed to assisting governments in identifying the ways in which CEDAW can contribute positively to specific national development priorities.

18. As part of its mandate, ECA/ACGS therefore undertook to develop a new strategy in order to specifically implement the recommendations of the 15th year regional review, and to accelerate the implementation of the BFFA in general, as well as the commitments set out in other international instruments as agreed in Banjul. This will also argument the AU Women's Decade whose ten (10) thematic areas of intervention, are based on the outcomes of the Beijing Plus 15 review.

B. Objectives of the Follow-up strategy

19. The Follow-up Strategy for the outcome of the Beijing +15 regional provides strategic interventions agreed upon by ministers responsible for gender and women's empowerment during the Banjul ministerial meeting as key commitments that may facilitate the acceleration of the implementation of the BPFPA, tackling the obstacles and challenges that have resulted in the limited accomplishments on the strategic objectives of the 12 critical areas of concern of the BPFPA. The strategy document proposes key strategies with specific focus on the seven strategic areas recommended by the Banjul declaration and also provides some broad gender indicators aimed at strengthening the capacity for monitoring the impact of implementation.

20. **Specifically the strategy aims to;**

- (a) Give impetus to priority-setting;
- (b) Identify concrete measures to be undertaken; and
- (c) Set specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound targets for the next five years to address areas of weaknesses that were identified in the 15th year review process.

C. Expected outcome of the Follow-up Strategy

⁵ These are: trafficking and the exploitation of prostitution; public and political life; international affairs; nationality; education; employment; health care; economic and social life; rural women; equality before the law; equality in marriage and family life.

21. After approval of the document by the CWD, it is expected that member States will develop national level strategies based on the agreed Follow-up strategy. Country strategies have to be based on reviews of the country's performance, achievements, strengths, gaps and limitations in implementing the BPFA together with other reviews such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the MDGs. Countries will select their priorities and develop implementation strategies as defined in the Follow-up Strategy.

II. LESSONS LEARNED FROM 2005- 2009

22. To set the stage for the strategy, it is important to reflect on some of the key issues identified by the regional review as areas where African countries are doing as well as where governments failed to fulfill their commitment towards the implementation of BPfA. This section therefore discusses and highlights the major progresses made and challenges that still persist and seem to hinder the realization of the objectives of BPFA in the African continent.

A. Women and Poverty

23. A number of African countries have put poverty reduction as their priority and continue to strengthen their actions and policies to alleviate poverty through a wide range of strategies like PRSPs. In some cases country specific strategies are being developed. Besides, a number of countries are being guided by long-term developmental goals. It was indicated that twenty-five countries have allocated public spending in favour of programmes and projects aimed at empowering women. In addition, commendable progress is being realized in the area of expanding social security systems, addressing education and training of women and provision of micro-finance schemes for women.

24. Despite the above achievements as reported by countries, the pace of poverty reduction is very slow. Most of the challenges which have been encountered by countries have been persistent and needs to be strengthened and continuous efforts. The major challenges include: lack of gender/sex disaggregated data to monitor poverty trends over time, the global economic and financial crisis which has had disproportionate impacts on women as more of them lose jobs and are forced to manage shrinking household income, prevailing high fertility rates in sub-Saharan African countries which limits the active participation of women in the labour force, endangers their health and exacerbates poverty. Moreover, inadequacy of micro-finance and the focus of small-scale women's business on traditional jobs which limited opportunities for growth have limited women's economic empowerment in a manner that is transformative.

B. Education and Training of Women

25. A majority of African countries have made some progress in the area of parity in education, with a majority putting emphasis in the promotion of girls/women education by reforming their educational systems to enhance the delivery of quality education and creating enabling school environments. Primary/basic education is being widely implemented across a substantial number of countries and at this level, education is generally free and compulsory. Moreover, functional and skills education training is also being developed to provide alternatives and second chances for girls and boys. As a result, gender parity at the primary level has been achieved in many of the countries.

Literacy rates for women and men are improving but achieving universal literacy remains a significant challenge, particularly in Africa

26. The review report also indicated that some countries have also given priority to the training of women through various plans and programmes. Affirmative action measures are being implemented in a number of countries – for instance, the provision of student scholarships and loans, with specific quota for girls as well as preferential treatment for girls in the allocation of university accommodation. Nevertheless, achieving gender parity in secondary and tertiary education still has some way to go for most of the continent.

The achievement of full gender equality in education would imply:

(a) *Equality of opportunities*, in the sense that girls and boys are offered the same chances to access school, i.e. parents, teachers and society at large have no gender-biased attitudes in this respect;

(b) *Equality in the learning process*, i.e. girls and boys receive the same treatment and attention, follow the same curricula, enjoy teaching methods and teaching tools free of stereotypes and gender bias, are offered academic orientation and counseling not affected by gender biases, and profit from the same quantity and quality of appropriate educational infrastructures;

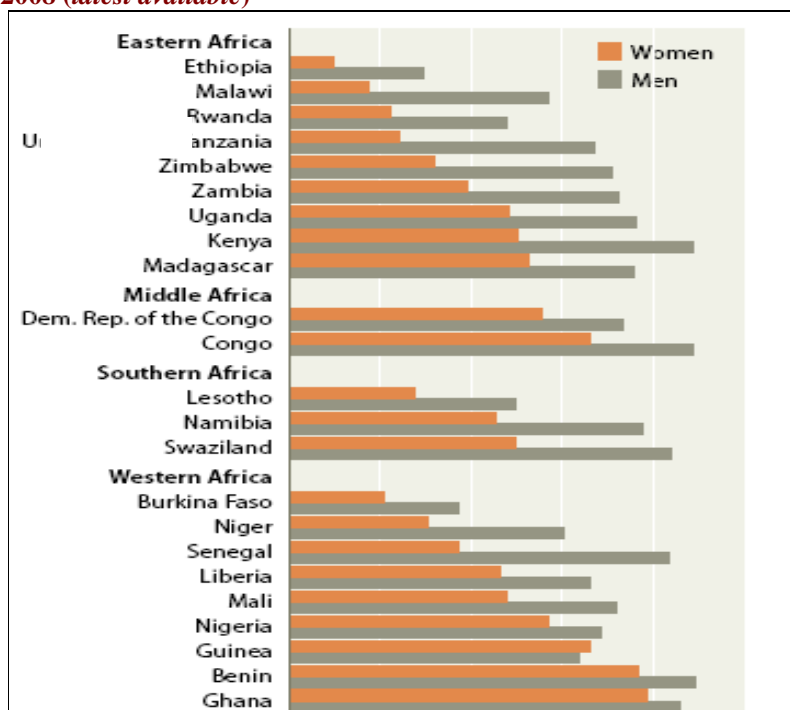
(c) *Equality of outcomes*, i.e. learning achievements, length of school careers, academic qualifications and diplomas would not differ by gender; and

(d) *Equality of external results*, i.e. job opportunities, the time needed to find a job after leaving full-time education, the earnings of men and women with similar qualifications and experience, etc., would all be equal.

27. The review however, notes that countries are still facing the challenge of high illiteracy rates among women, dropout and repetition rates as a result of financial constraints at the household levels, lack of interest, poor health and long distances to schools, as well as existing discriminatory norms and values in society.

28. The review report further indicated that all countries that participated in the review indicated having registered an increase in women's economic participation either in the formal or informal market, as employees or employers and several countries ensure equal access to capital and trade opportunities. The other issue to note is the fact that women work longer hours than men and they may have fewer chances in the formal labour market because the domestic tasks are not equally distributed in the household. The figure below shows the disadvantaged position of women when it comes to paid employment in selected African countries.

Married women and men aged 15–49 who were employed and earned cash income in the last 12 months, 2003–2008 (latest available)



Source: Macro International, Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) database (2009). As presented in “*The World’s Women 2010, Trends and statistics – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs*”.

29. In most countries in Africa and about half the countries in Asia women are disadvantaged by statutory and customary laws in their access to land ownership and other types of property. Elements of gender inequality with regard to inheritance rights were identified in 45 out of the 48 African countries (available data), see below.

Number of countries with gender inequality with regard to inheritance rights and entitlements to ownership of land and other property, by region

| | Number of countries with gender inequality related to | | |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Inheritance rights | Right to acquire and own land | Right to own property other than land |
| Africa (48) | 45 | 43 | 35 |
| Northern Africa (5) | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa (43) | 40 | 40 | 34 |
| Eastern Africa (15) | 13 | 13 | 12 |
| Middle Africa (8) | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| Southern Africa (5) | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Western Africa (15) | 15 | 14 | 10 |

Source: Computed by the United Nations Statistics Division based on data from OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Database online (as of December 2009).

30. Some countries have undertaken efforts to analyze national budgets to ensure that there are public resources to support and promote gender equality and women’s advancement. Some

countries have engaged in gender analysis of their respective national budgets. The report also notes that a majority of African countries have ratified the ILO Conventions 100 and 111 which deal with wage and employment discrimination respectively, which is an indication of commitment to address issues of employment. However on a disturbing note, only one country of those that participated in the review process, on record had ratified the Maternity Convention (183). A substantial number of ratifying countries have undertaken part or full domestication of these conventions.

