

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: August 2005 to August 2006

Peace and Security

Collaboration with Regional Institutions

Working with regional bodies has served as a strategic entry point for UNIFEM to influence policy decisions and voice women's concerns at the highest levels of decision-making, and to work towards the systematic implementation of regional and international human rights instruments that call for gender mainstreaming in peace-keeping operations.

In the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and West Africa, UNIFEM has opened the space for women's effective participation at the peace table. UNIFEM placed a gender advisor in the SRSG secretariat of the International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy, and Development in the Great Lakes Region (IC-GLR), thus ensuring the consideration of gender issues in the drafting of protocols and programmes in the framework of IC-GLR. In 2005, UNIFEM contributed to the drafting and adoption of the Protocol on Women's Rights and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence of IC-GLR, the first regional instrument to call for the elimination of violence against women in Africa.

Similarly, with ECOWAS, UNIFEM established a gender unit within the executive secretariat that provides technical advice on gender issues and works with other heads of departments to mainstream gender. Additionally, UNIFEM's partnership with IGAD and the AU resulted in successful advocacy for the inclusion of Darfurian women in the seventh round of the Abuja peace talks held by the African Union in November 2005.

Participation of women in peace negotiations and reconstruction processes

UNIFEM promotes the centrality of women in reconstruction efforts throughout Africa. UNIFEM's interventions in developing Somalia's post-conflict needs assessment focused on ensuring Somali women's effective participation, applying a rights- and gender-based approach to planning, allocating resources for gender equality and women's rights, and establishing accountability mechanisms.

UNIFEM also continued its work with Sudanese women from the North and the South by sponsoring a Gender Symposium and facilitating their access to the Oslo Donor Conference. Together the Sudanese women highlighted the critical gender and women's issues for peace-building and reconstruction and presented a joint statement of priorities and recommendations to donors. In the Government of National Unity and the Government of the southern Sudan, a ministerial portfolio for women and gender-related issues was established and a Presidential gender advisor to the south government was appointed.

UNIFEM sponsored the launching of a report entitled *Role of Women in Peace Building and Reconstruction in Rwanda 10 Years after the Genocide*, which will be disseminated as a best practice throughout the region.

UN Security Resolution 1325

The five-year review of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 marked an important opportunity for UNIFEM to raise awareness, create debate and secure tangible support on women, peace and security issues in the region. UNIFEM, in collaboration with the Centre for Conflict Resolution in South Africa, supported consultations with UN agencies, government and civil society and participated in a regional evaluation of Res. 1325 with a view to enhancing its application vis-à-vis women in different countries. One recommendation emerging from this evaluation was to develop gender-sensitive early warning indicators for Southern Africa. UNIFEM, in partnership with the World Bank, is also working to engender demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes especially where it concerns women combatants in the Great Lakes Region.

UNIFEM sponsored training in conflict management strategies and conflict sensitive approaches. UN Security Resolution 1325 was also translated into Kirundi.

Gender-Based Violence

Working in partnership with ministries of gender, civil society organizations, law enforcement and judiciaries, UNIFEM raised the profile of gender-based violence at national and regional levels. In Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Rwanda, UNIFEM helped to establish Family Friendly or Gender Desks at Police Stations that simplified the reporting of abuse for women and improved response and prevention. UNIFEM also supported trainings for local court officials on the administration of justice and on human rights. In Rwanda, UNIFEM enlisted the mayoral leadership of four districts to spearhead alliances with local officials, men, and women in the fight against gender-based violence. UNIFEM plans to replicate this experience in other Central African countries in 2006.

Political and Economic Governance Initiative

Women's increased political participation

UNIFEM actively promoted the increased representation of women at all levels of government by working with ministries of gender and supporting leadership and communication trainings for women leaders. In 2005, African women scored significant gains in presidential and parliamentary elections and/or were appointed to key ministerial posts in 14 countries. Women also scored victories in local government.

In 2006 and beyond, UNIFEM will build the capacity of elected women to address rampant issues in gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and women's rights in Africa. UNIFEM will also work with partners to further engender governance structures and processes and will facilitate and strengthen alliances between women parliamentarians, gender ministries and other interest groups.

