

**NGO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
TO THE AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

**FIFTH AFRICAN REGIONAL
CONFERENCE ON WOMEN**

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1. PREAMBLE

1. The 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS) contained three interrelated and mutually reinforcing objectives: Equality, Development and Peace. The Nairobi Strategies defined equality within the context of economic, social and political participation by women in terms of their contribution to socio-economic activities and in terms of the benefits they derived from their participation and contribution and as key decision makers. Equality then is not defined merely by the absence of discrimination but also by the rights, responsibilities and opportunities enjoyed by women. Development is seen in terms of the overall well-being of the women, their full and active participation in all economic activities and their integration, mainstreaming and advancement, in all aspects of development. Without peace, however, there can be no equality and no development. Neither can peace be achieved without the full involvement of women, as equal partners with the men, in the mechanisms for peace and reconciliation.
2. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies were adopted as the global blueprint for the advancement of women up to and beyond the year 2000. In Africa, this event coincided with one of the worst famines in recent history, which heralded the current era of socio-economic decline. Several factors combined to impede the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies, inter alia, lack of specific frameworks, structures and concrete plans of action with regard to women; economic policies, performance and reforms; continued vagaries of the weather; war and internal conflicts; imbalances in the terms of trade between Africa and its trading partners; the debt burden; and lack of strong political will.
3. The Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s, assessed the current situation of women in Africa, within the context of the Nairobi Strategies and identified areas where the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies had been initiated with some success, as well as areas where progress had been slow. At this Conference, it was noted that the condition of African women had worsened and the gains made in the 1970s and 1980s had eroded, particularly in the fields of education, health, employment and economics. For example, the gross enrollment ratio at the primary level fell from 80.9 per cent in 1980 to 70.6 per cent in 1991. At secondary and tertiary levels, it fell from 41.2 to 38.3 per cent in the same period. Open urban unemployment has increased from 7.7 per cent in 1978 to 22.8 per cent in 1990. The labour force in the formal sector, already low, decreased from 10 per cent in 1980 to less than 8 per cent in 1990. In 1992, the maternal mortality rates reached 650/100,000 while the under-5 mortality rates reached 165 out of 1000 live births.

In all these developments, women and children have borne a disproportionate burden of the crises. Current estimates by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) show that in sub-Saharan Africa, the female labour force in 1990 was about 73 million which represented 38 per cent of the total labour force. However, current estimates reflect a decline of 2 per cent during the past two decades. About 75 per cent of agricultural work is done by women who produce and market up to 80 per cent of the food. **Although women constitute a large proportion of the labour force their condition in the work place and in their homes has worsened.** ~~Despite the grave situation~~ The Abuja Conference noted various areas where some progress had been made with regard to women. **However the grave situation demands that priority action be taken in the immediate term to address the increase in all types of poverty, the lack of food security, the need for employment and economic empowerment; education and training including life skills, science and technology; promotion of culture; equitable reconstruction of family relationships and socialization; prioritize population development and health care; ensure protection of the environment and effective natural resource management; the removal of conditions which endanger peace and security; the political**

empowerment and inclusion of women in decision making processes; ensuring sanctions for the violation of legal and human rights in respect of women; particular emphasis for the well being of women with special needs; and mainstreaming of gender-sex-disaggregated data.

The immediate short term response to the crisis confronting women will not deal with the deep rooted problems with in the political economy. In spite of evidence that the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) are inappropriate in addressing these problems they are still offered as the remedy. Women's voices across Africa are loud and angry about the increasing levels of poverty and social degradation which is the direct result of SAPs.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in its African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio - Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF - SAP) has proposed a new framework for structural adjustment with in the concept of the African political economy and mindful of the need to ensure growth with equity. It has emphasized the need for Assessment of the Principles and Policies of Orthodox Adjustment Programmes and put forward change in Policy Directions and Instruments which will help to reverse some of the social and economic problems created by SAPS.

Despite the grave situation, the Abuja Conference noted various areas where some progress had been made with regard to women and suggested priority action in poverty, food, security and economic empowerment; education, training and science and technology; culture, the family and socialization; population and health; environment and natural resource management; peace; political empowerment, legal and human rights and women with special needs; and mainstreaming of gender-disaggregated data.

4. A major gap still remains in terms of the concretization of this awareness and its reflection in the continued implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Nevertheless, since the Abuja Declaration, in the midst of these bleak scenarios, there have been some positive signs and encouraging developments, both globally and regionally.
5. During the last decade, a major achievement has been the overall sensitization of African leaders, policy makers and development agents as to the need to incorporate a gender perspective in all activities of the development process. The World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, Austria, in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 and the World Social Summit to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995, are other examples of positive shifts toward accelerated advancement of women. On the African continent, 1994 ushered in major political changes highlighted by political developments in South Africa. The process of democratization is fast spreading in the region and women have become active participants and are at the forefront in various capacities. But for them to participate and contribute fully, there has to be an infusion of support measures for them particularly through **an enabling environment guided by legislation, structures for participation, economic resources and capacity building through education**. In order to accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the countries of the African region are committed to the search and forging of a new ethic for sustainable development that must be reflected in all their activities for development, and whose primary objective is the improvement of the quality of life of all their citizens as well as their active participation as agents of change. Further, the ECA member States are fully aware of the necessity of:
 - (a) Balancing political, economic, cultural and social aims;

- (b) Harmonizing and reconciling growth with equity; and
 - (c) Emphasizing the interdependence and partnership of the men, women and youth of Africa, in an atmosphere of peace and well-being.
6. The Platform for Action is based on the premises that the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies are still valid and serve as guidelines for action for the advancement of women at all levels.
 7. It recognizes the serious obstacles that impeded the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies but proposes that women are a resource whose mobilization can provide part of the solution in removing some of the obstacles.
 8. This African Platform for Action is derived from a regional country-based review of the progress of implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, as well as broad consultations at subregional and regional levels, with input from grass-roots communities, NGOs, governments and United Nations agencies. It is intended to provide firstly, the African common position and consensus on the advancement of women and secondly, a framework for committed and concerted action at the regional, sub regional and national levels for the accelerated achievement of the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies during the rest of the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. The adoption of the Platform for Action will be a renewed commitment by African women, men, youth and children, NGOs, governments and their United Nations and international partners, to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other related conventions and declarations.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

9. The African Platform for Action is a synthesis of regional perspectives and priorities, and a framework for action for the formulation of policies and implementation of concrete and sustainable programmes for the advancement of women. It is developed in consonance with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the Abuja Declaration and the Kampala Action Plan. The Platform for Action aims to accelerate the social, economic and political empowerment of all women at all levels and at all stages of their lives under the guidance of the following principles:
 - (a) The operating principle of the African Platform for Action is the integration of the gender perspective in all policies, plans and actions directed towards the achievement of equality, development and peace. The underlying assumption is that international instruments that have been developed for human rights should be applicable to all sectors of society. To this end, this Platform aims to strengthen/establish sustainable mechanisms, and alternative economic frameworks which are informed by critical gender analysis of development ~~including information systems at all levels,~~ gender awareness, the advancement of women and the promotion of legal literacy. An alternative approach which integrates political, social, economic and cultural aspects of lives in way that ensure the economy is geared to human development. In this regard the philosophy of AAFSAP should be carried forward in the restructuring of the relationship between the private sector and the state to allow for civil society representation, specifically of women, in the distribution and production of services and goods.

have globally adopted strategies for the enhancement of women's status and skills, their mainstreaming and their involvement in key decision making. However, what is still lacking is the total political commitment and the necessary resource allocation without which the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies will remain unfulfilled aspirations.

13. Governments throughout the world should demonstrate their full commitment to the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies through concrete allocation of resources for the implementation of these Strategies, accompanied by concerted efforts to develop basic institutional and human resource capacities to facilitate the attainment of the stated objectives.
14. Since the adoption of Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985, major political, economic, social and cultural changes have taken place. These have had both positive and negative effects on women and it is against the backdrop of the impact of these global changes on the African region that this Platform for Action has been formulated.
15. The expectations for greater global security and a just, equitable and non-discriminatory international economic order have not been realized. In addition, financial institutions and new world trade arrangements have assumed larger roles in global affairs and have failed to halt the economic decline in many African countries. There has been a reduction in external assistance flow and the depressed demand for African primary commodities have significantly reduced export earnings. In addition, the heavy debt burden has exacerbated the already depressed economic situation **including the negative impact of SAPs on the lives of women**. Regrettably, the interdependent world economy continues to be marked by uncertainty, imbalance, recessions and eventually this has led to the continuing marginalization of developing countries. Numerous interrelated global factors therefore impinge on the lives of women in Africa, affecting both their productive and reproductive roles. The emergence of the political democratization process has ushered in competitive multi-party system whose impact on women is yet to be assessed.

B. REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

16. The first Regional Conference on the Implementation of National, Regional and World Plans of Action for the integration of Women in Development was held in Nouakchott, Mauritania in 1977. The main purpose of that Conference was to review progress made by African member States and by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations operating in Africa in the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action adopted at the World Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975. In line with the decisions taken at this Conference, the second Regional Conference for the Integration of Women in Development was held in Lusaka, Zambia in 1979. The main purpose of that Conference was to review the progress made and constraints which hindered the achievement of objectives as stipulated in the World and African Plans of Action for the Integration of Women in Development and to draw up programmes and strategies as well as to prepare for the second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen, Denmark, in July 1980. The third Regional Conference on Women was held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania in 1984. This Conference was also the preparatory meeting for the Nairobi World Conference on Women in 1985. The objectives of that Conference were to review and appraise progress achieved and obstacles encountered in attaining the goals for women; to adopt forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women in Africa to the year 2000; and to arrive at a common African position for the forthcoming Nairobi World Conference on Women. The main outcome of the Conference was the adoption of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of African Women beyond the United Nations Decade for Women. The meeting further called for a regional review and appraisal of the United Nations

Women's Decade in the area of women's equality, advancement and integration in the African region. In 1986, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 (UN-PAAERD), was adopted, while in 1989, the ECA Conference of Ministers considered a document on the "Changing socio-economic conditions in Africa in the context of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies".

