Eighth Session of the Committee on Women and Development

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Report to the Committee on Women and Development on progress in the implementation of the follow-up strategy on the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+15)
I. Background

1. The African Centre for Gender (ACG) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is mandated to follow up on and support implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action.

2. The Eighth Africa Regional Conference on Women held from 16 to 20 November 2009 in Banjul undertook a specific examination of continent-wide progress within the time frame of 2005-2009. The regional review revealed that government implementation of various global and continental commitments on gender equality and women empowerment had led to positive changes in the lives of African women. However, while progress had been made on several fronts, it was still not enough to elevate African women to the desired level.

3. At the conclusion of the Regional Conference on Women, an outcome document, “the Banjul Declaration on the Strategies for Accelerating the Implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action” was adopted. The Declaration identified the following seven strategic areas of focus: (a) economic empowerment of women; (b) peace, security and development; (c) violence against women (VAW); (d) representation and participation of women in all areas of decision-making; (e) sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS; (f) climate change and food security; and (g) financing for gender equality.

4. The Seventh Session of the Committee on Women and Development (CWD), held from 17 to 20 May 2011 in Addis Ababa, under the theme “Closing Gaps, Maximizing Opportunities: Beyond Beijing+15”, reviewed a five-year follow-up strategy for implementing the areas of focus of the Banjul Declaration presented by the ACG. The overall objective of this strategy is to provide concrete actions to accelerate implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), focusing on the seven strategic areas agreed in Banjul.

5. To assess the progress of the implementation of this strategy, the ACG administered a comprehensive questionnaire targeting the strategic areas of focus for African member States. Thirty-one member States, namely: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, responded to the questionnaire on the follow-up strategies for accelerating implementation of the Beijing and Dakar platforms for action. This report to the Committee on Women and Development is based on and informed by these responses.

II. Progress in strategy implementation (2010–2013)

6. The seven critical areas of focus for Africa endorsed by the Seventh Session of the Committee on Women and Development are intended to accelerate implementation by African governments of the Beijing Platform for Action as well as other regional and international commitments during the post Beijing+15 era and form the basis of the follow-up strategy. Entrepreneurship and employment are the two pivotal pillars in poverty reduction and acceleration of the economic empowerment of women on the continent. Increased representation and meaningful participation of women in formal and informal peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes would ensure that the differential needs of women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations are addressed sustainably. The adoption and implementation of multisectoral plans to address VAW within the framework of the United Nations
Secretary-General’s “UNiTE to End Violence Against Women and Girls” campaign in Africa will consolidate the gains made in various legislative reforms and advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns undertaken in the region.

7. The seventh session of the CWD proposed that national and regional frameworks on electoral processes should be strengthened; likewise political participation and women’s representation should be promoted and national strategies implemented. The plans and strategies of political parties should ensure at least 50 per cent women’s representation in local government and other positions of power and decision-making. Reducing maternal mortality through effective community management of pregnancy-related interventions, increased availability of emergency obstetric care and skilled attendance during pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery were identified as key to accelerating implementation of the BPfA. Gender should also be mainstreamed into integrated maternal and child health services and should include sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS components to address the vulnerability of women and girls and ensure their access to prevention and treatment.

8. To address climate change and food insecurity, strategies should focus on harnessing women’s local knowledge and expertise to develop gender-responsive policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation, with a focus on agriculture, water resource management, energy, forest use and management and transportation and technology transfer. Equally important is the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into national policies, action plans and other measures on sustainable development and climate change. To ensure financing for gender equality and women’s empowerment, national entities should be supported to incorporate gender perspectives into their programmes, with special attention to: (a) macro-planning instruments that integrate gender analysis and specify gender equality results (b) women’s unpaid work (c) gender-responsive public investment; and (d) gender-sensitive analysis of data. A strategic plan should be formulated for financing of gender equality and women’s empowerment activities; such a plan should be reflected in budget guidelines and decision-making processes such as annual budgeting for the ministries of gender and extrabudgetary allocation.