31. Notwithstanding progress in legislation, the African continent still faces persistent and major challenges limiting progress in policy and decision-making, which include: data gaps with respect to women's contributions in the economy; persistent negative customary views on women's access to productive resources particularly land, remains a barrier to their effective participation in the economy; existence of wage discrimination against women and gender gaps in professional skills, educational attainment and occupational segregation, with a predominance of women in seasonal employment; and very few countries are building capacity in gender-sensitive economic analysis.

C. Peace, security and development

32. To a limited extent the review points to the some progress in the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, in few conflict and post conflict countries. Recognition was made of the ten countries that are implementing the provisions of UN SCR 1325 while three countries also have Action Plans in place to operationalize the resolution. In addition, eleven countries showed progress in training women in conflict resolution, reconciliation and tolerance. Nine other countries reported that they have integrated gender perspectives into all aspects of conflict resolution initiatives, according to the review report. On the positive side it was also noted that seven countries have mechanisms in place for the protection, safety and integrity of women refugees. Furthermore countries were also seen to be undertaking the training of military officials on the human rights of women and on measures to assist women refugees to deal with the trauma of rape and rejection.

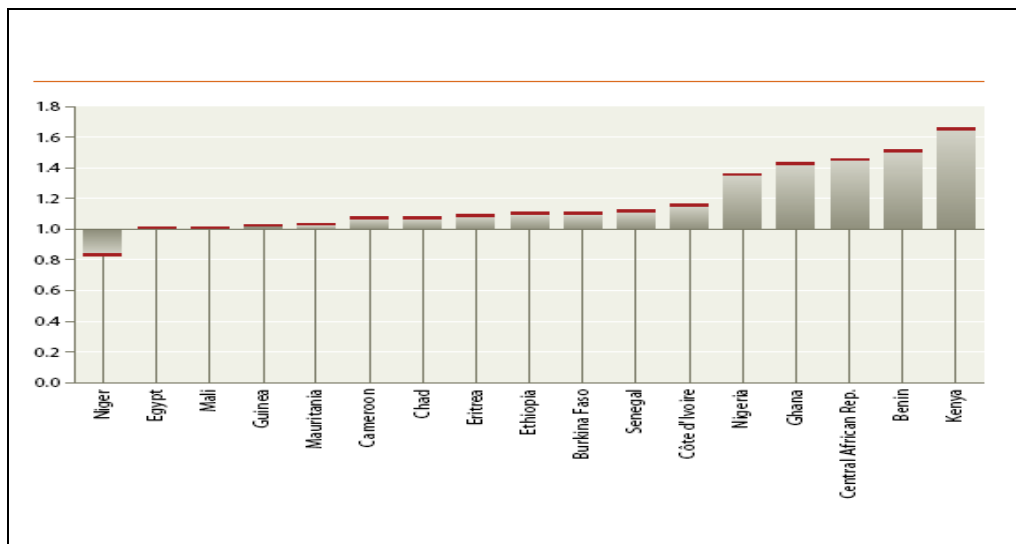
33. Despite these efforts, Gender Based Violence (GBV) is one of the deadly consequences of armed conflict in Africa and it also continues to be used as a weapon of war in some countries. The threat of post-conflict violence has resulted in low levels of women's full and equal participation in the post-conflict prevention, peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts. In addition, traditional views regarding the roles of women in society affect their effective participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes.

D. Violence against Women (VAW)

34. Strategic interventions such as national laws and/or plans of action are in place, enforced or even adopted to address and punish all forms of VAW and girls in line with international human rights standards and the 2005 strategic document recommended strengthening the gender focal persons in law enforcement agencies. In addition, to combat various forms of exploitation of children, some countries have domesticated the provisions of the Conventions on the Right of Child (CRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Moreover, many countries have put in place penal legislation to address various forms of sexual offences. It was also indicated that a considerable number of countries have enacted legislation to combat FGM/C.

35. The figure below illustrates the prevalence of Female genital Mutilation which is one form of violence against women.

Ratio of FGM prevalence for 30–49 years old to FGM prevalence for 15-29 years old, 1998–2004 (latest available)



Source: The Worlds Women 2010, Trends and statistics – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

36. The review report notes that there has been slow progress in countries responding to the needs and concerns of victims of abuse to ensure that they receive holistic services. However, it is noted also that in most countries law enforcement agencies and national machineries for women constitute the main institutional arrangement for combating and treatment of violence, with limited results. Progress was noted however in the area of investment in public awareness and sensitization programmes, and this has helped to break the wall of silence surrounding VAW, although on the negative part some of the awareness messages have been noted as causing an increase in stereotyping of victims of violence. The report therefore recommends an urgent need to take actions to address gender stereotyping as it is rapidly increasing.

37. The other major challenge in addressing persistent violence against women is that, domestic violence is still regarded by society as a whole, as well as by enforcement agencies, as a private concern. Similarly attitudes of both men and women to the criminality of domestic violence could be impeding prosecution for such acts. The lack of necessary financial and human resources in the implementing institutions impede execution of their functions and programmes. Moreover, there is a neglect of GBV on issues such as sexual harassment, assault, rape. Therefore countries need to tackle these issues in addition to addressing the lack of data collection, research and analysis systems.

E. Representation and participation of women in all areas of decision-making

38. In recent years, women’s participation in politics and decision-making in Africa has received significant attention. Affirmative action has been used to promote women’s participation in politics at all levels. The continent currently has one woman occupying the position of Head of State and a number of Vice-Presidents. The percentage of women representation in Parliament is also growing as witnessed by women accounting for 56 per cent of MPs in Rwanda and over

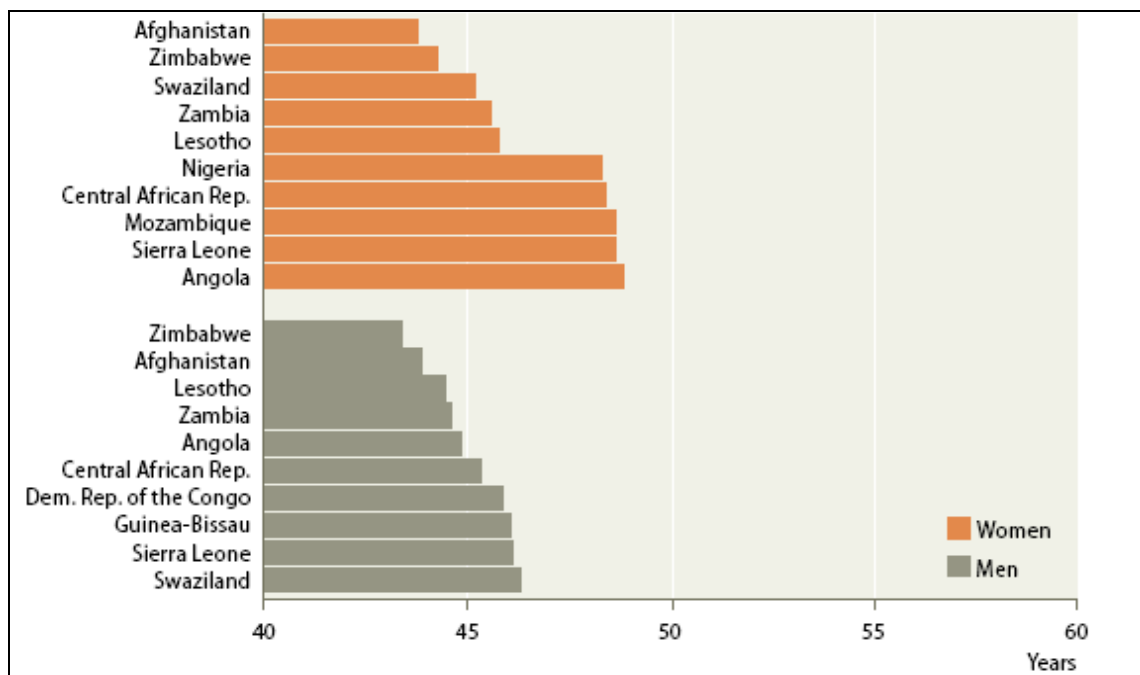
30 per cent in South Africa and Mozambique. In addition, the number of women being appointed to important positions in the civil and public services is also increasing.

39. Despite this, countries have been facing challenges which still need concerted and increased commitment by various stakeholders. Where women have joined the government, they continue to be appointed to ministries considered 'soft' such as Gender etc. Additionally, the representation of women in key decision-making positions is very low. There are indications that fewer women than men are presented for electoral processes in situations where political parties do not have gender-sensitive policies, especially in nominating candidates for elections. Women seeking decision-making positions can be constrained by different factors, which include a lack of financial support and time for campaigning because of difficulties in balancing family and public life, lack of confidence about relevant skills, and fewer connections to politically relevant networks.

F. Women and health

40. African countries reported that maternal health and safe motherhood, pre and post-natal follow-up care as well as neonatal care are among their priority areas of work. Most countries are taking steps to reduce the impacts of unsafe abortions, while ensuring that girls have continued access to necessary health and nutrition information and services. Efforts were also made by some countries to integrate gender equality issues in the medical school curricula. Countries are also strengthening their efforts by mainstreaming gender and right-based approaches in the provision of health services. However, the overall picture in terms of life expectancy reveals that women have a shorter life expectancy than men, as illustrated in the figure below.