17. The fourth Regional Conference on Women and on the implementation of the Arusha Strategies was held in Abuja, Nigeria, in November 1989. This was in accordance with ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 365 (XIV), adopted in March 1979 in Rabat, Morocco, which endorsed the recommendation that ECA should convene a Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development every three years. The objectives of the Conference were to provide a forum for a thorough review and assessment of the extent of implementation of the Arusha Strategies by governments, United Nations bodies, NGOs, etc., to consider emerging socio-economic problems that are affecting the lives of African women, and to reassess the priorities stated in the Arusha Strategies and make appropriate recommendations for the future. The outcome of this Conference was the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women 2000 in the areas of education, science and technology, agriculture and food production, environment, decision making and mainstreaming, population issues, women and culture, etc.
18. Other regional milestones that have impacted upon the political, socio-economic and cultural status of women in Africa have included, inter alia:
 - (a) The Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos (1980);
 - (b) The Kilimanjaro Programme of Action on Population and Self-Reliant Development (1984);
 - (c) The African Charter on Popular Participation and Transformation (1990);
 - (d) The Ouagadougou Declaration on the Education of Girls (1990);
 - (e) The Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (1991);
 - (f) The Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development (1992);
 - (g) The Regional Conference on Women and Peace, and the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace (1993) which was adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU at its sixtieth session held in Tunis in June 1994;
 - (h) Resolution CM/Res. 1550 (LX) on the preparation of the fourth World Conference on Women adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU at its sixtieth session held in Tunis in June 1994;
 - (i) Resolution CM/Res. 1551 (LX) on population and development adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU in July 1994.
19. In most of Africa, drought, disruptions from civil wars and political conflicts have contributed to the depressed economic activity and growth resulting in low per capita incomes. As a result, more countries have been pushed into the least developed country (LDC) category with extremely low income levels. Economic growth has also been constrained by external debt which at the end of 1993 stood at \$US 285.4 billion, with interest on arrears representing nearly 40 per cent. The debt structure has hardly changed over the last five years. The impact on economic growth has been mixed due to the inadequacy of external support and internal conflicts which have derailed the attainment of these objectives, resulting in their failure to reflect long-term development goals and the

neglect of regional planning. This has adversely affected income levels and distribution and the capacity to deliver basic services.

20. These recurrent crises have affected the tempo and level of all economic development of Africa. Women more than men tend to bear the disproportionate burden of such crises, and they become greatly disadvantaged in participating effectively in any development ventures because of other compounding traditional, cultural, religious and attitudinal constraints. Women, who make up more than 50 per cent of the populations affected by these crises, must contribute effectively to solving the numerous problems posed by these adverse conditions.
21. Early indications of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations which were finally concluded in January 1994 are that it will have limited immediate effects on Africa's economic performance, depending on the region's ability to manage change and optimize technology for more efficient use of factors of production in an effort to raise its competitive status in international markets. It is also likely that agricultural subsidies will increase the food import bills of African countries. This will greatly affect the socio-economic status of women because of their total involvement with agricultural sector activities. The emergence of trade blocs and regional markets such as the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) could also make it more difficult for the African region to maintain its traditional relationships with its European partners for much-needed resources. **There is a concern about the implications of GATT's provision which make it difficult for local and export products from horticulture, textiles and garments, fishing industry to compete in the global markets.**
22. Economic decline, recession and the resultant economic restructuring in the face of external debt have led governments to focus on the more pressing and immediate problems often to the neglect of longer term issues that have direct bearing on the advancement of women. At the same time, pre-existing conditions of inequality between men and women, *inter alia*, in health and nutrition, levels of literacy and training, access to education and economic opportunity, and in participation in decision making, have sometimes been exacerbated both by the crises and by the policies adopted to cope with them. In other words, such policies have compounded further the already disadvantaged situation of the women. The policies do not effectively address the impact of restructuring on women and their multiple roles. This Platform for Action is expounding a comprehensive and attainable agenda for human and social development centred on women.
23. There is a democratization process sweeping the whole continent and women have been active participants as candidates for election, as voters and as observers of the election process in many countries. A good number of women have entered parliament through their own efforts, affirmative action and through the support of women and men, women's groups, non-governmental associations and organizations of women. Unfortunately, the number of African countries in political crisis and turmoil is on the increase with many such cases manifesting themselves in the form of disputes over election results, cancellation of election results and abrupt cancellation of the democratization process. In addition, African Governments have yet to undertake comprehensive and concrete steps to promote pragmatically the integration of women as equal partners, particularly in politics, in popular participation and in key decision making. There is need therefore to monitor the impact of democratization on women locally and nationally and to ensure that there are provisions for women's education and sensitization for more effective political participation.

24. Despite the commemoration of the International Year of the Family; (IYF) in May 1994, the integrity of the African family life is being seriously undermined by persistent socio-economic crises. **There is massive increase in rural-urban migration, precipitated by the lack of land reforms and development of rural infrastructure.** ~~The recent and unprecedented~~ The majority of the ~~consisting mostly of~~ young men and women, has severely affected the socio-psychological and financial security of many families. **Consequently, there is an increase in crime and violence, drug abuse, homelessness, slum conditions, sexual exploitation of women, young girls and boys.** In many African rural and urban communities, the number of households headed by single women has steadily increased to a regional average of around 35 per cent increase in their burden.
25. The unprecedented increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons in the region is one of the major consequences of the protracted internal strife, civil wars and political instability in many countries of the region. According to UNHCR, the current refugee population in Africa is estimated at 7 million out of a world total of 20 million and there are also 25 million internally displaced persons, most of whom are women and children. **Women form a large percentage of refugees and displaced persons in the continent.** Refuge and displaced women are particularly vulnerable and special attention should be paid to their protection needs. But they also represent a useful resource whose potential should be tapped in the search for durable solutions to the refugee problems. The refugee women' and girls' access to health, education and shelter should not be affected as a result of their need to flee from the areas of conflict.
26. Worldwide, AIDS is a social, economic and political issue as well as a medical one. Africa is in the front line of the worldwide epidemic. The full dimensions of the epidemic in the region are still uncertain but it is already a grave problem in many countries in East, Central and Southern Africa. With regard to women, according to WHO, the number of HIV infections among women in Africa outnumber men by six to five, and more than 4 million women of child-bearing age have been infected. One out of every three pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in some major African urban centres is infected. The economic and social consequences of AIDS affect women the most with serious repercussions on the elderly women who are left to care for orphans when they are least capable. The subordinate position of women and their lack of access to education, health facilities, training, independent income, property and legal rights make them particularly vulnerable to the AIDS infection. They lack knowledge about the disease and the measures that have to be taken to protect themselves against HIV infection.
27. During the last decade, African Governments have undoubtedly shown an increasing tendency to see the political and socio-economic participation of women as a key factor and catalyst in the processes and linkages that engender and encourage equality, development and peace for the accelerated advancement of women. In this respect, almost all governments have established and given support to national machineries to discharge their responsibilities of coordinating and monitoring the incorporation of the gender perspective in overall national development activities. In addition, most African countries have enacted legislation against discriminatory practices with regard to education, employment as well as legislation in favour of paid maternity leave for women.
28. Overall therefore, despite regional and individual efforts made by member States and the international community **and local and national NGOs** to improve the status of African women, only modest progress has been made and critical gaps still exist in several areas. The more glaring gaps are in relation to, *inter alia*, gender disparity in access to education and health; under-representation in the higher political and decision-making

levels; inadequacy of national machineries, policy and programmes for the enrichment of the women's cause; lack of disaggregated data; *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination with respect to marital and family status; lack of awareness on the part of both women and men regarding the issue of women's legal and human rights; and lack of understanding of the legal and administrative systems and mechanisms for redress. A more detailed analysis of these gaps is given in the following section.

IV. CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

29. In the regional review of the process and progress of implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, several gaps and critical areas of concern have been identified at the national and regional levels. Others have been identified through technical workshops convened at national, sub regional and regional levels, with inputs from grassroots communities, women and women's organizations, national and international NGOs, intergovernmental bodies and United Nations agencies. The intention is to reflect a broad-based consensus on the critical areas of concern as well as the criteria used in the process of identifying these areas. They constitute the core of the African Platform for Action, viz:

- A. Women, poverty, food security and economic empowerment;
- B. Women, education, training, science and technology;
- C. Women, culture, **religion**, the family and socialization;
- D. Women's health, **reproductive rights**, family planning and population;
- E. Women, environment and ~~natural resource management~~ **sustainable development**;
- F. Women in **armed conflict situations** and the peace process;
- G. The political empowerment of women, **decision making and power sharing**;
- H. Women's legal and human rights,
- I. Mainstreaming of **sex and race** ~~gender~~-disaggregated data.
- J. **Women, communication, information and the arts.**
- K. **The girl child**
- L. **Women in Agriculture**
- M. **Women with special needs**

It should be noted that these nine critical areas of concern are interdependent in terms of how they affect the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Further, the order of presentation reflects the concerns of women in the African region but they are all of equal priority.

A. WOMEN, POVERTY, FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

30. Poverty manifests itself in various forms. Ultimately, the problem of poverty has its essential origin in lack of income, exclusion from the market and social and political life, unequal distribution of wealth and income from global, regional, sub regional to local levels, and these in turn are linked to the general political, economic and social conditions of a given country.