9. An analysis of the progress made by 31 countries in the implementation of the follow-up strategy to the Beijing+15 review shows significant improvement in five of the seven key strategic focus areas. Climate change and food security as well as financing for gender equality have shown marginal improvement since the 2009 review.

The following sections provide an assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the follow-up strategies, highlighting key achievements and identifying challenges encountered by member States.

**Strategic Area 1: Economic empowerment**

10. African countries have introduced several policies, programmes and projects to accelerate economic empowerment of women in various areas, with a strong focus on agriculture, business development and finance. To address the constraints of women’s access to collateral and credit due to high interest rates, many countries have launched credit schemes and financial initiatives to grant women softer terms of lending as well as remove the requirement for loan collateral. Countries such as Benin and Mauritania have backed these initiatives with institutional, legal and policy frameworks that outline the specific target groups and interventions in place. The first women’s commercial bank in
Ethiopia, ENAT and similar institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia were created with a view to empowering women in business.

11. Projects for enhancing women’s entrepreneurship through capacity development and financial assistance are in place in several countries\(^1\). Morocco and Zimbabwe, in particular, have taken major steps to develop women’s entrepreneurship and encourage women-led trade by enhancing women business ownership and entrepreneurship and facilitating women’s participation in key economic decision-making positions, ensuring employment equity and assisting vulnerable women to participate in and benefit from informal and formal economic activities.

12. Ethiopia and Mali have instituted programmes aimed at strengthening women’s competitiveness and diversification in agriculture. Multifunctional platform projects\(^2\) are also expanding in several West African countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, whose economies are largely agriculture-based.

13. Many poverty reduction programmes are catalysing efforts towards the most vulnerable groups - women farmers, women in the informal sector, migrants, women with disabilities, women in rural areas and older women - through special assistance and support for income-generating activities and vocational programmes. This is the case in Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Morocco and Sudan, where special collaborative programmes are in place.

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

15. Only 12 countries\(^3\) have so far established monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track progress towards the goals of gender parity and women’s economic empowerment at the national level. Djibouti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have recognized the important role played by the African Gender and Development Index developed by the ACG as a powerful policy and planning tool for monitoring progress in the implementation of commitments towards gender equality and women’s empowerment in Africa.

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\(^1\) Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

\(^2\) The Multifunction Platform (MFP) is a concept and structure developed by UNDP and deployed in a number of West African countries and in Tanzania and Zambia. The idea was to place an MFP driven by a diesel engine in a village to power devices such as pumps, grain mills and generators. The MFP has greatly impacted women’s work by reducing daily drudgery and opening up new opportunities for them.

\(^3\) Algeria, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
Main challenges and recommendations

16. Microcredit programmes still suffer from lack of effective targeting and sustainability. Situation analyses should be undertaken prior to implementing the programmes, so as to effectively assess needs and forestall counterproductive outcomes such as indebtedness and increased exclusion.

17. Most ongoing projects and programmes are largely funded by donors, putting their sustainability at stake. Enhanced national leadership, financial commitment and harnessing of resources will ensure consolidation of gains.

18. Better initiatives are required to scale-up microprojects that only promote the basic livelihoods to bigger and more profitable medium- and large-scale programmes.

19. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are still rare and need to be implemented as a way to strengthen the impact and effectiveness of policies, programmes and projects.

Strategic Area 2: Peace, security and development

20. The Beijing Platform for Action recognizes that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men and development. It calls for women’s full involvement in all conflict prevention and resolution efforts and also for the protection of women living in situations of armed and other conflicts. The BPfA is a crucial precursor on which the African Union Protocol on Women’s Rights and United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960 have been built.

21. At the time of the Beijing+15 review, only three countries in Africa had developed and launched national action plans. However, to date, the number has increased to 11. Two regional action plans have also been developed; the first in the Great Lakes region covering Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, and the second in the Mano River region covering Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

22. In recognition of the recurring cycles of conflict and violence permeating the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, 11 African countries signed the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the country and the region. This is an important step towards building stability by addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering trust between neighbours.