World's lowest life expectancies at birth by sex, 2005–2010



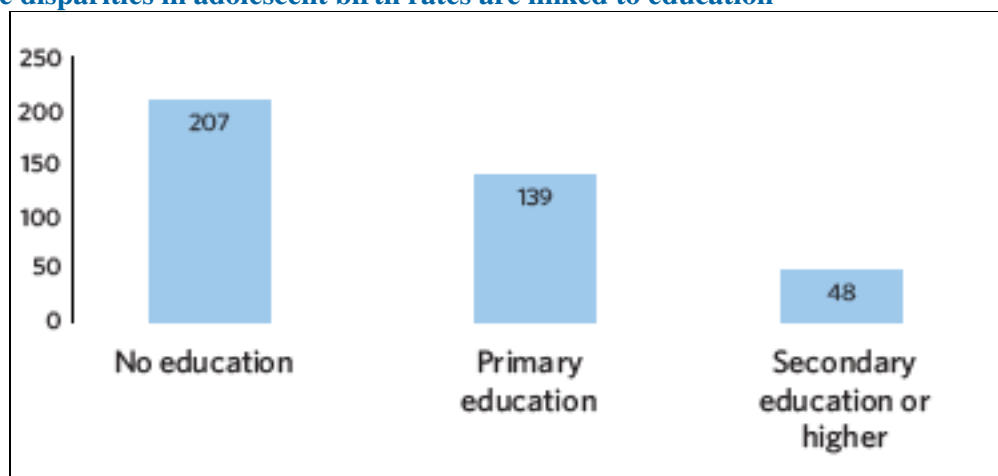
Source: The World's Women 2010, Trends and statistics – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision (2009).

41. According to the World Women's report 2010, Africa stands out for its disproportionately high incidence of deaths due to infectious and parasitic diseases (43 per cent for both women and men in 2004). In 2007, sub-Saharan Africa saw an estimated 1.5 million AIDS deaths (see also the section of HIV/AIDS in this chapter).

42. The risk of dying from malaria is also high in Africa. In 2008, there were 243 million malaria cases, causing 863,000 deaths globally, with one out of every 10 cases occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.⁶ The second leading cause of death in Africa after infectious and parasitic diseases was respiratory infections (13 per cent for both women and men), followed by cardiovascular diseases (12 per cent for women and 9 per cent for men). Hence, the overall patterns of leading causes of death showed little differences by sex in Africa, though women were somewhat more likely to die from cardiovascular diseases and men were more likely than women to die from unintentional injuries. It should be noted that deaths related to maternal conditions accounted for 5 per cent of the total female deaths in Africa as opposed to only 2 per cent of female deaths worldwide.

43. Other initiatives recorded include, capacity enhancement programmes involving the use of Non-Physician Clinicians (NPC) to overcome shortage of health personnel is also being practiced by several countries. Studies to assess progress in achieving MDGs have also revealed that the issue of high adolescent birth rates is linked to education, as illustrated in the table below.

Large disparities in adolescent birth rates are linked to education



Source: *The Worlds Women 2010, Trends and statistics* – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

44. Adolescent birth rates by education level of the mother in 24 sub-Saharan African countries with surveys during 1998/2008 (Number of births to women aged 15-19 per 1,000 women)⁷ Birth rates among adolescents with no education are almost 1.5 times higher than among those with primary education and four times higher than among girls with secondary or higher education. Educated women tend to have more autonomy and marry at an older age, all of which are factors contributing to later pregnancies.

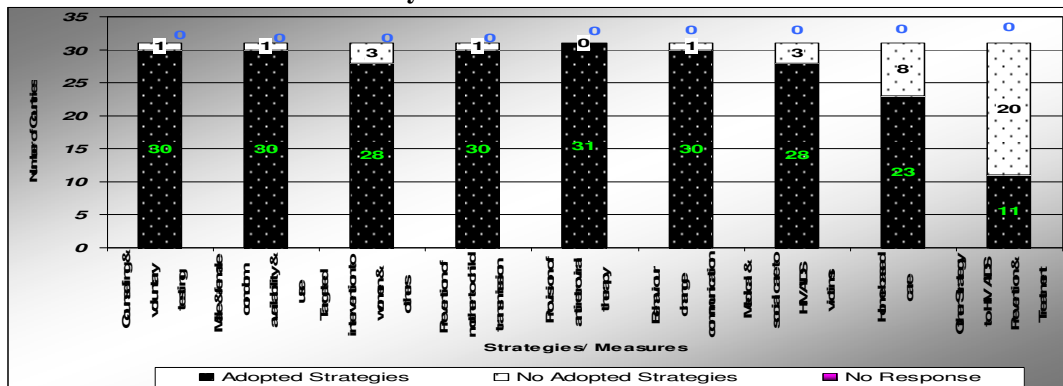
45. In the area of sexual rights and reproductive health, the review highlighted issues of HIV/AIDS as still persistent and requires concerted efforts to address from a women's

⁶ WHO, 2009b

⁷ UN 2010, Report on MDGs on Goal 5

perspective. The figure below highlights the major HIV/AIDS interventions in responding countries.

Total Number of Countries that Adopted Recent Strategies or Measures as Part of the Country's HIV/ AIDS Prevention and Treatment



Sources: Country data from the Beijing Plus 15 Regional review

46. The review report indicated that a number of African governments have put in place policy frameworks to address HIV and AIDS, including relevant changes in legislation. The need to prevent mother-to-child transmission has also been recognized by some countries, which now is providing of free antiretroviral therapy. Various means of communication and mass are being used to encourage health service-seeking tendencies and the practice of safer sex. It was noted that, although some countries are seeing an increase in budgets allocated to the health sector, in others there is only a small increase – this is having detrimental consequences on the realization of expected health outcomes.

47. Despite commitments to improve the health of women, maternal mortality in Africa remains the highest in the world. The major obstacles are the inadequacy in human resources and the limited access to emergency obstetric care. This is linked to the high and persistent brain drain burden which is affecting the ability of African countries to provide quality health care. Certain gender implications of HIV/AIDS have arisen due to high levels of poverty coupled with low levels of education – this has, in turn, contributed to limiting the capacity of women to access quality health care and build awareness on the disease.

48. Furthermore, socio-cultural resistance and the persistence of cultural dispositions towards the situation of women slows progress both towards achieving gender equality and responding to the threat of HIV/AIDS. It must not be forgotten HIV is not just a challenge in itself – it is very much interlinked with other issues such as violence against women, education and health, economic insecurity and human rights.

G. Women and the environment

49. In order to enhance the participation of women in environmental management, the 2005 follow-up strategy document suggested the adoption of gender-sensitive environmental management policies that recognize and utilize women's indigenous knowledge of the environment and involvement of rural women in the design and implementation of environmental programmes as critical interventions that need governments' attention. Moreover, strengthening the capacity of environmental planners to utilize gender analysis tools

and strengthening the capacity of gender machineries and gender focal persons to monitor the monitoring process were the other important elements of the recommendations made.

50. The issue of climate change and lack of gender sensitivity in both policy and planning as well as financing for gender equality seems to perpetuate inequality and increase in the work burden for women, as is illustrated by the figure below:

Women and men engaged in water collection and average time burden in selected countries

| | Year | Percentage collecting water | | Average time burden in population (<i>minutes per day</i>) | | |
|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|-----|--|-----|------------|
| | | Women | Men | Women | Men | Gender gap |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | | | | | | |
| Benin | 1998 | 73 | 19 | 45 | 12 | 33 |
| Ghana | 1998/99 | 60 | 38 | 41 | 33 | 8 |
| Madagascar | 2001 | 44 | 16 | 27 | 9 | 18 |
| Malawi | 2004/05 | - | - | 54 | 6 | 48 |
| South Africa | 2000 | 13 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 5 |

Sources: World Women's report 2010 - Compiled by the United Nations Statistics Division from World Bank, *Gender, Time Use, and Poverty in sub-Saharan Africa* (2006) and time use survey reports from national statistical offices

51. It was important to promote the involvement of women in environmental decision-making at all levels, the integration of gender perspectives in the policies and programmes for sustainable development, and the strengthening or establishment of mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women. Countries have been implementing plans and strategies towards improving basic services for all, especially in poor and rural zones. There are improved provision of services in sanitation, water and health in many countries. Capacity of women in various productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, small enterprises, trade and industry was strengthened through technical assistance.

52. Though there has been improvements in the involvement of women in environmental issues, women remain largely absent at all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resources and environmental management, conservation, protection and rehabilitation. They are rarely trained as professional natural resource managers with policymaking capacities. African women are very vulnerable and are most likely to be disproportionately affected by the adverse impacts of climate change because they constitute the majority of poor people; they lack adequate knowledge of rights and access to resources and information vital to overcoming the challenges posed by climate change. In addition to the above, inadequate awareness and knowledge of gender issues by policy makers, planners and implementers, institutional weaknesses in coordination between women's NGOs and national institutions dealing with environmental issues; and low recognition of adaptation research and activities gender differences that affect the interventions to strengthen livelihoods and food security from external shocks have been additional challenges faced by most of the governments in the continent.