- 30(bis) **Women with disabilities are the poorest of the poor. They are affected by food insecurity both as women and because they are disabled. There is a need to target them directly in all economic development interventions.**
31. In 1991, it was estimated that about 250 million people in Africa were living in abject poverty, unable to meet their most basic needs. This situation is related to complex internal and external factors. **The legacy of the economic crisis of the 1980s has been worsened by the introduction of the structural adjustment program (SAP) which has led to the devaluation of the currencies, reduction in public sector expenditures, privatization and deregulation of the economy.** ~~is still in evidence, especially the deteriorating~~ **The social and human conditions of poverty have escalated and escalating poverty.** In 1993, for example, infant mortality averaged 103 per 1000 in sub-Saharan Africa compared to 71 per 1000 for all developing countries. In the same year, under-5 mortality rates were estimated at 16 per cent per 1000 live births in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1985 and 1990, only 5 per cent of urban population in Africa had access to sanitation facilities compared to 16 per cent for the rural population. During the same period, access to safe water covered only 68 per cent in the urban areas and 26 per cent in the rural areas. For all Africa, calories per capita per day averaged 2,100 in 1993 while protein per capita per day was 53 grams compared to a world average of 1,697 calories and 71 grams consecutively.
32. In 1993, women constituted approximately 52 per cent of the population. They provide 60 to 80 per cent of the food supply and represent the greater proportion of the unemployed, earning only 10 per cent of the income while owning only 1 per cent of the assets. Women are the backbone of both cash crop and subsistence farming, yet are denied the tools for sustainability. They still confront considerable discrimination that constitutes a major obstacle to increased productivity. The number of female-headed households is increasing and is now around 35 per cent while the feminization of poverty has become a reality.
33. To compound all this, many African countries are also experiencing critical situations in terms of food security and agricultural products. Once a net exporter of food, since the 1980s the region has become a net importer and hunger and malnutrition continue to be a critical human problem, affecting particularly women and children. Since 1960, the population in Africa has increased at an annual rate of 3 per cent while food production grew by only an average of 1.8 per cent with the food self-sufficiency ratio dropping from 100 per cent in 1960 to 81 per cent in the 1990s. Approximately 25 per cent of food requirements are imported including food aid. **The annual food imports are equivalent to roughly 30% of Africa's agricultural export earnings thus diverting scarce foreign exchange from more important uses to pay for food imports.** ~~The scarce foreign exchange earnings are used to pay the debts and food imports.~~ Security and self-sufficiency are therefore not related to food alone, but to the general and pervasive problem of poverty, unequal distribution of income and weaker purchasing power.
34. Women in Africa must be empowered to participate in economic structures and policies, in employment and in the productive process itself. It has now been widely recognized that the contribution of rural women in Africa is critical to development. The African Platform for Action, in line with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and the Abuja Declaration, emphasizes the economic empowerment of women through stimulating, consolidating and coordinating the entrepreneurial spirit of African women and providing increased access to both formal and informal sector resources. Women's empowerment will also enhance their capacity to realistically alter the direction of change in favour of their well-being. Consequently, strategies and actions are needed in order to move away from the current welfare orientation to address the economic empowerment of women; stem the growing

disparity between rural and urban conditions; and move towards environmentally sustainable actions for poverty alleviation through sustainable development. The actions proposed by the Platform are based on the recognition of women's own responses to increasingly difficult and changing productive and economic circumstances based on their know-how, initiatives and capacities.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

34(bis) Women are the backbone of both cash crop and subsistence farming. In 193, women constituted approximately 52 percent of the population. They provide 60-80 percent of the cash crops and food supply. Despite their importance in the sector, that drives most African economies, they are denied the resources for its sustainability and they still confront considerable discrimination that constitutes a major obstacle to increased productivity.

A major obstacle is the continued non-recognition of the primary role of women in agriculture. It goes unreported, unrecorded and unremunerated by official sources.

Cultural practices combine with women's poor access to control of land, property, access to credit, technology and training, and impact negatively on national development.

Nomadic pastoralism needs special attention in agricultural policy. Pastoralist livelihood Systems should be recognized, supported and improved upon to enhance their sustainability.

The persistent economic crisis in African countries have particularly undermined agriculture and food security. Prices of conventional agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, labor technology are now too high for most farmers. Women bear the burden of the crisis because their already poor access to agricultural productive resources has become even more limited. As a result of this crisis, since 1980, the region which was once a net exporter of food is now a net importer. Hunger and malnutrition continue to be a critical human problem affecting particularly women and children.

Women's ability to produce food has become seriously impaired such that Africa's annual food imports are now roughly equivalent to 30% of Africa's agricultural export earnings.

Women in Africa must be empowered and supported to explore and implement sustainable agricultural approaches, technologies that enhance productivity without harming the environment. Such alternatives combine conventional agriculture with alternative techniques for increased sustainable production.

B. WOMEN, EDUCATION, TRAINING, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

35. Education has major implications for social development. In addition to the inverse relationship between female education and high levels of fertility, education at the first and second levels impacts positively on infant mortality rates. Life expectancy, under-5 child

mortality and maternal mortality rates and morbidity. The process involved in transforming societies makes education of the populace an imperative.

36. All available indicators point to severe and persistent crisis in the African educational sector with gross enrollment ratios being consistently on the decline while attrition rates have been on the increase and the quality of education sliding. Between 1988 and 1990, out of the total female population, the gross enrollment ratios annually were 85, 64 and 32 per cent for primary, secondary and tertiary respectively. There is also a pronounced discrepancy in educational attainment between rural and urban communities and between males and females, a factor which has adverse implications for Africa's recovery and long-term development. Africa's education system is pyramidal, with a broad base at the primary level moving precipitously through the secondary level to a narrow apex at the tertiary level. Approximately 23 per cent of primary school graduates enters secondary institutions while less than 3 per cent of those who leave secondary school enter tertiary levels of education. The recent education policy in most countries which advocates an expansion of access to basic and primary education at the expense of secondary and tertiary education is based on a fallacious assumption that the most productive or functional level of education in Africa is the primary level, with the contrary holding true for the higher and tertiary levels. Implementation of this policy, unless carefully monitored, would saturate the economy with primary school leavers while only a handful of university and technical level graduates would be available with few skills to confront the integrated and technology-driven global economy.
37. The adult literacy rate of less than 50 per cent in Africa is the lowest in the world. In 1990, the adult literacy rate of males was 61 per cent while that of females was 41 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. There is a high level of illiteracy among women, a serious impediment to development in the region. In most countries, the formal education system is still too small - or too few pupils emerge from it successfully - to reduce the absolute number of illiterates, while out-of-school non-formal education programmes are not sufficiently widespread to compensate. The continued crisis in the education sector can be explained, to a large extent, by the sharp decline in expenditure on education and the rapid population growth. Levels of illiteracy in the region have steadily been on the increase since the beginning of the last decade and are projected to reach 146.8 million by the year 2000, compared to 132.3 million in 1980.
38. The educational process reinforces existing gender inequalities which in turn shapes the perceptions that influence curriculum designers, textbook writers, audio-visual aids designers as well as teachers and pupils. Thus decisions on what is to be learnt at what level and by who and delivered by who are male-dominated. This renders the curriculum inappropriate in relation to gender.
- (a) Training
39. Through training, several member States, in partnership with some bilateral agencies and United Nations organizations, have made some initiatives towards strengthening the capacities of African women. Some of these initiatives include training and extension services, access to credit and new technologies, and research and policy support. ECA's African Centre for Women, in collaboration with United Nations agencies and regional organizations, has also made efforts to strengthen the capacities of women farmers and entrepreneurs through staff training; training of extension workers; training women in technical and income-generating skills and food processing; training of women's groups and training of non-literate women through the use of audio-visual materials. **Vocational and technical education must be infused into the curriculum and implemented as part of the mainstream of education.**

(b) Science and technology

40. Paragraph 191 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies states that women should be viewed as users and agents of change in science and technology, and their technological and managerial skills should be enhanced in order to increase national self-reliance in industrial production and to promote innovations in productive design, product adaptation and production techniques. In a number of African countries, measures have been introduced to increase women's participation and equity between the sexes through revision of the school curricula and the promotion of equal opportunities in vocational training. However, the involvement of women in science and technology and their contribution to the process of industrialization is still minimal. **Women must play a meaningful role in this process from the conceptualisation to final product development.**
41. Although the low level of development in science and technology in the region affects the socio-economic well-being of the populations, the lives of women who are overburdened with the responsibilities of sustaining the livelihoods of their families are even more burdensome. In both rural and urban areas, women shoulder heavy and laborious tasks of agricultural activities, which could be greatly eased by the adoption of simple and appropriate technologies. The direct linkage between access to and application of science and technology and the lives of women cannot be overemphasized. There is no doubt that science and technology are the driving forces of economic and social development, **hence the need to include the direct involvement of women.** Technology is gradually changing African societies and it is essential that women benefit from it.

C. WOMEN, CULTURE, RELIGION THE FAMILY AND SOCIALIZATION

42. African societies are products of a unique historical evolution, enriched by diverse cultures, languages and composed of different ethnic or religious communities. Individuals within those societies have their collective identities as members of families, communities, ethnic or religions groups, nations and increasingly, a global society. The delicate balance between the rights of the individual and the society, and the groups within a society ~~should~~ **must** be respected. ~~In particular, there should be active encouragement for the social integration of the disadvantaged, particularly women, the vulnerable and the marginalized in society, in order to reconnect and integrate them into the community, through the enhancement of their potential and by making all institutions of societies more accessible to them. This should be done within the framework of their full participation in decisions that affect them.~~ **There must be active promotion and protection of the rights of individuals within the family and society. This must be done within a framework of shared values in order to promote and protect social diversity, stability, welfare and advancement towards a society for all.**

The family should recognize the woman with a disability as a full member of the family. Cultural and religious practices that portray the woman with disability as a curse from the ancestors and gods should be done away with. Other siblings should be socialized to look at the woman with a disability positively and with love. These positive family values will be carried to the community and the world at large. The religious institutions should also help in positive portrayal of women with disabilities. Fathers should be active participants in the upbringing of their disabled daughters.

(a) Culture

43. **African culture is dynamic.** In Africa, heavy responsibilities fall disproportionately on women who have had to assume increasingly new roles in addition to their traditional ones. ~~The role of the women in holding the family fabric and functions together is therefore a critical one.~~ On the other hand, men have been losing some of their traditional roles without taking on new ones. This has resulted in inordinate family dynamics such that the working hours of the woman have increased while the hours spent by men working for the well-being of the family have greatly decreased. ~~It is thus necessary to address this imbalance by encouraging men to share family responsibilities for the well-being of women, men and the family as a whole.~~ **It is thus necessary for men to share family responsibilities to redress this imbalance for the well-being of the family.** ~~At the same time, some cultures often continue to perpetuate traditional practices that are harmful to the health of women.~~ **At the same time some cultures and religions perpetuate beliefs and practices that infringe on the rights of women and are harmful to their well-being.** ~~In this connection, some countries have adopted legal and constitutional measures aimed at ameliorating the situation of women by providing access to education and better quality of life. A strategy for information, education and communication (IEC) aiming at improving the image and role of African women through the media and school manuals should be developed.~~ **In this connection, some countries have adopted legal and constitutional measures aimed at eliminating these practices.**

RELIGION

Culture and tradition in Africa are greatly influenced by religion and religious beliefs. The development of a healthy society is the responsibility of both men and women, and the role of religion in this respect is critical. Misinterpretation of religious texts and religious intolerance often lead to conflict situations and perpetuation of the oppression of women. In these situations the rights and well-being of women have been compromised.