23. Member States have undertaken efforts to accelerate women’s participation in peace processes; however, trends in recruitment of women in the security forces show that their numbers remain low, particularly in decision-making positions. According to the African Gender and Development Index, Botswana and the Gambia have a relatively high percentage of women in decision-making in the security forces, currently standing at 37.9 per cent and 33.3 per cent respectively. On the contrary, countries such as Senegal have women’s representation as low as 3.2 per cent, while women in the

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4 Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

5 The 11 signatories to the framework are: Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
national police force of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stood at only 6,074 or 6 per cent of the total number in 2010.

24. Support for women’s quotas and affirmative action in all public institutions has contributed to the high number of women in security institutions such as the police force, immigration department and the national army in the Gambia. In Kenya, the Standard Guidelines for Peace Structures state that at least one-third of District Peace Committees should comprise women. Of the 147 committees established so far, 49 per cent have complied with the one-third rule.

25. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and other violations of women’s rights are a big concern, not only in times of violent conflict but also in their aftermath and in times of peace. A review by the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (2012)\(^6\) reveals that in 2011 alone, about 11,600 cases of aggression, rape and defilement were reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Liberia, 2,283 cases of sexual assault, abandonment, gang rape and domestic violence were reported. Additionally, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees found that women and girls accounted for more than half of refugees and internally displaced persons, increasingly putting them at risk of SGBV.

26. With regard to capacity-building, awareness raising and training to integrate a gender perspective into peace and security measures, the Cairo Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa was established in 1994 to support peacekeeping missions in Africa and strengthen peacebuilding, conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy and crisis management issues.

**Main challenges and recommendations**

27. In most countries, the mandate to develop policy and coordinate implementation of initiatives in this area lie with national gender machineries, which are often under-resourced and marginalized. Member States are urged to commit human and financial resources, coupled with targeted capacity building, to facilitate the mandate of women machineries and support female participation in peace and political processes.

28. Implementation of women, peace and security resolutions and instruments is not well monitored, due to factors such as lack of baseline data in conflict and post-conflict contexts as well as lack of agreed targets and indicators and institutional capacities to undertake monitoring and evaluation. National governments need to strengthen systems to systematically collect information on women, peace and security to facilitate progress monitoring.

29. Member States cited the lack of coordinated multisectoral policies and plans to prevent and respond to SGBV in conflict and post-conflict situations. National governments and development agencies are urged to develop more robust and integrated approaches to respond to SGBV in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

Strategic Area 3: Violence against women

30. Violence against women and girls has many forms – physical, sexual, psychological and economic – all representing an expression of unequal power relations between men and women. Though considerable achievements have been made in the recent past, particularly in response to violence, progress has been slow due to deeply entrenched societal attitudes and practices.

31. It is widely acknowledged that violence against women and girls also hinders broader poverty reduction efforts and has intergenerational consequences. The United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality\(^7\) recognized that ending violence against women and girls was one of seven strategic priorities needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and that violence hindered progress towards a number of those goals, including those on education, HIV/AIDS, maternal health and child mortality.

32. The agreed conclusions at the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in March 2013 in New York shine the spotlight on the need to accelerate preventive and responsive action to VAW, against the backdrop of the establishment of multisectoral services, including health, psychological support and counselling for survivors of violence. The conclusions highlighted the need to ensure access to justice by survivors of violence and appropriate punishment for perpetrators, in a bid to end impunity.

33. Strategic interventions such as formulation of legal frameworks and implementation of strategies at the national level have been enforced and adopted to address and punish all forms of VAW. An estimated 15 African countries\(^8\) have made strides in formulating legal frameworks and implementing strategies aimed at eliminating VAW, since the 2009 Beijing+15 review.

