

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: August 2004 to April 2005

UNIFEM's support to the implementation of NEPAD is aimed at promoting the role of women at many levels and in all activities, especially in key priority areas, such as peace and security, political and economic governance and human resource development.

Peace and Security

NEPAD assigns priority to promoting the long term conditions for development and security under its "Peace, Security, Democracy and Political Governance Initiative". Within this key context, UNIFEM has been active in policy advocacy and decision-making, especially in promoting gender perspectives in peace and security processes, and in facilitating women's effective participation in the Great Lakes Region, Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Burundi and Sierra Leone.

The International Conference of the Great Lakes Region represented a major positive development for women's rights and human security. UNIFEM provided support to the Women's Regional Meeting in October 2004. Attended by over 100 women, the Women's Regional Meeting was an unprecedented forum where the specific needs of women in matters pertaining to peace and security, democracy and governance, economic and regional integration as well as humanitarian and social affairs were addressed. The meeting resulted in the Kigali Declaration which was later incorporated into the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration of the First Summit of Heads of State and Government in November 2004. The Declaration stressed commitments to address issues of sexual violence, gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, woman's effective participation in economic and security sectors, institutionalized the Great Lakes Women's Forum and adopted a 1/3 quota of women representation in follow up mechanisms. This process has served as an all important entry point for UNIFEM to influence policy decisions and voice women's concerns at the highest levels of decision-making in the sub-region.

UNIFEM has also substantively engaged with the peace process for Somalia, Sudan and Burundi. By attaching two gender experts to the North and the South, UNIFEM was able to make a strategic contribution to the Joint Assessment Mission for Sudan by creating a space for dialogue among women and women's organizations as well as providing gender analysis and input into various consultative meetings, including the Donor Conference in Oslo, Norway. Similarly, in Burundi, working with the newly established UN Mission in Burundi, UNIFEM was able to create and ensure a space for women's concerns and participation in the design of democratic institutions and frameworks. In Somalia, and with UNIFEM/IGAD support, women's organizations were able to effectively lobby for the inclusion of women in government structures resulting in the election of 10% women into the parliament and the appointment of one woman into cabinet.

UNIFEM, in partnership with the World Bank, is also working in countries such as Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, and Sudan to address gender concerns during wartime in relation to humanitarian interventions and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes especially where it concerns women combatants.

Political and Economic Governance Initiative

The emphasis of UNIFEM's assistance at the regional level has been on working with regional institutions to mainstream gender and supporting women's representation and participation at regional meetings. At national level, UNIFEM works with partners to promote legislation and/or gender sensitive constitutional provisions or policies to safeguard women's human rights and to mainstream gender responsive budgeting into macroeconomic planning frameworks.

Collaborations with Regional Institutions and Networks

Drawing from the success of its existing collaboration with IGAD, SADC and ECOWAS, UNIFEM worked with the newly established Economic Community of the Central African Countries (CEEAC) to adopt a gender policy in 2004 as a strategic entry point for UNIFEM's work in the sub-region.

Together with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), UNIFEM organized an Expert meeting to review the priorities of ECOWAS in trade, conflict, policy harmonization and infrastructure and to develop strategies for incorporating gender using the gender policy. At present, UNIFEM is advocating for the recruitment of a long term gender expert at the ECOWAS Secretariat.

UNIFEM also supported the establishment of the Southern Africa Network of Women Economists (SANWE) in September 2004. Much like its counterpart in Western Africa, SANWE consists of a core group of women economists who are knowledgeable about gender equality and human rights issues, and who can influence the engendering of economic and trade policies in the sub-region. Lobbying efforts by women economists have resulted in the initiation of the development of economic models integrating HIV and AIDS and Gender in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Women's Participation at Regional Meetings

Working with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), UNIFEM has established several networks at community, national, regional and international levels aimed at forming national task forces on gender and trade issues in countries such as Botswana, Zambia and Malawi, negotiating gender sensitive trade policies and more preferential trading terms for women in business, strengthening linkages of women entrepreneurs across the sub-regions, and expanding the market base for exports. UNIFEM supported the participation of five members from the Southern Africa Region to the COMESA Business Summit.