(b) The family

44. . The International Year of the Family, 1994 in which the "International Family Charter" has been formulated by United Nations Member States and which will be adopted in Paris in December 1994, focuses on one of humankind's oldest social institutions. ~~yet the pressures and rapid changes of today have contributed to a breakdown in the central role of the African family. Traditionally, the family is the provider of values, behaviour, character formation, the means for economic progress and cultural values that influence work attitudes, ethics and accountability for the individual and society. The family is the basic unit of the society which establishes behavioural patterns, attitudes, and cultural values that influence the conduct of individuals in society. Various factors have contributed to a change in the nature and concept of the African family. To this end, the extended working hours of the woman is a reality that must be addressed in order to balance the family and professional responsibilities. Politically, traditional leadership among African families is a link between communities, enhancing tolerance and bridging ethnic and political differences.~~ Contemporary problems have greatly challenged the fibre of the African family, e.g. economic deterioration has impoverished many households. Unemployment and migration to urban centres have disrupted family relations. ~~and family social systems.~~ As a consequence, young family members have lost the social, economic and emotional support of the family and often resort to delinquent behaviour and drug abuse. **Violence against and girls within the**

family is a fundamental violation of human rights. Much of this violence has remained unreported and unaddressed.

45. In addition, recurrent natural disasters, civil strife and ethnic rivalries conflicts have created serious hardship for families. The displacement of families during these crises deprives them of the support of the extended family system and this has serious social and cultural implications. ~~Families are~~ **The family is** the primary source of economic and social protection for those who cannot support themselves due to disability, illness, age, unemployment, displacement ~~or~~ **and** other causes. In this context, the burden falls disproportionately on women who have had to ~~assume increasingly other roles~~ **increasingly assume greater responsibilities** in addition to their traditional ones. ~~When family support is not available, the community or~~ **Governments** must provide assistance through social welfare and social protection schemes and programmes ~~including targeted programmes on women especially~~ **targeted at women**. Single-parent, particularly single-mother families make up a large proportion of the poor in many African societies in recent times. ~~Governments and community organizations~~ should make particular efforts to ensure that single-parent families receive the social support they need ~~either~~ in the form of economic support for the family ~~or~~ **and** child-care support for a single working parent.

(c) Socialisation

46. ~~Socialization is the process by which a child is taught the roles he or she is to play in society.~~ **Socialization is the process by which an individuals value system, self perception and role definition are established.** ~~This process determines how adult men and women behave as chief agents of socialization in families, schools and communities. In Africa, roles assigned to men and women are pre determined and different.~~ The family as ~~an~~ **the primary agent** of socialization assigns different status, values and roles to girls and boys. Discrimination against women and girls starts before birth with parental and societal attitudes that promote a preference for sons over daughters. **In many African countries, women's disadvantaged position, translates into low self esteem, socio-economic deprivation, low political motivation and lop-sided educational policies, which blur women's participation and contribution to society.** Young women and girls should be accorded equal opportunities to grow and to develop their full potential in their productive and reproductive roles. There must be concerted effort to promote a cultural environment where girls and boys grow and work together as equal partners for sustainable development and peace. ~~In many African countries, women's culturally disadvantaged position, low self esteem, lack of confidence coupled with lack of time and low motivation limit their capacity to take advantage of opportunities available to them in order to alleviate poverty.~~ Social and cultural traditions and practices should be reformed towards a common civil code that upholds the dignity of women as equal partners with men in the family including ~~removal~~ **elimination** of gender bias in matters of marriage, divorce, **child** custody and property rights.

D. WOMEN'S HEALTH, REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (INCLUDING FAMILY PLANNING) AND POPULATION

47. The 1992 Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population. Family and Sustainable Development stated, *inter alia*, that population policies and programmes should be part of sustainable development strategies. **The Programme of Action of ICPD 1994 moved this further (principle 2) to recognise "that human beings are at the centre of sustainable development.** But the inability to integrate population factors in African development plans effectively, in a bid to harmonize population and economic growth

rates, still persists. Africa had an estimated population of 644 million in 1992 which is expected to grow at annual rate of 2.9 per cent to the year 2000. The region has the world's highest fertility rate, the lowest life expectancy (49 years for males and 52 for females), the highest infant mortality rate (114 deaths per 1000 live births); the highest maternal mortality rate and the highest dependency ratio 47 per cent under 15 years and only 3 per cent over 65). **In addition, unsafe abortion accounts for up to 30% of maternal mortality in some African countries.** ~~In addition,~~ In the 1980s, population growth rates exceeded economic growth rates in 32 African countries. The gap between fertility and mortality is widening; it doubled between 1972 to 1994 and is expected to double again by 2017. These demographic trends have had many negative consequences on the health and quality of women's lives. The unavailability of adequate health services and inaccessibility to information, coupled with the presence of chronic diseases such as malaria and malnutrition, leave many women unable to cope with the physical demands of pregnancy **and also lead to high incidence of low birth weight babies.** Consequently, maternal morbidity is widespread and the life time risk of maternal death for African women is one in 20 compared to one in 10,000 in developed countries. The emergence of HIV/AIDS and the multiple effects it has on women adds another dimension to their already vulnerable health status. The rising rates of unwanted and unplanned pregnancies among women under 20 years of age not only compromise their reproductive health but deny a majority of them opportunities to complete their education. **Teenage pregnancy with the attendant high risk, female morbidity e.g. visico vaginal fistula (VVF), infertility, female genital mutilation, all constitute important public health problems in the region.** ~~and acquire decision-making skills which will enable them to make informed choices about their fertility.~~

Women with disabilities are first and foremost women with reproductive needs. Health facilities and family planning services should be made available to them by making the structures barrier free and providers friendly to women with disabilities. Women with disabilities should be recognised as people who know their needs and should be consulted when planning services for them.

48. In this context, population-related policies and programmes in Africa must strive to improve the status of women while at the same time seeking to reduce the rates of population growth, infant and child mortality and maternal mortality. Therefore, the full participation and partnership of both men and women is required in both their productive and reproductive lives, including shared responsibilities in the care and nurturance of children as well as the experience of reproductive health and rights, as defined in **Paragraph 7.6 of the ICPD 1994 document.** In this context, the provision of quality family planning services is essential. Such services must ensure that both men and women have the right to be informed and have access to safe, effective and affordable methods of family planning of their choice, at each stage of the reproductive life cycle, because family planning is not only a policy of limitation of pregnancy but a policy of prevention and protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Thus, the complete integration of the full range of reproductive health services in the primary health care systems as well as their decentralized delivery and management will contribute significantly to the promotion of safe motherhood for women and the achievement of responsible parenthood for both men and women.
49. While it is acknowledged that African economies can no longer provide free health services to all, it is imperative likewise to acknowledge that a very large proportion of women constitute the poorest of the poor. It is therefore necessary to target subsidized health services to such women who also carry the burden of providing health care to their families, in order to improve their situation. To reach these objectives, IEC strategies and

efficient services in the field of family health should be adopted to promote family planning and improve maternal and child health, particularly in the rural areas.

E. WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

50. ~~Widespread evidence from the African region indicates that poverty, population growth and environmental degradation are inextricably intertwined. Poverty is a major cause and consequence of environmental degradation and is compounded by scarcity and depletion of resources for the initiation, stimulation and promotion of sustainable development for a growing population.~~ There is a need for a new development paradigm that combines environmental sustainability with gender equality. Such a paradigm should also stop the indiscriminate and undemocratic exploitation of natural resources at the national and international level that results in the marginalisation of people rather than development of people. In the absence of alternative means of livelihood, poverty is strongly linked to the mismanagement of natural resources and the consequent environmental pressure which results in environmental degradation. Unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, both in developed and developing countries, do not reflect adequate concern for environmental conservation and rehabilitation in developing countries. Natural resources are central to the livelihood of poor rural households and it is women who are responsible for processing and, to a lesser but increasing extent, growing and processing agricultural products. Women are key environmental managers, with profound knowledge of plants, animals and ecological processes with which they are intimately involved. Poor women often have no choice but to exploit natural resources in order to survive even though they may possess knowledge to protect the environment and its sustainability.

There is need to make women with disabilities visible in their role as managers and users of the environment.

51. At The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in 1992 culminated in the recognition of the crucial role of women in sustaining the physical, natural and socio-economic environment. UNCED adopted the "*Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable Development*" as elaborated in chapter 24 of Agenda 21. Experiences in many parts of Africa have shown that women play a critical role in environmental management, conservation and protection. They are also the first to suffer as environmental changes affect their ability to obtain firewood, energy, water, food and other resources for household and economic activities. Ongoing rapid environmental and economic degradation as well as natural and man-made disasters in Africa drastically affect the lives of women and children in rural and urban areas. Regrettably, women have been largely absent in decision making and in the implementation of environmental projects and programmes. Furthermore, their commitment, experiences and knowledge in natural resources management and environmental protection has not been recognized. Key concern for promoting women's role in natural resources management should focus on their access to and control over natural resources such as land, water and energy. A crucial constraint for women's involvement in both agriculture and environmental activities is their lack of natural resource tenure-rights, information, extension services and training in natural resource management and sustainable agriculture. Lack of appropriate technology and lack of recognition and legitimization of indigenous science and technology, particularly women's knowledge, has contributed to environmental degradation, food insecurity and increased women's work. The direct link between women, natural resources, appropriate science and technology and sustainable development cannot be overemphasized.

51.(bis) Women, Human Settlements and Sustainable Development

1) LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Despite women's active role in the management and creation of the urban and rural environment, they are discriminated against with respect to their access to and control over land and property. Traditions and religious practices more than laws prevent women inheriting and controlling land and buildings on an equal basis with men. Women in Africa work on land over which they have no right or control. Their poverty cannot change unless they gain something out of the work they do. Women need land to be used as collateral when they want to borrow money from banks. Women's equal rights in this respect must be treated as a fundamental human right, with the full backing of laws, legal advice services, public awareness campaigns and human rights education.

2) SHELTER AND FORCED EVICTIONS

One of the most basic human rights is the right to a place to live and the right not to be forcibly evicted.

Women are not equitably involved in the decision making of the design of the home, the choice of the area to live in, the planning and development of the neighbourhood and even more importantly, the planning, development and maintenance of our villages, towns, municipalities and cities. There are few women architects but they are seldom involved when houses are built. Women have useful views on what residential houses should look like to cater to children's and women's needs.

Forced evictions affect both men and women although women are the ones most affected because of their gender-assigned roles in the home.