H. Women's human rights

53. Thirteen countries have reported on schedule to the Committee on CEDAW on the ratification of the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) on the rights of women in Africa and a substantial number indicated that civil-society participated in the preparation of reports. In addition, nineteen countries disseminated information on national, regional and international mechanisms for seeking redress of human rights abuse. Twenty eight countries indicated that they have undertaken additional work on CEDAW mostly related to enactment of legislation to reflect CEDAW and other treaty-related provisions. Similarly, twenty-seven countries have ratified the protocol to the ACHPR on women's rights. About 57 per cent of countries have reported that they have embodied the principle of the equality of men and women in country legislation and strengthened programmes to protect the human rights of women. Similarly eighteen countries have translated CEDAW into user-friendly formats and several countries have translated and populated the regional and international instruments such as CEDAW and ACHPR into local languages with the support of national NGOs and other regional and international organizations.

54. Some of the major challenges in promoting women's human rights include: enforcement of revised legislation, operating under mixed legal traditions, contradictions between customary law, religious law and codified law which undercut women's rights; limited capacity of national gender machineries due to the inadequacy of human and financial resources; persisting negative attitudes and perceptions of society towards gender equality and women's empowerment; the continued existence of harmful practices which threaten the physical integrity of women and girls; lack of the necessary financial resources to obtain the required legal services; cumbersome legal procedures; and insufficient legal aid and counseling support provided by CSOs.

I. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

55. The review revealed that, all the countries that were reviewed have institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women although with various operational constraints. Twenty three countries indicated that they have undertaken appropriate subregional level policy and strategy development as well as actions taken at country level. Furthermore, there has been gender mainstreaming at policy, programming and output levels within Ministries/Departments and other offices in line with the national gender policy framework, as well as recent reforms towards effective public financial management systems. The majority of countries has either fulfilled or is in the process of fulfilling the basic requirement of having guidelines in place for mainstreaming gender.

56. Though progress has been made, there have also been challenges encountered by some countries. These include "ineffective" gender machineries due to limitations in human and financial resources as well as the involvement of gender focal persons in other routine functions and therefore a neglect of their main tasks. The naming and placing of national machineries has also been an issue since some are aligned to under-funded sectors, such as Family, Youth or Social Development - an indication that gender issues have yet to be given primary consideration in their own right. Many national women's machineries also lack clear focus, possess broad or ambiguous mandates and have low funding levels.

J. Women and the media

57. Networks of women working in the media have been advocated strongly against the negative depiction of women in the media. Improved access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) has enabled an increasing number of women to contribute to and share knowledge through the media. To strengthen the various efforts undertaken by countries in implementation of BPPFA, the seventh regional conference on women had suggested the need to develop and implement gender-aware media policies and support initiatives to improve women's access to the media, strengthen the capacity of national gender machineries.

58. There has been some notable progress in a few countries that have put efforts to engender the media at policy and practice levels and on eradication of all forms of gender stereotyping and conduction of research into women's access to and their role in the media. Similarly, some countries have adopted policy strategies or policies to enhance women's role in the media and have in addition, developed relevant action plans.

59. Besides the positive changes registered in the past 5 years, various challenges exist at different levels. These include a lack of gender-specific legislation and policy in the media, lack of strict implementation and monitoring measures, under representation of women in decision-making positions in all media houses and unbalanced and stereotyped portrayal of women in the media are challenges related at policy level. Furthermore; continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications-electronic, print, visual and audio, violent and degrading or pornographic media products are also negatively affecting women and their participation in society; marginalization and under representation of gender issues and women views and voices in the continent's media and confinement of female journalists to cover 'soft or entertaining issues while male journalists tend to cover 'hard' or serious topics.

K. The girl child

60. The 2005 strategy highlighted different interventions to be undertaken by countries in order to improve the status of the girl child in their societies. These interventions included enactment of laws and to protect girl children against harmful traditional practices (HTPs, GBV, forced early marriage and trafficking); advocacy and social mobilization against HTPs, development of social mobilization programmes to reduce exploitation and abuse of girls, and facilitating girls' access to technical education through curriculum reform, gender training of teachers and all other workers in the education system.

61. Except for Somalia all African member States have ratified the convention on Child Right (CRC) and have even enacted and are enforcing legislation to protect girls from violence; several countries set equal age of marriage for both females and males. Measures were undertaken to eliminate barriers to schooling of pregnant adolescents and implement sectoral plans, strategies and programmes targeting children in education, health, protection and juvenile justice administration. Furthermore, various efforts have been deployed in all countries to deliver good quality services and appropriate aids to children living with disabilities.

62. Despite all these efforts, girl children continue to be victims of discrimination from the earliest stages of life, through her childhood and into adulthood. The major challenges include the economic crisis that cause both male and female youth to engage in business ventures and

distract them from attending school, discriminatory religious and cultural practices and unfair distribution of property of the deceased; lack of implementation of affirmative actions, limited coverage of career guidance and scholarship for girls' education which have contributed for the slow improvement on the status and development.

III. STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

63. The main focus of this strategy is enhancing national capacity to advance gender equality as an essential path to the achievement of the MDGs, including but not only MDG3 on gender equality, in the context of the follow-up to the Beijing Plus 15 evaluation outcomes in Africa., as a bid to accelerate the implementation of the implementation of the Beijing Platform and address gender inequality.

64. While this strategy indicates broad areas of intervention with regard to the focus areas, the detailed definition of follow-up interventions will be undertaken by member States on the basis of their own context, and their own analysis of national needs. Many relevant interventions are already ongoing, and several countries in the region have developed good practices which have been elaborated during the review. The overall intention is to build on these successful applied approaches to develop strong implementation mechanisms for gender equality across the African region as elaborated in the subsequent paragraphs.

A. Economic empowerment of women

65. Many African countries undertook a number of gender responsive initiatives, programmes and projects aiming to economically empower women to reduce their poverty. These countries have as well put mechanisms in place to improve the economic status of women in their societies. Some countries have enacted laws to guarantee equal access to employment opportunities and social protection benefits.

In some countries or areas, female-headed households are more likely to be poor, while in others male-headed households are more likely to be poor. For example, only in 4 of the 16 countries in Africa with available data – Burundi, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe and Zambia – were the poverty rates for female-headed households higher compared to male-headed households

The largest difference, of 8 percentage points, is observed in Malawi, where 59 per cent of people living in female-headed households are poor compared to 51 per cent of those living in male-headed households. In the other countries or areas with available data in the region, male-headed households had similar or higher poverty rates than female-headed households. In Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria (all in Western Africa) the poverty rates for male-headed households were higher than those for female-headed households by more than 8 percentage points. For example, 44 per cent of people living in female-headed households in Nigeria were poor compared to 58 per cent of people living in male-headed households.

66. Countries have also reported facing problems in getting gender statistics and made clear reference to their need for capacity-building of national statistical agencies and systems. In the area of the economic empowerment of women, the following strategies are therefore proposed, as recommended by the Ministers in Banjul as well as the recommendations from the review:

Specific challenges

Achieving women's economic empowerment is not a "quick fix". It will take sound public policies, a holistic approach and long-term commitment from all development actors.

Women's economic empowerment is both a right and "smart economics".

Development actors need to reach and enhance opportunities for the poorest of the poor and women in remote communities. "Picking winners" is not enough.

Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender>

67. Strategic interventions these will include:

(a) *Two ways to get income into women's hands is by expanding women's employment options, or by providing them with cash transfers (conditional or unconditional). Other ways of expanding employment options include programmes supporting self-employment, enterprise development, and skills training;*

(b) *Promote the Economic empowerment of women through gender sensitive poverty reduction strategies and actions, employment creation, access to and ownership and control over productive resources (finances, land, credit, technologies, etc...);*

(c) *Reinforce the entrepreneurship capacity and skills of women through the capacity-building and training activities, access to information and improvement of the agricultural productivity of rural women by providing them with advanced and appropriate technologies;*

(d) *Nurture the economic independence of women from an early age by adopting a holistic approach and ensuring that young women, in particular those with disabilities, have access to secondary and tertiary education and use of incentives and social protection measures to reduce the dropout rate among girls, particularly poor girls and pregnant adolescents; and protecting the girl-child from violence and early and forced marriage;*

(e) *Develop and strengthen monitoring, evaluation and information systems, as well as capacities for analyzing linkages between gender and economic development by focusing on sex-disaggregated data collection, production, analysis and dissemination; and undertaking studies on the formal, informal and agricultural sectors; and*

(f) *Reduce women's workload in unpaid household and community activities to increase women's participation in productive and paid activities.*

B. Peace, security and development

68. There has been some progress towards increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes in countries in conflict situation in Africa. Some countries have also demonstrated political commitment to implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325, by adopting national action plans to realize the commitments enshrined in the Resolution and the three subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security, 1820, 1888, and 1889. However, despite progress, obstacles to strengthening women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding remain persistent.

During the war in Southern Sudan, daughters became economic bargaining chips, escalating forced and early marriage, rape within marriage and domestic violence. This combined with the idea that child-bearing was a patriotic obligation, resulted in many men having a sense of entitlement to sexual services whether inside or outside marriage.