34. Some of the VAW programmes under implementation involve the provision of services to victims of VAW, advocacy for behaviour change, public awareness and social mobilization and capacity-building for public institutions and civil society. However, this review notes that there has been slow progress in response by countries to provision of holistic services to victims.

35. 30 per cent of respondents had a holistic response to VAW that included economic empowerment for the survivors. A negligible number of countries – Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mauritius, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Algeria – had established or were in the process of establishing one-stop centres for victims of violence to ensure access to physical shelter, medical, psycho-social, legal and economic support services.

36. It is difficult to obtain statistical information and sound data on the prevalence of VAW throughout the continent. There is also acute lack of effective statistics on violence against women in most countries. Algeria, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe indicated the availability of good statistics on VAW, while other countries had little or none at all.

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\(^8\) Benin, the Gambia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Lesotho, Mali, Morocco, Kenya, Mauritius, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, Egypt and Nigeria.
37. All 31 countries indicated that they had invested in public awareness and sensitization programmes to bring about ideological and behavioural changes which lead to the prevention and elimination of VAW.

**Main challenges and recommendations**

38. Weak enforcement of legal and normative frameworks on VAW was cited as a major impediment to combating the pandemic. Countries need to prioritize effective enforcement of the laws addressing and punishing all forms of VAW by allocating adequate resources and targeting capacity-building of law enforcement agencies. This includes integrating the Addis Ababa Declaration made at the Africa Ministerial Preparatory Meeting for the 57th session of the CSW and the outcomes of the CSW on the theme: “Elimination and Prevention of all Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls” into their responses.

39. Most member States reported the lack of holistic responses to victims of VAW. Multisectoral plans to prevent and respond to VAW should therefore include provision of physical safety to victims of VAW as well as a component on economic support to the victims to make them independent and self-sufficient.

40. Planning and implementing policies and strategies to prevent and respond to VAW rely on the availability of effective and verifiable data, which most African countries lack. There is a need for widespread and consistent use of an agreed indicator or set of indicators to enable African countries to collect VAW data and monitor its extent more systematically.

**Strategic Area 4: Representation and participation of women in decision-making**

41. A combination of advocacy, promulgation of progressive legislation and adoption of gender policies at national level by some countries has led to remarkable progress in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women in politics and decision-making. In 2012 for instance, the continent witnessed the election of Dr. Joyce Banda as the first woman president of Malawi. In the same year, Dr. Dlamini-Zuma was elected the first woman chairperson of the African Union Commission.

42. While the actual numbers of women in politics and decision-making have not dramatically changed in the last three years (2010-2013), there is evidence that Africa is registering some positive changes in women’s representation, especially in national parliaments, with Rwanda topping the list with 56.3 per cent. A number of other African countries are among the best performers in the world with over 40 per cent of women in decision-making positions (Seychelles is at 45.16 per cent while Senegal and South Africa are both at 42.7 per cent). Also, nine countries in Africa have surpassed the critical mass of 30 per cent representation of women, mainly as a result of innovative strategies like affirmative action, quotas and progressive laws that have set clear targets to advance gender equality in governance, politics and decision-making. While the global figure of women’s representation is estimated at 20 per cent, sub-Saharan Africa stands at 19.8 per cent with Southern, East and Central

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9 Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was the first female elected African president.

10 Rwanda 56.3%, Seychelles 45%, Senegal 42.7%, South Africa 42.7%, Mozambique 39.2%, Tanzania 36%, Algeria 31.6% and Burundi 31%.
Africa on the top list of good performers. There is, however, a need for comprehensive capacity-building to translate the numbers into qualitative and effective representation.

43. Eight countries\textsuperscript{11} have enacted laws and amended electoral processes to advance women’s participation in politics and decision-making. Burkina Faso, Mauritius, Morocco, Gabon and Eritrea have put in place a quota for women in decision-making positions at the local government level.