F. THE POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

52. Democracy is instrumentally linked to human rights and, as defined in the 1993 Vienna Programme of Action, it is based on the freely expressed will of people (men, women and youth) to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems. In Africa, the process of democratization has been put in motion with varying success. Given the long-standing discrimination against women in Africa, specific and critical measures should be taken to enable women's full participation in decision making as well as access to all organizations of society. The concept of civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights has provided individuals and groups subjected to discrimination with the means for correcting injustice and enhancing social integration. African Governments can promote this process by creating a climate of tolerance for the rights of all persons, particularly women, by clearly stating the rights which all can expect to enjoy and by ensuring that their legal systems are open to all and effective as remedy for limitations on those rights.

53. Women constitute half of humankind and throughout the world they enter all areas of activity, thereby modifying humankind's vision of the world. Women therefore are half of its resource of talent, ability and potential, and their participation in decision making is logical because they are the major contributors to national economies through their paid and unpaid labour; politically, half of those served and represented by governments are women.

Women's participation in the decision-making process worldwide has been one of those areas where there has been little notable progress. In 1993, only six countries had women heads of government while the average proportion of women in parliaments worldwide had dropped to 10 from 12 per cent in 1989.

54. In Africa, the low representation of women in the political decision-making process can be attributed mainly to socio-cultural perceptions and inhibitions; lack of finances; lack of political commitment on the part of women; lack of goodwill by men; lack of civic education; multiple roles of women and gender stereotypes; and lack of rural infrastructure. Under the circumstances, women are denied the opportunity to play their economic and intellectual roles to the fullest extent, besides that of wife and mother. Another impediment to women's participation in the political decision-making process is the high illiteracy rate among women in the region. This has repercussions on women's awareness, as well as on their level of participation in political life. This means that the bulk of political activity by women is carried out mostly by their educated elite, which constitutes a very tiny proportion of the total population of women. The limited participation by women in political life is closely associated with the less visible factors such as uneven distribution of roles and responsibilities between men and women, persistent differentiation in the field of training and occupation and the economic dependency of women.

Women with disabilities should be included among the nominated members of parliaments in all countries. Ten percent of all policy bodies dealing with issues concerning women should be women with disabilities. This would ensure their visibility as well as give them a voice.

55. Similarly, both at the regional and international levels, the representation of women is still low especially at the higher levels of professional categories. This situation persists despite the fact that the majority of African countries have ratified various United Nations conventions supporting the empowerment of women. Thus whereas globally there are a few women heading international organizations such as UNHCR and UNFPA, no African regional organizations has appointed women to the top echelon of their hierarchy. Notwithstanding the fact that the entry of women in their employment ranks has been facilitated by the establishment of women's units, organizations such as OAU, ECA, PTA, ECOWAS and ADB need to tap the immense potential and alternative world-view and perspectives of health management, economic development and conflict resolution, among others, that women have and which should be used in solving the multiplicity of the region's problems.
56. Policies to promote social and political integration must guarantee opportunities for women's full participation in decisions that affect their interests. A guiding objective in this very critical area of concern is the need to engender and strengthen factors that promote the full participation of women in power structures and decision making at all levels. This should encompass the participation of women in a wide range of organizations and institutions in the public and private sectors. This is one of the most critical areas of this Platform in terms of its potential for strengthening democracy, for ensuring equality in the long term and for enriching the development process with diversity and innovation. Several initiatives have been taken within the region towards enhancing popular participation; for instance, the Khartoum Declaration of 1988 which was the outcome of the International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development, attended by African policy and decision makers. Similarly, the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s was very specific on the measures that have to be undertaken in this field. Another milestone was the Arusha Declaration of 1990 (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation) which serves as a guideline for governments, NGOs, grass-roots

organizations, youth and women's groups, etc., for the implementation of the principles of the Charter, namely human rights, democracy, development of a civil society, good governance and accountability.

G. WOMEN'S LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

57. The ~~issue~~ **concept** of human rights is fundamental to all aspects of human development. It is a fundamental principle of the United Nations, its Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights are inalienable birthrights for every human being regardless of race, religion, creed, nationality or sex and they are not dependent on the State. Since 1949, numerous human rights instruments and resolutions have been proclaimed. The numerous resolutions in favour of equal rights ~~for~~ of women and girls, **the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African Heads of State and Government Declaration on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** are all guidelines for improving the legal and human rights status for women. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, now signed by over 34 countries in the African region, explicitly acknowledges that extensive discrimination against women, which continues to exist, violates the principle of equality of rights and respect for human dignity.
58. Most African countries have provided in their constitutions for fundamental rights and freedoms to both men and women and have mandated the equality *de jure* for all their citizens in line with provisions of the Convention and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. A recent comparative study on national law on the rights and status of women in the region shows that some progressive changes are taking place in specific areas affecting women but that the changes have been made in a piecemeal and uncoordinated manner thus situations exist where the potential advancement in a certain area is negated by the lack of change in another intricately related area. **It is important to include women with disabilities in any examination of and change in laws and policies concerning the human rights of women.** African countries also have the problem of constitutional rights being abrogated by customary, arbitrary and/or religious laws. For example, there are countries where, regardless of age, employment or civil status, women remain as minors under the guardianship of husbands, fathers ~~or even,~~ brothers ~~or~~ **and even sons**. In some countries, and despite the provisions of the right to work stipulated in labour laws, married women may not work if their husbands refuse on the basis that they are the heads of the households. In others, there are provisions in the laws that a woman who marries a man from another nationality loses her citizenship and this will further complicate the situation with regard to children. While there are countries in which a woman, irrespective of her marital status, can own and manage property in her own right, sue and be sued in her own name, there are countries where a woman cannot appear in court without the permission or the assistance of her husband or male relative.
59. ~~Women's legal and human rights~~ **National laws and policies** in Africa should be evaluated and reformed against the background of the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights. The Conference took historic new steps to promote and protect the rights of women, children and indigenous peoples, etc., and supported the creation of a new mechanism, a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. Paragraph 18 of the Vienna Declaration stated explicitly that the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. It called for the full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex. It further stated

that gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, including those resulting from cultural prejudice and international trafficking are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and must be eliminated. In paragraph 36, the Vienna Declaration underlines the importance of the integration and full participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries in the development process, and reiterates the objectives established on global action for women towards sustainable development in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and also in chapter 24 of Agenda 21. The African Platform for Action fully endorses these objectives and obligations for the legal and human rights of women. **Government should ratify and implement all those international treaties and standards which promote and protect the rights of women and the girl child.**

(a) Women with special needs

60. Despite the increasing pressure for greater participation, large numbers of women continue to be excluded from the benefits of development.
61. Paragraph 277 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies observed that there is an increasing number of categories of women who, because of their special characteristics, experience not only the common problems experienced by all, but also specific difficulties due to either their socio-economic and health conditions, disability, minority status or a combination of these factors.
62. In para. 280, the Nairobi Strategies recommended that additional efforts should be directed towards ensuring the gainful and productive inclusion of these categories of women in mainstream development and in political activities, with priority emphasis being placed on income-generating opportunities. Further, there should be independent and sustained improvement of their condition through the full integration and active participation of women as agents and beneficiaries of development at the same time.
63. During the last decade, the conditions of such special groups of women in Africa have become even worse due to the interplay of a number of external and internal factors, as discussed elsewhere in this Platform for Action.
64. Article 11(e) of the 1979 Women's Convention is explicit on the rights of women with special needs and states that all States Parties should take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment, in order to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women, the same rights in particular "The right of social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work. as well as the right to said leave"
65. **Aged and disabled women, widows, internally displaced persons, women in conflict situation, refugees, girls and adolescents, and female headed households** are normally excluded from participating as full members of the community. Policies and programmes developed for such needy women therefore must be geared towards the social integration of these marginalized and disadvantaged women and to guarantee better opportunities for them.
66. The 1975 Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons and the 1982 World Programme of Action in respect of Disabled Persons provide overall frameworks for action, but also point out that problems specific to women have not yet been fully appreciated by society because they are not fully realized and understood.

- (a) Development strategies, planning, decision making and resource allocation at all levels in order to meet the needs and improve the quality of life of present and future generations;
- (b) All aspects of development planning in order to promote social justice and to eradicate poverty through sustained economic growth in the context of sustainable development.
- (c) Another objective is to raise the quality of life for all people through appropriate population related and human development policies and programmes targeted at the eradication of poverty and human resource development. Since women are generally the poorest of the poor and are at the same time key actors in the development process, a major objective is to eliminate all kinds of gender imbalance and discrimination against women as a prerequisite to eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable human development. ~~a balance between population and available resources.~~
- (d) Achieving a budgetary allocation to women's health issues commensurate with the critical nature and centrality of women's health to the totality of human development.
- (e) Providing preventive preventive and early intervention measures for girls and women (including counseling and education) for diseases affecting them throughout their life cycle.
- (f) Reducing the environmental and occupational hazards that adversely affect women's health, infant and maternal mortality; eradicating traditional practices which are harmful to women's health such as female genital mutilation, widowhood rites, child marriage, etc:
- (g) Supporting research on women's health problems including reproductive health and family planning , and environmental health hazards etc., with the aim of devising effective and appropriate programmes and technology to address these issues.
- (h) Ensuring equitable representation by women in professional and managerial positions in the health sector.

The objectives on HIV/AIDS are to:

Control the scourge of HIV/AIDS by appealing to African Heads of State and Government to implement the Declaration on HIV/AIDS that they adopted in July 1992 in which they decided:

- (a) To sensitize 100 per cent of the adult population by 1993 about HIV/AIDS, how it is transmitted, how to protect themselves and others against it and also ensure that each governments department of health will have prepared a plan of action on the control of the disease;
- (b) To elaborate a plan of action by 1994 on how to control HIV/AIDS in Africa;
- (c) To sensitize women with a view to enable them to negotiate the practice of engaging in protected sexual practices without risk, especially when they know that their sexual partners are not doing so;
- (d) To promote within the family and between partners the spirit of dialogue that permits mutual protection against HIV/AIDS and give the necessary support when one of them is infected with the disease.