Held in conjunction with the 9th Annual Heads of State Summit in Kampala, the American and African Women's Alliance issued a communiqué advocating for increased women's participation in trade that was adopted by the Heads of State.

Influencing Legislative Processes

As mentioned above, UNIFEM works with its partners at national level to promote legislation and gender sensitive constitutional provisions or policies to safeguard women's human rights. UNIFEM supported both women's organizations and women parliamentarians to engender constitutional/electoral processes (Burundi and Swaziland), to ensure the implementation of gender provisions at decentralized levels (Rwanda), and to ensure the retention of women's rights clauses in the Kenyan constitution. On the legislative front, UNIFEM's participation was instrumental in having the Burundi Gender Equality Policy adopted. Similarly in Zimbabwe, UNIFEM's lobbying efforts were instrumental in having the Domestic Violence Bill signed into legislation.

Gender budgeting

To address the feminization of poverty, UNIFEM has been working in a number of African countries to consolidate gains made toward mainstreaming gender budgeting. In partnership with the government of Tanzania, UNIFEM's work on gender responsive budgeting resulted in linking gender budget work with ongoing macroeconomic policy processes. Similar work in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana, and Senegal is underway.

Human Resource Development

UNIFEM continues to initiate and maintain its strategic partnerships with civil society and women's organizations, especially for gender mainstreaming in sector-wide programming areas, such as ICT, health (HIV/AIDS), water, roads, governance, etc.

Reversing the Brain Drain (ICT & Digital Diaspora Initiative)

UNIFEM continues to provide support to the Digital Diaspora Initiative aimed at creating an enabling environment for African women to influence all aspects of ICT use and policy at national, regional and international levels and to harness the expertise of African ICT entrepreneurs in the Diaspora.

UNIFEM reviewed the Zambia ICT policy and provided recommendations that would enhance its gender sensitivity. Similarly in Zimbabwe, UNIFEM is a member of a committee tasked with developing an ICT policy. Additionally, women in business are engaging policymakers in a policy dialogue on engendering ICT policies in Zambia and Zimbabwe through an on-line discussion list developed by UNIFEM in conjunction with the E-Knowledge of Women in Southern Africa (EKOWISA), which includes government policymakers, private sector, and civil society. Women in business are also interacting with representatives from trade and investment centres through the list.

EKOWISA is a landmark development as it is the first regional women's organization in Southern Africa to have a mandate of mainstreaming gender in ICTs. Following a

stakeholders workshop held in September 2004, and with strategic support from UNIFEM, EKOWISA will establish a database of women entrepreneurs in the Diaspora with a view to connecting them with the SADC women in business.

A similar project in Rwanda - Bridging the Gender Digital Divide - has also raised an increased awareness on ICT and gender economic empowerment in that country.

Health – HIV/AIDS

In addition to the awareness raising role UNIFEM has played in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, it has also worked with strategic partners to create networks among the AIDS service organizations, media women's groups and networks of positive women. For example, UNIFEM continues to support the Southern Africa Regional Network of the International Community for Women Living with HIV and AIDS in Swaziland. In Kenya, a consortium of organizations has convened around drafting and lobbying for a gender responsive HIV/AIDS prevention and control act.

UNIFEM also provided support to the National AIDS Commission in Burundi and Rwanda to address gender and HIV/AIDS cultural behaviour through advocacy, capacity building and data collection. This collaboration produced a better understanding of the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, especially the disproportionate impact of this epidemic on women, and the need to focus on their protection against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Support to NEPAD Secretariat

UNIFEM continued to support the mission and objectives of NEPAD by providing strategic inputs to the NEPAD National Secretariat in Rwanda, namely the appointment of a gender expert to continue supporting efforts within the NEPAD framework and the engendering of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). UNIFEM is responsible for ensuring that the role, participation and inclusion of women is mainstreamed throughout NEPAD initiatives and activities.