44. Countries such as Algeria, Cape Verde, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Mali, Morocco and Sudan have also instituted national election laws, in line with special provisions for political parties to ensure women’s representation within political party structures. Indeed, Morocco has distinguished itself with the establishment of a system of financial incentives for political parties, to encourage women’s candidacies and place them in eligible positions for the voting constituency\textsuperscript{12}.

45. Member States are initiating innovative strategies such as 50/50 campaigns within the ambit of various RECs,\textsuperscript{13} to promote policies that ensure benchmarking and increasing national targets to reach the AU 50-per cent set target of women’s representation in politics and decision-making, as has been achieved in Egypt, the Gambia, Mauritius, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

46. Even though some countries have low figures of women in national parliaments, they seem to be making progress in other areas such as cabinet and provincial governance. A case in point is Nigeria, which has 33-per cent representation of women in the Federal cabinet and the Gambia, where women make up 42 per cent of its cabinet. In Ethiopia, women exceed 33-per cent representation in the provincial governments of five regions.

Main challenges and recommendations

47. Sociocultural practices such as violence against women during the electoral cycle, which hinder women’s advancement in politics at all levels should be addressed through legislative reforms, with punitive measures against perpetrators.

48. Lack of political training for aspiring women leaders is an impediment to their increased participation in decision-making processes. Countries must reinforce political training, advocacy and national awareness campaigns in order to enhance women’s participation and leadership in the public sphere.

49. There are also gaps between policy formulation and practice in enhancing women’s representation and participation in decision-making. There is a crucial need to nurture political support and entrench the commitment to promote the role of women in politics and decision-making in national laws to ensure compliance and accountability.

50. CWD should further the discussion on strengthening initiatives to increase women in decision-making at all levels and consider new cutting edge proposals.

\textsuperscript{11} Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, the Gambia, Mauritius, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

\textsuperscript{12} UNECA, 2013, Compendium of good practices in gender mainstreaming: women, gender and local governance.

\textsuperscript{13} SADC Gender and Development protocol (2008).
Strategic Area 5: Sexual, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS

51. From 2000 to 2008, Africa’s annual maternal mortality ratio declined to 2.3 per cent, on average, well below the 5.5 per cent annual decline required to meet the MDG target, making it unlikely that MDG 5 will be met by many African countries by 2015.

52. This bleak picture notwithstanding; maternal mortality is generally on the decline in Africa. To date, 24 out of 46 sub-Saharan countries have achieved a reduction of more than 40 per cent. Equatorial Guinea has already achieved MDG 5, with a sharp 81-per cent decline in maternal mortality from 1990 to 2010, due to the improved proportion of births receiving assistance from skilled personnel, from 5 per cent in 1994 to 64.6 per cent in 2000.

53. Twenty-nine countries reported having specific national policies or laws on access by women and girls to sexual and reproductive health services, family planning services and prenatal and postnatal care.

54. High adolescent birth rates in Africa are a cause for alarm, as girls aged 15 to 19 are twice as likely to die during childbirth than women aged 20 and above. In Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Nigeria, the birth rates for adolescents in rural areas are more than double that of girls in urban areas, leading to high rural maternal mortality rates from unsafe abortions.

55. Antenatal care coverage for pregnant women is low in Africa. Less than half of pregnant women in Africa attend the recommended four antenatal check-ups, making them far less likely to recognize the signs of complications during their pregnancy or to be attended to by skilled health personnel during childbirth. In Chad, Ethiopia, Niger and Somalia, where maternal mortality is highest, less than half the women report having made even one antenatal visit.

56. Africa is making progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS, although sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most heavily affected by the virus, with an estimated 23.5 million people living with HIV, accounting for 69 per cent of the global HIV burden. New infections decreased significantly by 25 per cent, from an estimated 2.4 million in 2001 to 1.8 million in 2011.