93. Proposed actions

- (a) Incorporate population and gender concerns into all national development strategies, plan-policies and programmes and ensure women's full participation as decision makers in these processes;
- (b) Increase the accessibility, availability and affordability of primary health care services and reproductive health facilities and ensure that the design of health interventions takes into account women's multiple responsibilities and the demands on their time;
- (c) Promote social justice and eradicate poverty through people-centred and sustainable economic growth policies as to meet equitably the health needs of women of present and future generations;
- (d) Promote safe womanhood by ensuring pre-natal, peri-natal and post-natal care for the mother's and child's health;
- (e) Promote **affordable and accessible reproductive health services including family planning, and provide appropriate health services for women in their post reproductive years, disabled women with a strong emphasis on Information, Education and Counseling (IEC);** ~~informed family planning services aiming to space, postpone or limit pregnancies, particularly in rural areas and involve men in this process;~~
- (f) **Increase the participation and sharing of responsibilities by men in all aspects of reproductive health care including HIV / AIDS;** ~~Plan a strategy of IEC in the field of prevention of HIV/AIDS at all levels of social structures and particularly in the school system;~~
- (g) Decrease maternal and infantile mortality by 50 per cent of the 1990 levels by the year 2000;
- (h) **Prevent and reduce the incidence of and provide treatment for STDs including HIV / AIDS and their complications such as infertility with special attention to girls and women;**
- (i) **Provide adequate resources for research, documentation and services to address impact of stress, the environment (including the home environment) and occupational hazards on women's health;**

On population, reproductive health and family planning:

- (a) **Provide safe, accessible, affordable and quality reproductive health care including family planning services to all those who need them without discrimination;**
- (b) Adopt or enforce measures to ensure that women and men have the ability to exercise their responsibility and right to decide freely the number and timing of births that they desire;
- (c) Provide timely and accurate information to enable men, women and youth to make informed choices about their sexuality and health;
- (d) Enlist the support of men in safeguarding the reproductive health of their sexual partners through sensitive and appropriate programmes that target men;
- (e) **Provide updated gender sensitive training and information to health care ~~and family planning service~~ providers to empower them to give compassionate,**

- appropriate and timely reproductive health services to women at all stages of their life cycle;
- (f) **Ensure equal** ~~Increase the~~ representation of women as key decision makers at all levels of population and health policy formulation, programming and implementation in order to ensure the incorporation of **balanced** ~~critical~~ gender concerns;
 - (g) **Mobilize and allocate more financial and human resources to the health sector incorporating reproductive health and population—family planning and health sectors** in order to reverse the observed decline in overall health and well-being of women, men , **adolescents** and children;
 - (h) **Integrate reproductive health services in the primary health care systems and adopt innovative approaches which will involve communities as active participants as well as beneficiaries;**
 - (i) **Ensure better reproductive health and including family planning coverage by adopting an integrated development approach through multidisciplinary activities in order to outreach rural families involving the joint efforts of social partners, NGOs and communities;**
 - (j) **Ensure targeted measures on AIDS in the field of awareness, information, education and protection.**

Combat the spread of AIDS by calling upon the Heads of State and Government to implement the Declaration on AIDS and the Child in Africa adopted in July 1992 at the twenty-eighth Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly in Dakar in which the Heads of State and Government decided:

- (a) By 1993, they would have ensured that 100 per cent of every country's adults will know how HIV is transmitted, how to protect themselves and others from infection and to have ensured that every sector of government will have worked out a plan of action to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS;
- (b) By 1994:
 - (i) To have collaborated with their experts to produce a consolidated plan of action for controlling HIV/AIDS in Africa;
 - (ii) To mount awareness-raising activities to ensure negotiating skills for women to practice safe sex techniques especially when they are aware that their spouses/partners are involved in high-risk behaviours;
 - (iii) To organize activities that promote caring relationships within families in a context in which partners will protect each other from HIV and provide support in the event that either partner develops AIDS.

WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ~~NATURAL RESOURCE~~ MANAGEMENT

94. Rationale

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the international community agreed on objectives and actions aimed at integrating women, environment and development. Agenda 21 was conceived and accepted as a response to the major challenges related to the gender dimension of environment and development. The recommendations contained in chapter 24 of Agenda 21 need to be operationalized in order to harmonize the linkages between women, poverty, environment and natural resource management.

95. Objectives

- (a) To ensure that gender/population, environmental and poverty eradication factors are integrated in sustainable development policies, plans and programmes;
- (b) To create awareness among women regarding their dependency on the environment and how this impacts upon the natural resource base;
- (c) To establish, strengthen and maintain institutions responsible for environment and women's issues;
- (d) To mainstream environmental concerns into the planning and policy process.

96. Proposed actions

- (a) Analyze the structural linkages between gender relations, poverty, environment and development and integrate demographic and gender factors into environmental impact assessments and other planning and decision-making processes aimed at achieving sustainable development;
- (b) Undertake measures to enhance the full participation of all relevant groups, especially women, at all levels of decision making to achieve sustainable use of natural resources;
- (c) Ensure that environmental protection laws take due cognizance of women's concerns;
- (d) Teach discerning use of natural resources at all levels of government departments, schools, associations and NGOs, and introduce effective ways of mitigating the ensuing impact on the environment in all development programmes;
- (e) Develop and make available appropriate and affordable technologies which effectively reduce women's workload while protecting the environment;
- (f) Promote, design and disseminate information for appropriate houses in rural and urban areas in order to enhance the internal environment;
- (g) Legitimize, promote and replicate women's understanding and knowledge systems on the environment as well as their traditional techniques for resource utilization in support of their productive and reproductive functions.
- (h) Promote the development of a new environment paradigm that rejects population control programmes as a solution to problems primarily caused by a misallocation of and inequitable distribution of resources within between countries and focus on equitable resource distribution.**
- (i) Ban the dumping and import of toxic wastes as well as industries that polluted and result in the net depletion of resources.**

WOMEN, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(A) RATIONALE

The development and maintenance of the "human habitat" is not possible without the participation of all of us men and women. The social and economic agenda cannot be complete without focusing on human settlement development. Women are crucial in making "human sustainable, environmentally sound" development happen.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Customary laws and religious practices that discriminate against women should be either abolished or amended to include the right of the women to land.
- 2) Women should have the right to control the crops they produce on their so-called "family land." For most families, the husbands sell the crops and spend the money the way they like - drinking or marrying more wives.
- 3) Encourage women to own their own pieces of land so that even after divorce they have some sort of property.
- 4) Women should have the right to inherit clan land which they have been working on before the death of their husbands.
- 5) Ensure that forced evictions are not carried out and that functions of subsistence are respected in the urban transition.
- 6) A new form of structural adjustment is required, a structural adjustment of the international finance institutions, so that they place the priorities of the women, the sustenance of human life and the environment, above the priority of free trade.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- 1) Women's fundamental human right to equitable access to and control of, land and property must be upheld, regardless of customs, laws, traditions and practices relating to inheritance and marriage which would deny such equity.
- 2) Laws and practices relating to enforcement of women's rights to equal treatment must be reconciled through a process of law review and reform which must also be gender-sensitive
- 3) Public programmes of conscientization should be carried out to create awareness of women's rights vis-a-vis tradition. Non-Government Organizations (NGO) should provide information on women's rural and urban land rights at the community level. At the same time, the information media should disseminate information on this to the general public.

- 4) Mechanisms need to be set up for monitoring of implementation of all existing and new conventions relating to these fundamental rights.
- 5) Networking of women to support and promote equal gender right to land and property need to be set up by voluntary action, both within the bureaucracy and at the grass roots.
- 6) National and local authorities should have a policy supporting land allocation to women's groups: Finance institutions should have a policy to provide access to finance to women and women's groups for land, housing and development.
- 7) Carry out specific training and job development for women in formal construction skills, managerial advocacy skills, job development for women within the human settlement field.

THE POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN, DECISION MAKING AND POWER SHARING

97. Rationale

The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic and health conditions are highly critical areas of concern for the Platform for Action. The full participation and partnership of both women and men is required in all aspects of development.

Women in Africa receive much less formal and informal education than men, and at the same time, their knowledge, talent and abilities to cope with a highly adverse environment are hardly ever recognized. Women's inherent knowledge, talent and abilities should be fully recognized as attributes for their active participation in politics and decision-making processes. Similarly, the power relations that impede women's full participation and attainment of healthy and fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society and they should be fully recognized and adequately addressed.

98. Objectives

- (a) ~~To promote solidarity among women;~~
- (b) ~~To initiate and implement policies and programmes that are designed to improve women's access to secure livelihoods and economic resources, alleviate their heavy responsibilities and tasks with regard to farm and housework and remove legal impediments to their full participation in public life;~~ To promote the advancement of women in order to enhance their decision-making capacity at all levels and in all spheres of life.
- (c) To raise social awareness through effective programmes of civic education and mass communication;
- (d) ~~To improve the status of women in order to enhance their decision making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life;~~
- (e) ~~To promote a harmonious partnership between women and men in order to achieve equality and equity;~~
- (f) To increase the numbers of women politicians and parliamentarians.

99. Proposed actions

All development partners and actors should act to empower women and should take concrete actions to eliminate inequalities between men and women by:

- (a) Establishing mechanisms and strengthening chances for women's full and equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the political process, power structures and decision making in each community and society, and enable women to articulate their concerns and needs;
- (c) Adopting appropriate measures to improve women's ability to earn income beyond traditional occupations, achieve economic self-reliance and ensure women's equal access to the labour market and social security systems;
- (d) Adopting specific measures to redress past and present imbalances;
- (e) Mobilizing both women and men to support and promote women candidates at all political levels and support women aspiring to political careers, identify, **enable** and encourage them to take part in politics and governance. **The selection must be based on careful consideration of the commitment of candidates to promote women's interests.**
- (f) Governments should appoint women to decision-making positions in key ministries, such as Foreign Affairs, Defence, **Security and Policy**, Finance, Economic Planning and Development;
- (g) Information and training should be provided to enable women to participate in the political process. **In this regard**, Political parties and pressure groups should encourage women to take part in local and national elections, and other competitive leadership situations;
- (h) Taking further action to correct the low representation of women at the regional level and in the United Nations system, particularly at decision-making levels;
- (i) ~~Taking affirmative action to redress the imbalances between women and men.~~

WOMEN'S LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

100. Rationale

Nearly 20 years ago, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted. As of 20 May 1994, 20 African countries had neither ratified nor implemented it.

The African Platform for Action urges firm political commitment and concrete action towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

In most African countries, violence against women in domestic, private or public places has increased to alarming levels. This is further exacerbated by gender bias in the administration of justice, conflicts which arise between the rights of women and certain traditional and customary practices, cultural prejudices and extremism, **political repression** as well as armed conflicts. **The Government is urged to take immediate action to put an end to this unacceptable situation.** ~~This Platform urges immediate action to put an end to this unacceptable situation.~~

The equal status of African women and their legal and human rights should be integrated into the mainstream of African Governments' legislative, judicial and administrative bodies.

