

## **UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)**

### **Support to NEPAD**

**Period of Report: July 2007 to June 2008**

UNIFEM's work in Africa focuses on priorities identified by African countries and their institutions, including the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

#### **Collaboration with other UN organisations in support of NEPAD**

In this area, collaboration took place within the framework of the NEPAD Gender Task Force and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The NEPAD Gender Task Force was set up in 2005 to develop a framework for mainstreaming gender in NEPAD policies, programmes and activities. It draws gender experts from networks, academic and professional institutions from 20 countries, 25 women organisations, nine representatives from RECs and ten representatives from UN agencies. UNIFEM is an active member of the Task Force which holds regular meetings.

Through the Task Force UNIFEM makes strategic technical input into NEPAD's effort to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in its work. The Gender Task Force has significant achievements including the successful advocacy for including gender indicators in the APRM. The Task Force is currently focusing on assessing the extent to which national budgets and development assistance support advancement towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. UNIFEM will avail its expertise in Gender Responsive Budgeting to the Task Force and a Memorandum of Understanding is being prepared with the NEPAD secretariat in this respect. With regard to the APRM, UNIFEM participates and supports the participation of women's organisations in the process at country level. UNIFEM also supported partner organisations, including national women/gender machineries to apply for grants from the NEPAD women's economic empowerment fund supported by Spain. The Gender Desk has been a crucial partner in UNIFEM organised advocacy forums and initiatives, particularly in the SADC region, and in Rwanda.

#### **Financial support for NEPAD programmes and projects**

In Rwanda, UNIFEM provided financial and technical support to the NEPAD secretariat for the APRM process. The peer review report on the gender aspects sponsored by UNIFEM revealed some gaps in gender equality and women's empowerment. Apart from the parliament and cabinet level, representation of women remains low at decentralized levels. UNIFEM and the NEPAD secretariat are currently updating the report to inform the sectors on the areas that need to be improved and to strengthen accountability mechanisms for gender equality.

#### **Advocacy work in support of African development**

UNIFEM has initiated advocacy work in line with NEPAD's priorities. With regard

to peace and security, UNIFEM supported various initiatives by governments and women's organisations that seek to build peace and reconciliation within communities affected by or recovering from war (Liberia, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda). These include: the Rwanda Defence Forces' (RDF) campaign against Gender Based Violence (GBV) which contributed to national authorities including GBV as a topic of discussion in the national civic education program, women's participation in peace talks and other peace building initiatives in Northern Uganda and Sudan (South Darfur), development of a draft gender policy by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia, Secretariat of the International Conference of Great Lakes Regions and the Campaign on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Burundi. Through the UN Trust Fund, support was provided to various initiatives to fight violence against women. UNIFEM is also planning activities to support women's participation in Peace building processes and reconstruction in Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire.

Concerning democracy and political, economic and corporate governance, UNIFEM in collaboration with other UN organisations supported governments, national election commissions and women's organisations to create an enabling environment for women's effective participation in elections as candidates and voters, and inclusion of gender equality concerns in national dialogue for elections (Kenya and Nigeria). In Kenya, UNIFEM supported a coalition of women's organisations to carry out a nation-wide advocacy campaign around the Affirmative Action Bill, and women's dialogue in the aftermath of the elections. Gender responsive budgeting initiatives are also being implemented in various countries in Africa.

With regard to regional co-operation and integration, UNIFEM is providing technical and financial support to a series of baseline surveys currently conducted in Liberia, Kenya, Niger, Tanzania, and Southern Africa on women and informal cross border trade (WICBT). The data collected will provide the evidence that is critically missing on the situation of WICBT in Africa.

UNIFEM also addressed feminized poverty through, for example, facilitating access to land for a women's cooperative processing farina from cassava in Liberia in the framework of the UNIFEM/World Bank Results Based Initiative project and advocacy for the setting up of the 'Revolving Fund for Women' in Zimbabwe.

### **Work with the African Union**

Recently, a UNIFEM Liaison Office with the AU was established in Addis Ababa and a UNIFEM Representative to the AU was appointed. She has been working with the AU Commission on overall Africa Policy issues on gender equality and women's rights since January 2008. UNIFEM and the African Union's Gender Division have entered into partnership to work on three areas: Capacity building for human rights programming, gender mainstreaming and monitoring within the AU; Strengthening women's human rights in conflict and post conflict situations; and Mobilizing women's agency and effective participation through the AU Economic and Social Council and Pan African Parliament. The appointment of a UNIFEM dedicated senior staff member to work directly with the AU will accelerate progress in collaboration in these areas.