57. Stark regional variations do exist in HIV prevalence rates in Africa. The HIV prevalence in West and Central Africa is comparatively low, with adult HIV prevalence estimated at 2 per cent or under in 12 countries in 2009. In contrast, East and Southern Africa is the area most heavily affected by the HIV epidemic, with double digit prevalence rates in the large majority of countries. Thirty-four per

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16 UNFPA CARMMA, 2012 (Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa).
20 Benin, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.
cent of the total number of people living with HIV worldwide in 2009 resided in 10 Southern African countries\textsuperscript{21}.

58. In Southern Africa, the number of people getting infected with HIV has dramatically reduced. From 2001 to 2011, the rate of new HIV infections in Malawi dropped by 73 per cent, in Botswana by 71 per cent, in Namibia by 68 per cent, in Zambia by 58 per cent and in Zimbabwe by 50 per cent. South Africa, the country with the largest number of people living with HIV, reduced new HIV infections by 41 per cent. Swaziland, which has the highest HIV prevalence in the world, witnessed a drop of 37 per cent of new HIV infections\textsuperscript{22}. In West, Central and the Horn of Africa, Ghana topped the list with a drop of 66 per cent, followed by Burkina Faso at 60 per cent and Djibouti at 58 per cent. The Central African Republic, Gabon, Rwanda and Togo achieved significant declines of more than 50 per cent. Other countries with significant declines in the region include Burundi, Cameroon, Mali and Sierra Leone, where the decline was more than one third.

59. Another area with promising results is the prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission. From 2003 to 2011, new HIV infections in children declined by 43 per cent with a 24-per cent decrease in the last two years alone\textsuperscript{23}. In Burundi, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Togo and Zambia, the number of newly infected children fell by 40 per cent to 59 per cent from 2009 to 2011.

60. Eighteen\textsuperscript{24} countries reported having national programmes or projects with a component on gender-based violence, information on sexual and reproductive health, HIV counselling and testing, distribution of contraceptives to women and girls, services targeting vulnerable groups and initiatives engaging men and boys.

**Main challenges and recommendations**

61. Sensitization campaigns should be implemented to tackle three main issues: stigma attached to HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted infections (STIs); harmful cultural attitudes and practices; lack of knowledge on HIV/AIDS and STI transmission, prevention and treatment.

62. Lack of reliable data collection and information dissemination systems was reported by more than half of responding member States. African countries should institute these systems to track the spread of HIV/AIDS and STIs and monitor progress in tackling these major health issues.

63. Member States also reported the acute lack of operational mechanisms within countries to ensure the continuous access of services to patients. National governments are urged to establish and/or strengthen these systems by ensuring countrywide access to health centres with trained personnel, adequate stock of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs, contraceptives and diagnostic kits. This implies a significant and continuous investment in health care.

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\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{24} Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
64. Key in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Beyond 2014 Review were issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights. National gender machineries are urged to continue providing input into the ICPD Africa regional dialogues to secure the gains already made. As the discussion of the ICPD Beyond 2014 will impact greatly on the Beijing Plus 20 review, the CWD must formulate a strategy on the continued participation of the national machineries in this review.

**Strategic Area 6: Climate change and food security**

65. The impacts of climate change on development in Africa are expected to be diverse and significant. These changes will be accompanied by an increase in extreme events (floods and droughts) and sea level rise of some 20 to 50 centimeters by 2050, particularly in West Africa.

66. Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly vulnerable due to low incomes, the high poverty incidence, the fragile State structures and the prevalence of violent conflict over the past decades.

67. The Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development reiterated “the importance of empowering rural women as critical agents for improving agricultural and rural development and food security and nutrition”. It reaffirmed the central role women play in ensuring food and nutrition security and the need to build partnerships to empower women as change agents and harness their potential and knowledge in climate adaptation and mitigation.

68. The policy framework for climate adaptation and mitigation in Africa is inadequate. This is the case in countries which have not embarked on a comprehensive planning process for adapting to climate change, often articulated in national adaptation plans of action and/or national climate change response strategies. Gender is not mainstreamed into key adaptation response frameworks as national adaptation and mitigation strategies do not adequately address aspects of inequality and gender.