Engendering legislative and policy initiatives

Through strategic partnerships, UNIFEM worked with women activists, women's rights organizations, and parliamentarians to promote women's human rights in legislative and policy initiatives. Achievements in 2005 include support to the formulation of pro-women legislation in the areas of domestic violence, inheritance, land rights, and citizenship in Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda to name a few; the development of a National Gender Policy in Gabon; the engendering of electoral laws in DRC and Burundi and constitutional review processes in Kenya and Nigeria. UNIFEM also supported advocacy in Nigeria to increase the numbers of women participating in the National Political Reform Conference held in February 2005 to propose constitutional and governance reforms.

UNIFEM also provided support to women judges' network in order to increase the profile and number of women judges and to equip women judges for leadership roles in engendering the judiciary systems in Southern Africa.

Shaping economic governance processes

To address the feminization of poverty, UNIFEM works across Africa with national planning institutions, ministries of gender and finance, and other stakeholders to sensitize ministers and parliamentarians on gender budgeting; to ensure the participation of women in the development of poverty-reduction strategies and for gender budgeting processes. UNIFEM helped establish National Gender Budget Networks in Nigeria and Kenya.

Human Resource Development

Bridging the Digital Divide

UNIFEM supports the Digital Diaspora Initiative aimed at creating new business opportunities for women entrepreneurs and enhancing their access to finance, markets, goods, and services through partnerships with African entrepreneurs in the Diaspora. In Rwanda, UNIFEM supported the Genocide Widows Association (AVEGA) and facilitated its linkages with international business ventures.

The establishment of EKOWISA – E-Knowledge of Women in Southern Africa – represents the culmination of UNIFEM and its partners' effort to engender ICTs and is the first regional women's organization to have a mandate of mainstreaming gender in ICTs. UNIFEM supported the creation of a web portal consisting of several entrepreneurship development related articles and a database of women entrepreneurs from the Southern Africa region that benefit from an electronic market presence.

The convening of cyber dialogues was another innovative use of ICTs that UNIFEM spearheaded in 2005, especially during international summits such as the Beijing+10 Review and the five year reviews of the Millennium Development Goals and UN Security Resolution 1325. Cyber dialogues proved instrumental in linking community, grassroots and national women's voices with international advocacy initiatives and facilitating their participation in shaping agendas and plans of action.

HIV/AIDS

Throughout the region, UNIFEM worked with a broad range of partners to expand the scope of support for positive women, to address the issues of stigma and discrimination and to raise awareness on male responsibility and the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS.

UNIFEM's work in the area of HIV/AIDS resulted in important legislative changes in a number of countries, including legislation guaranteeing free access to anti-retroviral treatment in Togo and Burkina Faso; and extending better access to treatment and support for positive women. UNIFEM continued to build the capacity of its partners with National AIDS Commissions, Demobilization Commissions, training institutions, universities, local governments, and other civil society organizations. UNIFEM also provided technical support to National AIDS Commissions for mainstreaming gender into their institutions as well as in their national policy and program responses to HIV/AIDS. In Zimbabwe, UNIFEM established important links with the private sector and in 2006 will be developing gender-sensitive approaches for addressing HIV/AIDS in the work-place. In Nigeria, UNIFEM facilitated extensive consultations with women's machinery, women's organizations, National AIDS Commissions, and other state institutions to ensure that women's concerns were addressed in the national HIV/AIDS strategy. The success of this experience has been documented and UNDP will be replicating the strategy in other West African countries.

UNIFEM also supported the participation of positive women from Rwanda, Burundi, and Cameroon to the 14th International Conference on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infection in Africa (ICASA) where they successfully mainstreamed gender into conference activities and highlighted the gender and human rights dimensions of HIV/AIDS.

Agriculture

UNIFEM provided technical support for the elaboration of a Gender Policy for rural development, which serves as an entry point for the alignment of regional policies and practices on rural development and poverty reduction strategies with existing international instruments on gender equality. UNIFEM was also able to lend its technical expertise to the debate on ECOWAS' Common Agricultural Policy and helped to convene a consultation with women members of peasant organizations. A comprehensive analysis of gender issues in the agricultural market system will take place in 2006.

Support to NEPAD Secretariat

UNIFEM continued to support the mission and objectives of NEPAD by providing strategic inputs to the NEPAD Secretariat in Rwanda, namely the appointment of a gender expert. UNIFEM participates on the NEPAD Governance Thematic Group and is developing a plan of action for the inclusion and involvement of women in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). UNIFEM is responsible for ensuring that the role, participation and inclusion of women are mainstreamed throughout NEPAD initiatives, programmes, and structures.