The African Platform for Action endorses and urges action towards the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women, whether overt or covert. It also supports the universal ratification by all States of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and all other international instruments that affect the lives of women and the girl child.

In line with the African Charter and the Vienna Declaration (para. 38), this Platform stresses the importance of working towards the elimination of violence against women in public and private life, the elimination of gender bias in the administration of justice and eradication of any conflicts which may arise between the rights of women and the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices, cultural prejudices and religious extremism and armed conflict. The Platform further endorses the view that violations of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.

101. Objectives

- (a) To empower women with knowledge about their rights, and the ability to attain them;
- (b) To remove discriminative and oppressive laws and fill the gaps by enacting new laws and ensuring their implementation;
- (c) To ensure that **international** conventions and charters on women's rights are implemented. This includes the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Declaration on the Rights of the Child (Dakar Consensus) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women;
- (d) To assess implications of certain penal codes with regard to women's and children's rights.

102. Proposed actions

With regard to women's legal and human rights, actions should be taken to:

- (a) Urge governments which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the African Charter for Human and Peoples Rights and other legal instruments concerning women and organize campaigns to this end **before the World Conference on Women;**
- (b) **Governments are urged to withdraw reservations in the ratification of CEDAW and other international instruments which goes against the objectives and purpose of these instruments.**
- (c) **Governments to adopt strategies for effective implementation and consolidation of internationally accepted norms and standards on women's rights;**
- (d) **Government to reform the judicial system to make it more responsive to gender issues and establish and/or strengthen institutions to support and assist women to enjoy their rights;**
- (e) **Government to socialize boys and girls through the educational system to develop awareness and respect for the equality between the sexes;**
- (f) **Governments to eliminate violence against women and girls and the negative image portrayed by the media;**

- (g) Governments to provide accurate information on the ~~situation~~ status of women to human rights bodies and widely disseminate information on women's rights;
- (h) Governments to promote legal literacy and build on the existing initiatives by NGOs to create the necessary infrastructure for reaching women at all levels;
- (i) Governments to introduce and/or strengthen the concepts of human and women's rights at all levels of formal and non-formal education;
- (j) Governments to guarantee the right of all women to buy, sell, own, inherit and administer property;
- (k) **The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women** to introduce the right of petition through the preparation of an optional protocol to the Convention to provide for complaints procedures. **Governments to increase resources to provide training, advisory services and technical assistance in the implementation of the Convention;**
- (l) **Governments to ~~should~~ develop indicators to evaluate the impact of legal literacy programmes;**
- (m) **Governments should set up mobile legal clinics and para-legal services in rural and urban areas to help women understand the provisions and the correct interpretation of laws.**

The media should report on women's issues and collaborate with other partners to create public awareness of human and women's rights.

With regard to violence against women, **governments should acknowledge that the problem of violence against women is a violation of international human rights instruments, and should undertake the following measures:** ~~particular attention should be given to~~

- (a) Adopt and promote the strategic objective to eliminate violence against women, and review existing legislation with a view to making necessary changes to deal with violence;
- (b) Provide training and orientation to police and judicial personnel, doctors, social workers, nurses, **international public officials, peace keeping forces** and others to recognize abuses perpetrated against women, and develop national, **regional and international** strategies to address the causes of violence through the education system and the mass media;
- (c) **Government to organize shelters, protection and support groups and undertake campaigns against violence as well as providing legal assistance to ~~women faced with~~ victims of violence;**
- (d) Support the work of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, and monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (adopted by the General Assembly in December 1993);
- (e) Monitor the situation of violence against women by developing appropriate indicators.
- (f) **Governments are urged to enact specific legislation on violence against women.**
- (g) **Governments to take specific measures against media which portray negative images and stereotypes of women and girls that contribute to violence.**

108. Proposed actions

Peace making, maintenance and education is a life-long process that is based on the concept of partnership between men and women and between people. It expounds and advocates the necessity of eradicating all types of violence in society, at the family and community levels. In this Convention, the proposed actions are to:

Action for peace

- (a) **The governments should** reduce expenditure on armaments and "defence" and reallocate the financial resources so saved to improve science and technology for peaceful development and social services **for women** ;
- (b) ~~Pledge certain proportions of the defence budgets for the promotion of peace and social development;~~
- (c) **Governments should** tie aid to the ratio between military and social expenditures;
- (d) ~~Reinforce these~~ **Government and Non Governmental bodies should promote the positive** aspects of culture which enhance the status and importance of women in the peace process;
- (e) ~~Set aside a regional day for women in positive action for peace;~~
- (f) Identify potential situations of violence in a timely way and take preventive measures to avert it instead of responding only when fighting has actually broken out;
- (g) Provide for the practical empowerment of peacemakers and reconciliation of warring parties through the offer of amnesty and assistance for resettlement and rehabilitation which are more successful than punishment in securing cessation of armed struggles;
- (h) Develop and support programmes to introduce, promote and sustain peace;
- (i) **Governments should** recognize and support the national machineries of women and NGOs to work as pressure groups and mobilize necessary action to ensure that women achieve a critical mass at the national cabinet level in key ministries and departments and in international organizations that make or influence policy with regard to matters related to collective security and peace;
- (j) OAU is further requested to take a more active role in averting, managing and resolving conflicts and participating in peace-keeping - endeavors. To this end, member States are urged not only to support the newly established Mechanism but also to contribute to the Special Fund for Conflict Management and Resolution;
- (k) OAU and ECA should review, monitor and appraise the implementation of the Kampala Action Plan on Women and Peace and periodically convene conferences to assess progress and promote implementation;
- (l) **African Governments should ensure gender parity in peace negotiations and conflict resolution and take concrete steps to provide women and men with the necessary training in this area;**
- (m) **Refugee victims of sexual violence and their families should be provided with adequate medical and psycho - social care, including culturally appropriate counseling facilities;**
- (n) **Procedures for the determination of refugee status, asylum seekers who may have suffered sexual violence should be treated with**

technology and mathematics. The educational process reinforces existing gender inequalities which in turn shapes the perceptions that influence curriculum designers, textbook writers, audio-visual aid designers as well as teachers, methodology, and pupils. Thus decisions on what is to be learned and by who and delivered by who are male-dominated. This renders the curriculum inappropriate in relation to gender.

Widespread evidence from the African region indicates that the health and quality of life of girls becomes even more precarious at adolescence, as she is faced with the risks of exploitation and unwanted pregnancy, leading on to rejection, abortion and discontinuation of education. Faced with rejection by an unsympathetic society, she is then exposed to the streets and the risks of sexually transmitted diseases with its attendant health implications.

The economic conditions as well as the high poverty ratio in developing nations coupled with the socio-cultural values have brought about increased burdens on girls who have at an early age to contribute to the family fortunes either by hawking, trading or being married off early at a price. All these and traditional practises that are harmful to the girls such as infibulation and puberty rites and the burden of household chores, constrain the development and attainment of full potentials of the girl child.

Rationale

The girl child of today is the woman of tomorrow. In order that she may grow up with the health, confidence and education necessary for her to take her place with dignity and equal to man in society, special attention needs to be focused on her.

The girl child with disabilities needs the special help of government to ensure that she has access to all the special devices needed even when her family is poor.

Objective

- 1) To promote a positive image of the girl child at the level of the family, the community and nation.
- 2) To ensure the girl child is allowed equal access to formal and non-formal education from school to tertiary levels.
- 3) The girl child with disabilities should be prepared to live independently and should not be seen as dependent for life.

Proposed Actions

- a) Sensitize the community organisations from local to national levels on the needs of the Girl Child.
- b) Men and boys must be targeted for sensitization on the needs of the Girl Child as a process of girl's empowerment.
- c) Harmful traditional customs and practices impeding the social, economic health and educational well-being and developments of the Girl Child be eliminated.

- (d) **Empowering girls with knowledge, information, training as well as organisational skills to articulate better their needs and defend their interests should be given priority.**
- (e) **Research and documentation for deeper understanding of the issues that affect the advancement of girls call for community research in specific areas that have been neglected over the past decades.**
- (d) **To abide by and make explicit plans of action for implementation of the Women's and Rights of the Child Convention pertaining to the Rights of the Girl Child**
- (e) **Girls who fall pregnant while schooling should be allowed to continue their education.**
- (f) **Steps to eliminate gender stereotyping in school curriculum should be taken urgently.**
- (g) **Education of the girl child with disabilities should be free and compulsory to ensure that her needs are met regardless of her family's economic status.**

9. MAINSTREAMING OF RACE AND SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA

109. Rationale

It is not enough simply to define the critical issues and areas of concern. Proper implementation and monitoring of the Platform for Action requires information, data and continuous research for updating information. Furthermore, women as stake holders need to have knowledge and the statistics with which to assert their rights to mobilize for change and to make informed choices. In addition, the concept of mainstreaming and integration requires development of indicators and guidelines to guide policy makers, planners and the actors in the socio-economic, cultural and political sectors.

110. Objectives

- (a) **To effect research as a necessary component for the development of knowledge towards the understanding of gender issues in Africa;**
- (b) **To develop data that can quantify and evaluate women's and men's work;**
- (c) **To mainstream the use and application of gender and age disaggregated data of policy makers, planners and programme implementers in all sectors;**
- (d) **To establish in all member States reliable and updated data bases on women.**
- (e) **To achieve visibility of women at all levels in data bases.**
- (f) **In order to achieve equity in developing and distributing of resources sex and race indices must be reflected in data which the latter is still an issue.**
- (g) **To encourage governments, research institutions and the business sectors to develop sustainable resources -- human, technological and intellectual -- for research at all levels and in all fields engaged in by women.**

- (h) To empower women through the research process by developing research capacity that will be participatory, accessible, and informative to the decision-making processes at local, regional, and national levels.
- (i) To develop methodologies or instruments that will enhance women's capacities to be partners in research and unleash their potential.
- (j) To develop and maintain databases that are user-friendly and accessible to communities and different linguistic national groups on an ongoing basis.

111. Proposed actions

- (a) Facilitate national central bureaux of statistics to incorporate gender statistics units in their structures;
- (b) Improve the collection and dissemination of gender and age disaggregated information on target groups and target areas in order to facilitate the design of focused programmes and activities consistent with the identified needs;
- (c) Ensure and facilitate the mainstreaming and application of gender and age-disaggregated data by all development agents;
- (d) Strengthen the data gathering capability of women machineries and sectoral gender focal points;
- (e) Improve skills for the collection of gender statistics and issue guidelines and indicators for data and information development for and about women;
- (f) Enhance the capacity and strengthen the advisory, coordinating, operational and research roles of the African Centre for Women.

B. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS AND MOBILIZATION

112. Implementation of the African Platform for Action will require the mobilization of all available human, physical and financial resources internationally, regionally and nationally. Investment in people and, *inter alia*, in infrastructure, education, health, employment, food production and food security, including proper functioning of institutions, are prerequisites for the success of the implementation process. Such mobilization will have to be based on short-, medium- and long-term objectives and perspectives. In addition, commitments from the central actors should be reflected in specific and substantial allocations proportionate to their operating budgets. The main rationale for assistance to African countries to implement the Platform for Action should be based on ethics of mutual benefit and collective responsibility. Africa and its partners in development must recognize the reciprocal responsibilities in adopting criteria for the allocation of resources and the need to foster South-South cooperation. In Africa and the least developed countries, existing and new strategies towards a durable solution to the crippling external debt should be applied in a timely and flexible manner through measures such as debt consultation, debt-for-social development swaps, etc. Appropriate emphasis should be placed on bilateral and multilateral assistance for poverty alleviation and the economic empowerment of women, for example through job creation programmes; credit schemes for the poor, for women and the self-employed; rural employment generation programmes, non-farm employment in the women-dominated rural sector; programmes for education; nutrition and health.

113. Alongside these measures, the issues of accountability, transparency and mismanagement of resources must be openly addressed. African Governments should endeavour to explain economic reform and adjustment measures to their citizens, focusing on how these measures affect the lives of people. Governments must also introduce and publicize measures aimed at encouraging accountability within their own operations as well as in the operations of NGOs. In turn, women's organizations and NGOs can also exert pressure on governments to avoid the mismanagement of resources in order to free these resources for more pressing and priority national needs.
114. Resources will be mobilized from the following sources:
- (a) Governmental and intergovernmental: In the national budgets, provision should be made to fund the proposed actions for implementation on a sustainable basis;
 - (b) Women's organizations, national and international NGOs: To show their commitment towards the success of the follow-up to the Platform for Action, individual women, women's organizations and men should also make provision for funding the proposed actions;
 - (c) Development partners:
 - (i) *Bilateral partners*: There is growing consensus among countries in the African region that at least 20 per cent of ODA should be committed to human development programmes, as compared with the present average of 7 per cent. Africa's development partners should commit themselves to meeting this target and to match the increased allocations that African countries will make to human and social development fields. Africa's social development, particularly through the economic empowerment of women, will further require the availability of new and additional resources. This Platform endorses the setting of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of industrialized countries as the target for official development assistance (ODA). This is a valid target that should be implemented and enhanced within specific time frames. In addition, the 20-20 concept, including a call to donor countries and agencies, to allocate a minimum of 20 per cent of their development assistance, and on developing countries to also allocate the same percentage of their budget to social sector expenditure, is also supported, but with a special focus on women;
 - (ii) *Multilateral financial institutions*: Multilateral partners should establish special windows for financing the implementation of the Platform for Action. In particular, such windows should offer easy access to women entrepreneurs;
 - (iii) *The United Nations system* should incorporate a strong funding component in their programme of work and regular budgets in support of the implementation of the activities of the Platform for Action. It is proposed that such budgetary allocations should be between 20 and 25 per cent.
115. The proposed financial arrangements should address the stated objectives and the proposed actions in the Platform for Action. At the national level, African Governments should apply gender-sensitive planning and evaluation to all public spending including identification of the amounts directed to benefit women, and their impact. At the international, regional and sub regional levels, emphasis should be on evaluating and coordinating the programmes undertaken by United Nations agencies and regional and sub regional intergovernmental organizations.

C. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

116. The importance of core structures for the effective implementation of the strategies and plans of action for the advancement of women was recognized at the onset of the Decade for Women. Experiences since then have confirmed not only the need for such structures, but also the basic requirements that can make them more effective, especially in view of the need to bring women's concerns into the mainstream of development. These requirements include strong political will, locating them at the highest level of decision making and giving them high technical capabilities and adequate resources. Institutional arrangements for implementation and monitoring of the African Platform for Action have to be clearly identified, bearing in mind that gender issues and concerns cut across all areas of development and therefore involve multiple institutions and actors at all levels. However, a core structure with a direct mandate of coordinating, monitoring and evaluating implementation of, and accountability to the Platform for Action is required at international, regional and national levels. A review of the current institutional arrangements in support of programmes for the advancement of women is a useful starting point. The core structure for the implementation of the Platform for Action should have the mandate for advocacy and for ensuring the mainstreaming of gender concerns in all sectors, programmes and at all levels; monitoring, evaluation and accountability required at all levels.
- (a) National machineries for the advancement of women
117. The need to monitor the empowerment of women in all areas of life through the establishment of responsible institutions has been recognized and called for by African Governments. Several global and regional conferences have outlined the purposes and duties of such institutions and the strategies to accelerate the advancement of women. National machineries are defined as institutions or formal entities recognized by governments and entrusted with particular responsibility for the advancement of women and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in monitoring the ramifications of gender relations in a given society, and acting as advocates on behalf of women. Africa also has a rich history of grass-roots women's organizations.
118. Several reports and studies indicate that in mid-1980s, Africa had over 50 different types of institutions. The growth of such machineries has continued and by the end of the 1980s, there were about 166 machineries. To date, there are approximately 650 to 800 NGOs dealing with gender issues and the advancement of women. Most of these are independent grass-root groups dealing with women's issues in different capacities. A number of them are attached to the ruling political parties and there are a few cases where NGOs and mixed governmental and non-governmental organizations are recognized as national machineries. These institutions are engaged in activities ranging from welfare concerns of women to improving women's access to resources. A number of them, especially those tied to political parties, have also been engaged in advocacy and awareness-creation on women's concerns. National machineries in Africa have covered a lot of ground towards the implementation of the Nairobi and Arusha Strategies.
119. This Platform proposes that institutional arrangements for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its objectives and actions should be based on three major activities, namely:
- (a) Strengthening, mainstreaming and harmonizing the existing institutions at all levels, through increased human and financial resources;
- (b) Expanding the mandates and operations of existing institutions (e.g., mainstreaming women's needs and perspectives, defining clear mandates, policies

and management commitment and establishing strong independent women's networks and technical capacities);

(c) Creating new institutional arrangements, where necessary.

(d) Sub regional level

120. At the sub regional level, several agencies and treaties exist that can be instrumental to the implementation of the Platform for Action. These include, inter alia, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Preferential Trade Area of Eastern and Southern African States (PTA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). These agencies present good opportunities for empowering and mainstreaming women in the economic area and for eliminating gender biases in their operations.

(e) Regional level

121. Since 1975, United Nations regional commissions have been mandated by General Assembly resolution 3520 (XXX) "to accord special attention to government programmes and projects aimed at the full integration of rural women in development". In the African region, in 1978, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference of Ministers, established the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW), now the African Centre for Women (ACW). The Africa Regional Coordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) is a subsidiary body of the ACW with subregional representation by 15 member States. In addition, ECA also established committees for the implementation of plans of action for the integration of women in development, within the framework of the existing Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) at the subregional level. Regionally, several NGOs exist whose activities are focused on the advancement of women in Africa, for example, AFWE, FEMNET, FAWE, WLDAF, etc.

(e) United Nations

122. United Nations system-wide coordination on gender issues at the policy level is largely the responsibility of existing United Nations commissions and committees such as the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Commission on Human Rights, the Population Commission, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). At the level of programmes for the advancement of women, numerous specific United Nations organizations and agencies are mandated to focus largely on gender issues, inter alia, UNIFEM, INSTRAW. already pointed out earlier since the 1970s all United Nations organizations are required to include a strong gender component in all their programmes and activities.

VI. FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION

123. An assessment and monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the African Platform for Action should be put in place. This should be in the form of a Committee comprised of member States that constitute ARCC, IGOs (e.g., PTA, SADC, ECOWAS, etc.), the Joint Secretariat (i.e., OAU, ECA and ADB) and representatives from the relevant United Nations agencies. The body should meet annually and should present a progress report to the ECA Conference of Ministers, the OAU Council of Ministers and the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government every two years. ECA would act as the secretariat to the Committee. To foster the dissemination of information relating to the process and progress

of implementation of the Platform for Action, the publication of a regional report on African women should be envisaged.

(A) RATIONALE

The development and maintenance of the "human habitat" is not possible without the participation of all of us men and women. The social and economic agenda cannot be complete without focusing on human settlement development. Women are crucial in making "human sustainable, environmentally sound" development happen.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Customary laws and religious practices that discriminate against women should be either abolished or amended to include the right of the women to land.
- 2) Women should have the right to control the crops they produce on their so-called "family land." For most families, the husbands sell the crops and spend the money the way the like - drinking or marrying more wives.
- 3) Encourage women to own their own pieces of land so that even after divorce they have some sort of property.
- 4) Women should have the right to inherit clan land which they have been working on before the death of their husbands.
- 5) Ensure that forced evictions are not carried out and that functions of subsistence are respected in the urban transition.
- 6) A new form of structural adjustment is required, a structural adjustment of the international finance institutions, so that they place the priorities of the women, the sustenance of human life and the environment, above the priority of free trade.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

- 1) Women's fundamental human right to equitable access to and control of, land and property must be upheld, regardless of customs, laws, traditions and practices relating to inheritance and marriage which would deny such equity.
- 2) Laws and practices relating to enforcement of women's rights to equal treatment must be reconciled through a process of law review and reform which must also be gender-sensitive
- 3) Public programmes of conscientization should be carried out to create awareness of women's rights vis-a-vis tradition. Non-Government Organizations (NGO) should provide information on women's rural and urban land rights at the community level. At the same time, the information media should disseminate information on this to the general public.
- 4) Mechanisms need to be set up for monitoring of implementation of all existing and new conventions relating to these fundamental rights.
- 5) Networking of women to support and promote equal gender right to land and property need to be set up by voluntary action, both within the bureaucracy and at the grass roots.

- 6) National and local authorities should have a policy supporting land allocation to women's groups: Finance institutions should have a policy to provide access to finance to women and women's groups for land, housing and development.
- 7) Carry out specific training and job development for women in formal construction skills, managerial advocacy skills, job development for women within the human settlement field.

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