69. Securing women’s active and equal participation and leadership in sustainable development efforts will better inform the green economy and promote benefits for women, men, girls and boys. Along these lines, Nigeria is implementing a skills development programme for analysing climate impacts, policy and regulatory and financing issues, as well as educating women on international climate change negotiations. This includes the gender aspects of climate change adaptation, with special emphasis on developing women’s leadership in key institutions, including the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, State and local government and civil society. Malawi is providing technical support to build the capacity of parliamentarians to enhance their understanding of the political, economic, technical and social implications of existing and new climate change adaptation policies, laws and measures and facilitate discussions on available options for effectively mainstreaming gender into climate adaptation measures.

70. Women are increasingly faced with environmental hazards in the home. Cooking daily with wood, crop residues, dung and charcoal has left women and girls exposed to indoor air pollution, which leads to acute respiratory infections, chronic obstructive lung diseases, low birth weights, sinus headaches, lung cancer and eye problems. Other occupational health hazards for women involved in

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25 Accra, Benin, Togo, Abidjan and the Niger delta.
energy use and production include bone fractures, repetitive strain injuries, sprains, back disorders and miscarriages from carrying fuel wood, exposure to burns and smoke and skin diseases.

71. Promoting access to modern energy services is critical to increasing women’s productivity and economic power, with dramatic effects on their level of education, literacy, nutrition, health and community involvement. A cost-benefit study of improved cook stoves showed that users saved between three and 20 hours weekly on gathering fuel wood, or, if purchased, 40 per cent to 50 per cent of the cost, while smoke emissions were reduced by a factor of 2.6.

72. To effectively address the continent’s energy issues, Lesotho has embarked on wind and solar energy projects; Ethiopia and Kenya have signed up as partners in the Norwegian-led Energy+ Initiative, under which Ethiopia is to receive around US$85 million and Kenya - $43 million in performance-based financing to support energy development, including increased distribution of clean cook stoves in rural areas; Ghana and Nigeria have aggressively embarked on rural electrification projects likely to lead to a steady increase in access to electricity in rural areas.

Main challenges and recommendations

73. Paradoxically, while Africa abounds in energy resources, only a fraction of these is tapped for domestic use. Member States ought to use available natural resources such as oil and gas reserves, hydropower, large geothermal energy and wind energy to cater for the energy needs of their people. The solar energy potential is immense across the continent and modern forms of biomass could also play a greater role in some areas.

74. Rural women are talented entrepreneurs, but often lack access to markets due to inappropriate scales and/or standards of production, as well as context-specific gender roles and norms. There is an urgent need to build systems and institutions that can deliver the range of financial services rural women need and link them to remunerative and sustainable markets.

75. This is an area in which ministries of gender and women’s affairs have not been significantly involved. The CWD must make recommendations on involvement by ministries and departments at the national level.

Strategic Area 7: Financing for gender equality

76. Financing for gender equality is not solely about securing resources and funding for institutions such as national women’s machineries, women’s organizations and networks and gender equality projects. It should also include concrete steps that entail the design and implementation of socioeconomic policies that give women and men access to adequate employment, food security, social insurance and protection.

77. In 2011, developing countries and civil society organizations endorsed the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation at the 4th High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Republic of South Korea. Ownership, focus on results, inclusive development partnerships, mutual accountability and transparency were adopted as pillars for a new global monitoring framework.
78. A review of the responses provided by 31 African countries reveals that most policy documents, national plans of action, and sectoral policies only refer to gender equality as a cross-cutting issue, with a few gender concerns pointed out at the level of the situational analysis, without concrete actions identified at the level of programmatic responses or targeted investment of resources.

79. The Value Added Tax (VAT) is common in African countries for domestic resource mobilization. Selected and targeted measures can help poor women avoid bearing a disproportionate burden of the VAT. According to the results of data simulations in Morocco, reducing the VAT on tea, coffee and edible oils lowered the tax incidence for poorer female and male breadwinner households and those with no employed adults. In Ghana, reduced tax incidence on children’s goods benefited poorer female breadwinner and female majority households more than similar male-type households. Uganda performed simulations showing that zero-rated salt and paraffin disproportionately benefited poorer and female-headed households.