UNDP

69. The threat of post-conflict violence remains one of the most persistent obstacles to women's full and equal participation in post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation. Gender-based violence and the use of rape as a war strategy during conflict is a daunting challenge. Violence against women continues unabated in early recovery situations mainly due to the fact that women's security is rarely a priority in efforts made to reform, rebuild or rehabilitate security and justice systems. Furthermore alleviating cultural challenges to women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building requires serious effort.

Key message

Planning, resource mobilization and budgeting processes in the post-conflict context must be made transparent. This includes providing public information through channels that poor women and men can access easily, such as in local languages, via community radio or placing information on public notice boards.

Strategic Interventions

70. Implement international and regional resolutions such as UNSCR 1325, 1820, 1888, and 1889 which focus on women, peace and security through awareness creation and regional and national interventions which include:

(a) Adopt national actions plans or strategies for the implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000);

(b) Promote capacity-building and peer-learning in conflict prevention and resolution, in human rights protection and promotion for government officials, parliamentarians, women, men, youth, media, security services, the judiciary, and community leaders;

(c) Increase representation and participation of women in national and local governance including the planning and implementation of the peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts;

(d) Adopt laws to protect political, economic, social and cultural rights of women in line with international standards;

(e) Mainstream gender in all national efforts to foster the recovery process in conflict and post-conflict situations including in resource allocation;

(f) Establish operational mechanisms and structures to prevent all forms of violence against women, particularly sexual and gender-based violence;

(g) Allocate more resources for protecting women who are refugees or internally-displaced, with the support of international partners;

(h) Bring to justice those who abused women and girls and violated their human rights in conflict and post-conflict situations, including those who commissioned them in accordance with national, international law and international humanitarian law; and

(i) Adopt policies to ensure the reintegration into society of all victims of conflict especially women and children, as well as ex-combatants through provision of education, skills training, medical support, psychological support, and funds as part of the rebuilding process.

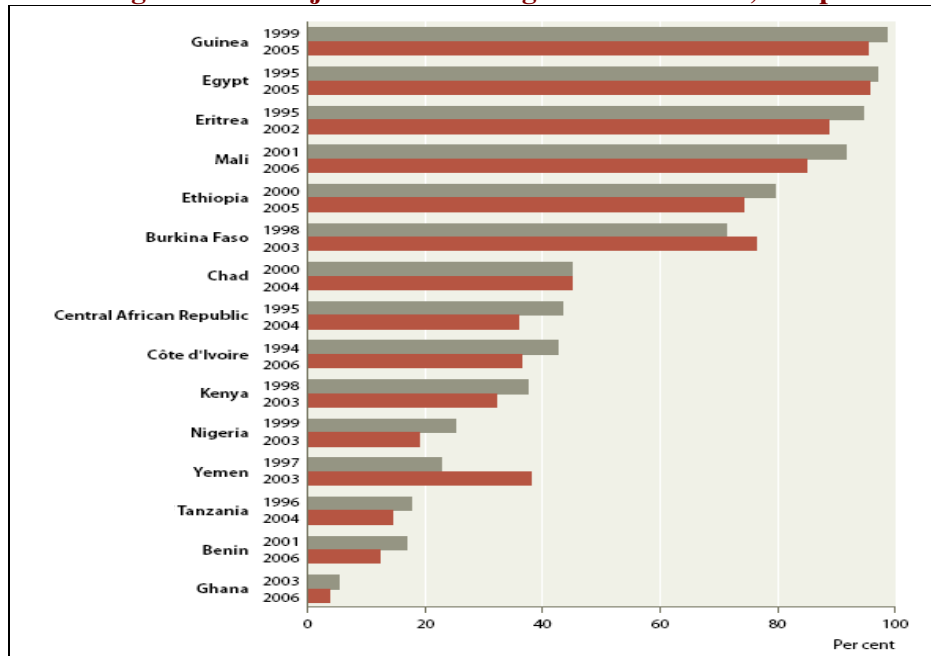
C. Violence against women

71. Violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. It both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. The proportion of women exposed to physical violence in their lifetime in the African continent is worrying. The statistics presented in the recently concluded survey by the UN reveals for example, in Mozambique (48 per cent), and Zambia (59 per cent), 48 per cent in Zambia and in Ethiopia.

72. The other concern on violence against women is that of the FGM. In Kenya the ratio reached 1.7 as around 43 per cent of women aged 30–49 were subjected to the practice compared to only 26 per cent of women aged 15–29. Similar occurrences were noted in Benin, Central African Republic, Ghana and Nigeria and to a smaller extent in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Senegal. There were no differences in prevalence in younger and older women in Egypt, Guinea, Mali and Mauritania, and in the Niger there were actually proportionally more younger women undergoing these procedures than older ones. It should be emphasized, however, that the overall prevalence rate in the Niger is relatively low – just around 5 per cent of all women aged 15–49.

73. The collective efforts of governments, UN bodies, women's organizations as well as research institutions have achieved progress in the areas of advocacy, awareness raising and some degree of legislative reform at the national and regional levels on VAW. However, the Being +15 progress report indicates that advances made in the development of legal norms, standards and policies has not been accompanied by comparable progress in their implementation at the national levels in Africa.

Women aged 15–49 subjected to female genital mutilation, two points in time



Sources: Population Reference Bureau, *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: Data and Trends* (2008); and UNICEF, *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: A Statistical Exploration* (2005).

74. On 25 February 2008, the Secretary-General launched a campaign entitled “Unite to End Violence against Women.” The campaign called on people and governments all over the world to unite to end violence against women and girls. The campaign will run until 2015, which is also the target year for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Strategic Interventions

75. The proposed strategies will take a multi-sectoral approach within the framework of the United Nations Secretary-General’s “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls”. These include the following:

- (a) Enhance collection and use of data on prevalence and magnitude of gender-based violence at national level;
- (b) Promote a legal framework and institutional mechanisms to protect women from violence;
- (c) Improve social protection and social support offered to women victims of violence;
- (d) Improve health services for dealing with cases of VAW;
- (e) Change community perceptions of VAW through promoting the principle of gender equality;
- (f) Enhance effective access to justice for women through intervention of open courts, legal information and support centres;

(g) Ensure the participation of communities and create opportunities to let the vast majority of African women and girls be empowered to claim international norms standards in their day-to-day lives and be agents of change to modify the top down strategies that has failed to be effective and sustainable; and

(h) Accelerate interventions that are key to the empowerment of women through education and debate which brings to the fore the human rights of girls and women and address the differential treatment of boys and girls with regard to their roles in society in general, and specifically with respect to VAW.

D. Representation and participation of women decision-making

76. The absence of women in political, economic and social decision-making structures has a negative impact on their ability to enjoy the full benefits from democratic processes in their countries, as well as opportunities and outcomes from socio-economic developments. Moreover, this gap negates Africa's ability to proactively meet leadership challenges, as there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the qualitative difference that women's leadership makes in all spheres of development, including accelerating the achievement of women's empowerment. Article 4 (l) of the Constitutive Act of the Africa Union, the AU Gender Policy, and the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004) reinforce, as a principle and goals, gender parity in decision-making at all levels, and require that this commitment be expanded and promoted at continental, subregional and national levels.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action states that the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status are essential for the achievement of transparent and accountable government that works for the benefit of both women and men. It recognizes that women's empowerment and full participation on an equal basis with men in all spheres of life, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental to the achievement of equality, development and peace.

77. Following recent improvements, the proportion of women parliamentarians in the lower or single house of parliament averaged 15 per cent or better in most subregions in 2009. In Southern Africa, for example women's representation averaged at least 20 per cent. However, average female representation was still below 15 per cent in Northern Africa (10 per cent). The highest proportion in the Africa and globally was registered by Rwanda in its 2008 elections. The first country ever to have achieved a gender balance in national parliament, Rwanda's achievement (56 per cent) is a marked increase over the 17 per cent representation of women in 1995. This can be attributed partly to focused and coordinated efforts to address the issue of gender balance during post-conflict reconstruction, and might also be associated with the fact that the majority of survivors of the preceding conflict were women. Experience in the continent has also shown that, a number of post-conflict countries rank high with regard to women's participation in both lower and upper chambers of legislative bodies. The regional outlook can even with women's participation in managing the election process equally demonstrates limited participation of women except for the few countries as shown in the table below.

Countries with a woman presiding over parliament, by region, 2009

| Lower or single house | Upper house |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Africa | |
| Gambia Ghana Lesotho Rwanda | Gabon Swaziland Zimbabwe |

Source: The Worlds Women 2010, Trends and statistics – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Proportion of parliamentary seats in lower or single chamber occupied by women, by region, 1995, 1999 and 2009

| | Proportion women (per cent) | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1995 | 1999 | 2009 |
| World | 10 | 11 | 17 |
| Africa | | | |
| Northern Africa | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Southern Africa | 12 | 14 | 24 |
| Eastern, Middle and Western Africa | 8 | 9 | 16 |

Source: The Worlds Women 2010, Trends and statistics – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

78. There has been mixed progress in achieving gender parity in decision-making in Africa, with significant achievements and loss of gains. More needs to be done; the global average of women representation in parliament is 19 per cent, and sub-Saharan Africa stands at 18.6 per cent⁸ (upper and lower houses).