80. Emerging promising practices are found in Morocco, where a team, comprising some 30 feminist and democratic development associations from different regions in the country has been set up to work specifically on gender financing. Cameroon highlighted the strong participation of civil society during the expansion, execution and evaluation of public policies. In Kenya, Liberia and Tanzania, women participate in various stages of the budgeting process. In Kenya, they attend public sector hearings to ensure gender-responsive budgeting by government. In Zimbabwe, women parliamentary caucuses lobby and advocate for gender to be mainstreamed into the budgetary process.

81. Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda may have made strides somewhat, as the budget reform process has compelled countries to disaggregate allocations by programmes. Resources, in some cases, have therefore been earmarked by virtue of the gender-related programmes indicated in the national development plans, albeit in very limited sectors such as health and education. In Zimbabwe, the initiative has resulted in the engendering of the “Call Circular” by the Ministry of Finance. In the country’s 2012 budget statement, three ministries were allocated specific budgets for mainstreaming gender. For other sector ministries, however, gender will continue to be mainstreamed into their activities using their allocated budgets.

82. Although in Algeria, Guinea and Madagascar, women parliamentarians have formed women’s pressure groups, they lack the skills to implement financing for gender equality; and gender analysis of macroeconomic policies continues to be a huge challenge for existing initiatives. Liberia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia all indicated the involvement of civil society organizations, women parliamentarians and gender machineries in advocating for gender-responsive public resource spending at the sectoral and macro level. However, it was difficult to trace tangible achievements made other than awareness creation.

Main challenges and recommendations

83. The theoretical progress made by gender-responsive budgeting initiatives has not always translated into progressive change in development practice. While the region has recently increased attention to gender-responsive budgets in country dialogues, more work is needed to develop these into actionable policies and programmes.
84. Excessive focus on the expenditure side of government budgets has adversely affected the expenditure on the ground. There is therefore a need for sustained policy dialogue, country and regional gender analytical work and existing knowledge on “what works for gender” (sex-disaggregated data, policy-relevant analytical and advisory activities) in each sector and context.

85. The lack of capacity in gender and economic analysis among key staff in member States was highlighted. National governments need to undertake targeted capacity-building initiatives to tackle the entire public finance sector with a view to addressing gender and women’s issues including, but not limited to, labour, savings, infrastructure and women’s health.

86. Strong leadership in financing for gender and development programmes should come from key players in the executive and legislative arms of government: the Office of the Head of State, the ministries of finance and planning and the parliamentary assembly. Strengthened gender machineries play a major coordinating role to ensure that financing for gender and development programmes are adopted across all line ministries and sectors.

Conclusion

This report provides a mid-term review in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, focusing specifically on the seven strategic areas of focus agreed in the Banjul Declaration. The report is also a precursor to the preparations for the Beijing+20 review. It provides lessons that would help Africa design a comprehensive and appropriate review.

The 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in New York from 4 to 15 March 2013 decided to conduct a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2015, with the additional elements of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action, as well as opportunities for strengthening gender equality and the empowerment of women in the post-2015 development agenda through the integration of a gender perspective. The regional commissions were encouraged to undertake regional reviews so that the outcomes of intergovernmental processes at the regional level can feed into the 2015 review.

In order to initiate the review process ECA is proposing the following for consideration by the CWD:

- November 2013 – Global questionnaire by UNWomen, ECA posted on the website;
- November 2013 – To augment the questionnaire and ensure that Africa’s specific issues are covered, as determined by the Banjul Declaration, member States will submit a narrative report over and above the questionnaire to ECA. The report will be guided by an outline drafted by ECA;
- November 2013 – deadline for member States responses for regional reviews, including the narrative report;