79. ***Strategic interventions will include:***

(a) Adopt specific policy and legal measures, including constitutional guarantees, affirmative action and amendment of electoral laws and systems that will accelerate achieve 50 percent women's representation in decision-making at central and local government levels, as well as the private and other sectors;

(b) Support parliamentary committees, women's wings in political parties, women units in leadership institutions, amongst others, with knowledge building, skills training, and networking opportunities to facilitate their role in advancing women's leadership;

(c) Ensure positive work and other environments are created to support women in decision-making to participate meaningfully, including skills training and gender sensitive staff welfare measures that acknowledge women's multiple roles;

(d) Engage political parties, the private sector and others to adopt or strengthen their gender policies committing to implement the gender parity principle;

(e) Facilitate aspiring women politicians and potential women leaders in other spheres to access resources, including finance and skills, to enable them to campaign and engage fully, thereby broadening their prospects of achieving success; and

⁸ Lowe Morna C, Jambaya Nyakujara, L (Ed) (2010) SADC Gender Protocol 2010 Barometer, Gender Links, <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/sadc-gender-protocol-2010-barometer-2010-08-10> (accessed 21.02.2011)

(f) Develop and implement communication and information strategies, including the use of all forms of media that raise critical awareness, promote women in decision-making as well as challenge gender stereotypes, whilst profiling success stories and best practices of their positive impact.

E. Sexual and reproductive health

80. The ICPD +15 regional review of Africa (ECA, 2009 a.) reveals that inadequacies in access to reproductive health services in Africa is an issue serving as a major threat to women's health. Among the major regions of the world, Africa has the highest records of maternal mortality. Globally, in 2003, there were 529,000 maternal deaths per year, 48 per cent of which occurred in Africa (WHO, UNICEF, and UNFPA, 2003). Sexual violence against women, including forced marriages, underage marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM) and rape, the latter being high in conflict-free and conflict-ridden countries alike, further compromise women's sexual health and compound the problem of HIV.

81. Strategic interventions in the area of women's health and HIV/AIDS as recommended include:

(a) *Reduce maternal mortality* through effective community management of pregnancy-related interventions, increased availability of emergency obstetric care and skilled attendance during pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery;

(b) *Strengthen health systems with incentives to retain medical personnel*; train middle-level health providers e.g. Non-Physician Clinicians (NPCs); facilitate their presence particularly in rural areas;

(c) Ensure that women are informed, educated, supported and empowered with the necessary skills and services that will enable them make responsible decisions about sexual and reproductive health and also have access to family planning advice;

(d) Reposition reproductive health as a development priority in order to increase access to family planning, especially in rural areas – based on culturally sensitive approaches, community mobilization and men's participation;

(e) In line with the Maputo Plan of Action, compile and disseminate data on the magnitude and consequences of unsafe abortions, enact policies to protect women and adolescents; and provide guidelines and appropriate training to service providers in the provision of comprehensive abortion care services;

(f) Scale-up behaviour change communication strategies across different target groups (children, adolescents and adults), through means such as peer education and community sensitization. Promote sexual and reproductive health services in order to better address the consequences of unsafe abortion. Provide comprehensive sex education and services for youth, particularly for young women in rural areas who are prone to ignorance and cultural prejudice;

(g) Mainstream gender into integrated maternal and child health services, which includes sexually-transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS components, to address the vulnerability of women and girls, and ensure their access to prevention and treatment;

(h) Prepare forward-looking national action plans for continued ART services. Integrate HIV/AIDS concerns into all reproductive health programmes, with a view to taking account of the

gender dimensions of the pandemic, such as the need to increase the use of contraceptives by both men and women;

(i) Strengthen the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS within the framework of maternal and child health care programmes;

(j) Develop efficient legal structures to protect women against domestic violence, discrimination, coercion and other forms of abuse when it comes to reproduction or making decisions about it; and

(k) Address health financing as an important catalyst of MDG 5 and 6 implementation, within the context of the Maputo Plan of Action and ICPD +15 outcomes. In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005), align financial and technical assistance and cooperation plans with national and regional needs and priorities for implementation of health priorities. Ensure that adequate budgets are available to not only support maternal and child health services, but also the prevention of obstetric fistula and early detection of reproductive cancers;

F. Climate change and food security

82. Investment in infrastructure to reduce women's and girls' time burdens in water and firewood collection has been identified by the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) Task Force on Education and Gender Equality as one of the seven strategic priorities to achieve gender equality, "empower women and alter the historical legacy of female disadvantage". This is particularly important in the context of declining supplies of water and firewood linked to desertification, deforestation and climate change, especially in some parts of Africa. For example, between 1990 and 2005 the total forest area in the world declined at an estimated rate of 8.4 million hectares annually. More than half of this loss, 4.3 million hectares annually, was in sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the highest household dependency on firewood for cooking. Also, increasing frequency and intensity of droughts was noted in some parts of Africa. By 2020, between 75 and 250 million people in Africa are projected to be exposed to increased water stress due to climate change.⁹

83. The proportion of households within a short distance from a water source is lower in rural areas than in urban areas in all regions. The urban-rural gap is the largest in sub-Saharan Africa where 42 per cent of rural households have an easy access to sources of drinking water, compared to 74 per cent of urban households. In rural areas of some sub-Saharan African countries only a minority of households can benefit from easy access to drinking water.¹⁰

84. The proportion of rural households within 15 minutes from a source of drinking water is as low as 8 per cent in Eritrea, 15 per cent in Somalia and in Uganda and 25 per cent or less in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique.

85. The UN World Women's report also reveals that, under representation of women in environmental decision-making is also illustrated by the low share of women in national coordinating bodies for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The share of women in the Convention coordinating bodies varied greatly among the countries with available data, ranging from 0 per cent in Chad to over 50 per cent in Lesotho (see table below. Women were less than 30 per cent of the members in more than half of the African countries with available data. Women's involvement in high-level decision-

⁹ UN World Women's Report 2010, Trends and statistics.

¹⁰ *Ibids.*

making related to the environment which continues to be hampered by limited access to formal training.

Share of women in national coordinating bodies for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, 2002–2006 (latest available).

| 0–9% | 10–19% | 20–29% | 30–39% | 40–49% | 50–59% |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|---------|
| Africa | | | | | |
| Angola | Côte d'Ivoire | Algeria | Botswana | Swaziland | Lesotho |
| Benin | Djibouti | Burkina Faso | Cape Verde | | |
| Chad | Eritrea | Congo | Central African | | |
| Mali | Guinea | Mauritania | Rep. | | |
| | Guinea-Bissau | Namibia | Comoros | | |
| | Kenya | Niger | Gabon | | |
| | | | Madagascar | | |
| | | | South Africa | | |
| | | | Uganda | | |
| | | | Zambia | | |
| | | | Zimbabwe | | |

Source: UN World Women's Report 2010, Trends and statistics

Key issues

- **More than half of rural households and about a quarter of urban households in sub-Saharan Africa lack easy access to sources of drinking water, and most of the burden of water collection falls on women.**
- **The majority of households in sub-Saharan Africa use solid fuels for cooking on open fires or traditional stoves with no chimney or hood, disproportionately affecting the health of women.**
- **Fewer women than men participate in high-level decision-making related to the environment.**

86. The effects of climate change affect women and men differently. Vulnerability is not only related to environmental forces, but to social conditions, too. Thus, it is not countries that are more or less vulnerable, but certain fractions of their population. Due to their low capacity to adapt, the poor are the most vulnerable group. Women, with their disproportionate share of the poor, are therefore among the most vulnerable groups. In light of the gendered dimensions of climate change, the following strategies are proposed:

(a) *Develop gender-responsive policies on climate change* that address its differentiated impact on different social groups, especially women by improving access to health care particularly for women and the elderly through cash transfers, free health checks and mobile health units; scaling up strategies to ensure water supply and quality to reduce the burden on women caused by water collection; securing women's land and property rights; and managing environmental migration and natural resource conflict in gender sensitive manner;

(b) *Promote the distinct and valuable knowledge and experience African women possess* in regards to adaptation mechanisms to environmental stressors through carrying out participatory researches to study and scale up the coping and mitigation strategies and innovations employed by African women in response of effect of climate change and food insecurity;

(c) *Promote gender-sensitive research and advocacy on climate change* and develop climate change indicators that account for gender disparities in formal and informal labor sectors, care work, land ownership and energy usage;

(d) *Ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation funds are accessible to women* and that they address both the practical and strategic needs of women aimed at improving their access and control over natural resources, climate change planning and governance processes; and

(e) Monitor and advocate the implementation of international conventions and treaties that mandate gender-sensitive approaches to climate change interventions and ensure that climate change policies such as National Adaptation Plan of Actions are gender-responsive and women actively participate in decision-making processes at the household, community and national levels;

G. Financing for gender equality

87. The achievement of gender equality in all fields is however dependent on the flow and management of internal and external financial resources. Resources are needed for the effective running of public and private agencies which possess mandates for coordinating and implementing gender equality obligations outlined in the above instruments. Of equal importance are those resources needed for actual programme implementation.

Key issues

- **Financing for gender equality and women's empowerment is an obligation**
- **Financing for gender equality yields high social and economic returns**
- **Investment in gender equality has intergenerational spill over effects.**
- **Increasing resources for gender equality and women's empowerment would contribute, significantly to the achievement of all other development goals, including the MDGs**

88. In addition to the outcomes of the Regional review, the African Women's Report (2009) notes the specific bias of performance towards the social sector to the general neglect of the economic and political participation of women even within this context, Africa demonstrates the worst indicators with respect to maternal mortality, secondary and tertiary education. While a number of countries have, with the support of agencies such as the Banjul Declaration of 2009 as an outcome of the Beijing +15 Africa Review reflects *Financing for gender equality* as a pillar of focus and implementation by African countries by the period 2015. The Africa region has further resolved to increase and improve domestic resource mobilization and management

Disparities draw attention to the fact that the national income does not dictate education outcomes and that public policy plays a role in shaping the distribution of opportunity.

through a number of commitments. *NEPAD (2001)* identifies domestic savings and improvements in public revenue collection as key resources to be supplemented by ODA, debt relief and private capital flows. Through the *AU Heads of State Declaration, July 2005* African leaders resolved to mobilize additional domestic resources for financing of MDGs and called on the private sector to contribute more substantially to development on the continent and to efforts to meet the MDGs.

89. UNIFEM embarked upon gender budgeting initiatives, these have not been effective in ensuring gender responsive outcomes to public financing. In the wake of the grim position of Africa with respect to its achievement of MDG commitments, the need for increased financing of gender equality-related initiatives to make this possible has become all the more urgent, especially when considered against the reality that no specific fund exists to specifically finance gender equality concerns.

90. In the follow up strategy therefore the following strategies have been identified:

(a) *Gender and macro-economic policy.* Mainstream gender in macroeconomic policies and enhance the gender budgeting initiatives;

(b) *Promote inclusive growth, gender equality and MDG achievement.* In light of the above, it will be critical to ensure support to national entities to incorporate gender perspectives, with special attention to four areas: (i) macro-planning instruments that integrate gender analysis and specify gender equality results (ii) women's unpaid work (iii) gender-responsive public investment and (iv) gender-sensitive analysis of data;

(c) *Strengthen the gender analytic capacity of macro-economists at all levels.* Support the capacity development of state and non-state actors to ensure higher visibility and awareness of the linkages between gender equality, economic growth and poverty reduction, and to take concrete action to advance gender equality based on this greater understanding and visibility. This will include capacity development in gender-sensitive budgetary monitoring;

(d) *Gender-responsive public investment.* In the public finance domain, countries will need to expedite support for MDG-consistent investment plans and frameworks through strengthened and expanded use of gender budgeting techniques. This will encompass the revenue as well as the expenditure sides; and

(e) *Track budget allocations and expenditure for gender equality and women's empowerment.* The obligation for governments to achieve gender equality across the social, economic and political fields has been fully documented and underscored in a number of global, regional and subregional treaties. The achievement of gender equality in all fields is however dependent on the flow and management of internal and external financial resources. Therefore, there is need to track both domestic and ODA allocations and expenditure to ensure adequate resource availability for gender equality and women's empowerment.

IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

91. The strategic interventions for accelerating the implementation of the BPFA and the Banjul Declaration outlined above indicate that building the gender analytic and gender mainstreaming capacity of key actors in the priority sectors and strengthening structures for monitoring and evaluation is the key to exposing gender disparities and reorienting development practitioners towards gender-sensitive planning and implementation of

programmes. The *Outcome and Way Forward* document and the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* identify the key actors at national, subregional and national levels who should play their roles effectively to ensure that the recommendations of these documents are implemented.

A. National, subregional and regional levels

92. The existence of well-resourced and functioning institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming is the key. Under the leadership of the national gender machineries, countries are encouraged to select their priority sectors for follow-up, identify the gaps in and limitations to the implementation of the strategic objectives of the BPFA in these areas, re-set national goals and expected outputs, identify key actors and resource requirements of the selected sectors.

93. Key socio-economic sector ministries should analyze their national plans and annual budgets, in order to address the gender gaps, limitations and emerging issues that should be tackled in the context of other existing national plans such as PRSPs/ national development plans, NEPAD and MDGs.

94. Civil-society organizations, NGO coalitions and networks should:

(a) Harmonize their advocacy work and create synergy towards calling for government accountability, for implementation of the ratified international and regional women's rights instruments, the regional and subregional declarations, and national gender policies and legislative provisions;

(b) Continue to pilot innovative strategies for participatory and gender sensitive development planning, programme implementation and service provision;

(c) Governments are urged to involve civil-society groups in gender-sensitive decision making; and

(d) UN agencies and bilateral and multilateral assistance should strengthen their partnerships with key national players as appropriate, to provide the necessary technical and financial resources for accelerated implementation of the BPFA and the Follow-up Strategy.

B. Regional level

95. **The United Economic commission for Africa -UNECA**, together with its subregional offices, and in partnership with other UN Agencies and bilateral partners should take the lead to:

(a) Disseminate and create awareness among member States of the commitments made in Banjul and the need to implement the follow-up strategy;

(b) Provide technical advisory services and build capacity of member States especially the capacity of national machineries and key sector ministries to identifying the key issues, gaps and limitations in the implementation of the BPFA;

(c) Providing M & E tools to track down progress in the implementation;

(d) Reviewing national policies and plans and assessing resource requirements; and

(e) Reporting periodically on the progress made and challenges encountered and Conduct a series of subregional workshops to involve all the countries by subregion between them;

96. **The African Union Commission – AUC.** The Commission has established criteria for working committees to drive the activities of the Decade. These Committees will be useful in rolling out together with the governments the agreed strategies at regional level. At the regional level: A Ministerial Working Committee will work closely with the RECs, to role out the strategy and ensure implementation of the Women’s Decade agreed programme.

V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

97. The monitoring and evaluation of the progress made towards implementation of this strategy will be based on existing national and continental frameworks already established as follows;

(a) The NEPAD Peer Review Mechanism, the AU Commissions, and regional economic commissions should be adapted for use at national levels;

(b) The capacity of accountability mechanisms to monitor national planning, budgeting and gender policy implementation processes should be strengthened to assess the adequacy of inputs and outputs, and remaining challenges to achieving gender equality and equity in all sectors;

(c) The MDG review and reporting processes should integrate issues raised in the BPFA;

(d) The capacity of the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Tool for Institutional Mechanisms to provide a framework for priority-setting, tracking progress and accountability, should be acknowledged and their use by member States as recommended;

(e) The AU will convene a meeting of Ministers for Women’s Affairs to agree on monitoring priorities for tracking delivery against the commitments of the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*, adopted in 2004 and the implementation of the Women’s decade priorities; and

(f) Countries should submit to UNECA, annual reports based on the framework to be disseminated by UNECA.

VI. WAY FORWARD

98. This follow-up strategy has not covered all the critical areas of concern, countries however, are encouraged to address issues beyond these as may be applicable to specific country situations. The BPfA review and the MDGs assessments show that notable progress has been achieved in legal reforms and defining policies towards gender equality and women’s empowerment. The performance in all the critical areas and towards the MDGs is varied.

Some show significant success as with primary school enrolment whilst others present a longer-term challenge, such as reducing maternal mortality.

99. It is evident from this review that governments still face challenges in meeting the targets set in the BPfA. Accelerating efforts to implement the BPfA would require addressing the challenges within the socio-economic context of each nation. Some of the crosscutting challenges include lack of statistics, particularly of sex-disaggregated data, which prevents governments from reporting.

100. The 15-year BPfA review also underscored the importance of collecting high-quality, reliable, comparable, policy-relevant, sex- and gender-disaggregated data for policy development on gender equality and women's empowerment. Quality and reliable data is crucial for policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. In this regard, governments and stakeholders need to invest in sound and responsive statistical planning with gender perspectives in mind.

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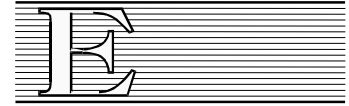
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**Banjul Declaration on the Strategies for Accelerating
the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing
Platforms for Action**

From Commitment to Action

We, African Ministers Responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs, meeting in Banjul (Gambia) from 19 to 20 November 2009 for the *fifteen-year* review of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action under the overall theme "*From Commitment to Action*";

Building on the 1999 and 2004 reviews of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action which led to the adoption of subregional and national action plans to redress gender imbalances, and which emphasized the need for gender-sensitive, participatory and inclusive poverty reduction strategies and the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, with emphasis on the definition, development and implementation of legal and policy frameworks;

Acknowledging the progress that has been achieved, in particular in women's representation in decision-making, and gender parity in education;

Endorsing the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action made by the expert session held from 16 to 18 November 2009 in Banjul, The Gambia during the Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women (Beijing + 15), which confirm that progress in the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern has been uneven;

Inspired by international, regional and subregional declarations, protocols and conventions, including the 2000 Millennium Declaration, which aim to promote and strengthen women's empowerment and accelerate the attainment of gender equity and equality as part of overall human rights;

Recognizing the interrelationships among gender equality, women's empowerment, human rights, economic growth and sustainable development;

Further recognize the Meeting of the African Union experts responsible for gender and women's affairs and take note of outcomes of the African Women's NGOs Consultative Meeting held on the margins of the Eighth African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing + 15);

Concerned that new challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation; food and energy crises; financial and economic crises; and the feminization of trafficking and migration can negatively affect the progress made;

Recognizing that progress towards gender equality, gender equity and women's empowerment can be achieved by addressing the structural and root causes of gender inequality through the enactment and enforcement of constitutional and legal instruments, taking into account the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other international, regional and subregional instruments such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development;

Convinced of the need to establish and strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming and budgeting in all policies and programmes, rooted in a human-centred vision of development and the promotion and protection of women's human rights;

Affirming the critical importance of the principles, objectives and goals of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action for women's advancement, gender equality, gender equity, sustainable development and poverty eradication in Africa, which will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);

Stressing the importance of committed and effective leadership at all levels and the role of women and men in promoting the required changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices that limit women's and girls' rights, capabilities and access to opportunities;

Encouraging the regional economic communities and other subregional statutory organs to be fully engaged in the implementation and monitoring of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action;

Appreciating the importance of establishing partnerships with all stakeholders, including ministries of finance and economic planning and other line ministries, civil-society, the private sector, workers' organizations, community and religious leaders, research and academic institutions, local governments, the media, the international community, and men and boys, and calling upon them to further support national efforts to address the critical areas of concern of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and to consider women as a strategic driving force;

1. *Emphasize* our commitment to fully implement international, regional and subregional agreements and initiatives whose objectives are in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action and the Millennium Development Goals;

2. *Are committed* to renewing and intensifying our resource mobilization efforts, improving national strategies, and enhancing institutional, financial and human resources in order to accelerate the achievement of the goals of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action as well as the Millennium Development Goals between now and 2015;

3. *Are committed* to focusing our actions on the following strategic areas:

1. Economic empowerment of women through poverty reduction, employment creation, social protection and use of information and communications technology:

1.1 Promote the sustainable economic empowerment of women by ensuring and reinforcing their right and access to timely and relevant information, training, ownership and control of productive resources; promoting entrepreneurship; creating employment opportunities for women through skills and business development and enhanced employability; and improving the agricultural productivity of rural women by providing them with advanced and appropriate technologies.

- 1.2 Nurture the economic independence of women from an early age by adopting a holistic approach and ensuring that young women, in particular those with disabilities, have access to secondary and tertiary education and professional training, including access to information and communications technology, and science and technology; using incentives and social protection measures to reduce the dropout rate among girls, particularly poor girls and pregnant adolescents; and protecting the girl-child from violence and early and forced marriage.
- 1.3 Develop and strengthen monitoring, evaluation and information systems, as well as capacities for analysing linkages between gender and economic development by focusing on sex-disaggregated data collection, production, analysis and dissemination; and undertaking studies on the formal, informal and agricultural sectors.

2. Peace, security and development

- 2.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive action plan that will include domestication of relevant international and regional resolutions and protocols, including United Nations Security Council resolutions S/RES/1325 (2000), S/RES/1820 (2008), S/RES/1888 (2009), and S/RES/1889 (2009) on women, peace and security; advocacy for change using the media and traditional communication channels; reform of legal and judicial systems and security institutions; research; and adoption of an early warning system;
- 2.2 Promote capacity-building and peer-learning in conflict prevention and resolution, and in human rights protection and promotion for government officials, parliamentarians, women, men, youth, media, security services, the judiciary, and community leaders;
- 2.3 Adopt measures such as the provision of psychological support and the creation of reparation and compensation funds to secure the full reintegration and rehabilitation of victims; promote the effective reintegration of ex-combatants; strengthen protection and assistance to women refugees, internally displaced women and children, and female returnees; and protect girls and women from trafficking.

3. Violence against women

Adopt and implement a multi-sectoral plan to address gender-based violence, within the framework of the United Nations Secretary-General's "UNite to End Violence against Women and Girls" campaign, with particular emphasis on its Africa component, and underpinned by the following actions:

- (i) Enactment and strengthening of laws to address violence against women; social mobilization, including the launching of zero-tolerance campaigns; literacy, including legal and functional literacy for women and men, as well as education for girls and women; partnership with civil-society; provision of social support and

compensation to victims of violence; creation and/or strengthening of networks of women lawyers; provision of psychological support to women affected by violence; and targeted actions for men and boys to act as agents and partners of change.

- (ii) Capacity-building, including the training of law enforcement agents and health services personnel for the effective application and enforcement of relevant laws and policies; provision of adequate support to social welfare institutions, the police and the judiciary; enhanced outreach services, especially at the community level; and sensitization of parliamentarians.
- (iii) Integration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into subregional and national action plans based on in-depth studies of the structural causes of violence against women. Development of relevant indicators and set baseline as well as undertake national prevalence surveys to assist in measuring progress and ensuring accountability.

4. Representation and participation of women in all areas of decision-making

- 4.1 Adopt and implement affirmative action measures, notably quotas for gender parity, and set up institutional mechanisms supported by adequate resources to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies, as provided for in international, regional and subregional instruments, and underpinned by constitutional guarantees and legislative provisions on gender parity.
- 4.2 Reform the electoral systems and internal leadership selection procedures of the public sector and political parties/organizations, in order to increase women's participation; encourage private sector institutions to become more gender-responsive, and promote gender parity in leadership and decision-making.
- 4.3 Develop capacity enhancement programmes to transform negative socio-cultural attitudes and perceptions towards female leadership; strengthen networking and collaboration among women's groups; and enhance inter-generational communication.
- 4.4 Ensure responsibility and accountability at the highest level of leadership, in both the public and the private sectors, using monitoring and evaluation systems such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, when applicable, and involving the media and civil-society.
- 4.5 Foster and enhance solidarity among women to support women running for office at local, national, regional and global levels.

5. Sexual and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS

- 5.1 Strengthen health systems with measures and incentives to retain medical personnel; avoid the brain drain; train middle-level health providers; facilitate their

presence in rural areas; promote sexual and reproductive health services in order to better address the consequences of unsafe abortions; and provide sex education and services for the sexual and reproductive health of the youth;

- 5.2 Reduce maternal mortality by two thirds by 2015 through effective and coordinated community management of pregnancy-related interventions and increased availability of emergency obstetric care services and skilled attendance during pregnancy, delivery, and post-delivery, as underscored by the 2009 African Union Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA);
- 5.3 Reposition reproductive health including family planning as a development priority in order to increase access to family planning, especially in rural areas, based on culturally sensitive approaches, community mobilization and men's engagement; and ensure that adequate budgets are available to sustain and expand maternal and child health and family planning services, as well as the prevention of obstetric fistula and early detection of reproductive cancers at all levels of health-care delivery systems;
- 5.4 Mainstream gender into integrated maternal and child health services, including sexually-transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS programmes, to address the vulnerability of women and girls, ensure their access to prevention, treatment and care, and facilitate access to and use of female and male condoms.

6. Climate change and food security

- 6.1 Develop gender-responsive policies on climate change which focus on agriculture, water resource management, energy, forest use and management, as well as transportation and technology transfer for improved food security.
- 6.2 Develop agricultural policies and programmes that address the differentiated impacts of climate change, in particular the impact on women.
- 6.3 Support the integration of gender into existing and upcoming scientific research on climate change with a particular focus on the collection and use of sex- and gender-disaggregated data, and the development of knowledge-sharing and peer-learning networks at subregional and regional levels.
- 6.4 Call on the upcoming Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change to take full account of gender dimensions and come up with gender-responsive measures.

7. Financing for gender equality

- 7.1 Institutionalize gender-responsive budgeting aligned with national development priorities and poverty reduction programmes, to support the financing of gender equality at subnational and national levels.

- 7.2 Develop financing mechanisms, including alternative sources of funding, and ensure the allocation of funds at sub national and national levels; establish a stimulus package that targets women; and monitor the effective utilization and impact of financing on gender equality.
- 7.3 Develop capacity-building programmes for the training and mentoring of parliamentary and government authorities on gender-responsive budgeting.
- 7.4 Strengthen national gender mechanisms by transforming gender focal points into gender teams that perform planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring functions for the mainstreaming of gender equality into all activities of ministries at subnational and national levels.

In undertaking the above actions:

- (i) We call on our Governments to allocate adequate resources to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.
- (ii) We call on our international partners, both bilateral and multilateral, including organizations of the United Nations system, to provide adequate technical and financial support for our development efforts and to move swiftly to implement their commitments from the Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness.
- (iii) We call on the African Union Commission, the United Nations system, the African Development Bank and the Regional Economic Communities to strengthen their coordination and harmonization processes with regard to the implementation of the priorities identified in this Ministerial Declaration, including that of facilitating South-South collaboration and exchange of experiences and best practices.
- (iv) We further call on the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to annually monitor and report on progress made in implementing the relevant development programmes and plans, and to ensure that the follow-up to the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action is included in the work plan of the Committee on Women and Development of the Economic Commission for Africa.
- (v) We call on the United Nations Secretary-General to swiftly implement General Assembly resolution A/RES/63/311 related to the establishment of a new gender entity through the consolidation of four entities, namely the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), to enable countries to receive the necessary technical and financial support to achieve gender equality.

In preparation for the 20th anniversary of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, we will assess the implementation of these two instruments, taking into account any relevant procedures that will be established.

We pledge to implement these commitments in order to achieve our development goals within the next five years.