

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR WOMEN (UNIFEM)

Support to NEPAD

Period of Report: 2003-2004

Orientation of work in support of NEPAD

In 2003-2004, UNIFEM has provided support, in the context of its mandate, to support the commitment of African governments to promote the role of women in society and economic development, working to advance various priorities outlined by NEPAD, in particular to efforts in enhancing Political and Economic Governance, Peace and Security, and Human Resources Development. UNIFEM has also facilitated the implementation of NEPAD by strengthening advocacy and public information activities in support of a gender-sensitive implementation of NEPAD.

Areas of support for NEPAD

Economic and Political Governance

In NEPAD, African leaders are urged to take responsibility for “promoting the role of women in society and economic development”, by reinforcing their capacity in the domains of education and training; by the development of revenue-generating activities and by assuring their participation in the political and economic life of African countries. In the last year, UNIFEM has worked to advance this commitment of NEPAD, by promoting many initiatives aimed at enhancing African women’s participation in economic and political governance at all levels. UNIFEM is working in partnership with governments, women’s NGOs and other international institutions in a number of countries to mainstream gender in economic policy frameworks, including the PRSP processes. For example, UNIFEM in

cooperation with UN ECA’s African Centre for Gender and Development has organized an Africa regional training on Gender and Macroeconomics for African women economists. UNIFEM is also providing technical support to a number of governments in the preparation and implementation of their PRSP documents, as well as in the CCA/UNDAF processes: for example, UNIFEM has developed methodological tools to engender PRSPs processes, which were successfully used in Cape Verde, Niger and Senegal. UNIFEM has also worked to advance advocacy and policy work on gender-sensitive budgeting in Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda.

UNIFEM works to promote an enabling environment for women’s equal participation in political and economic governance by supporting capacity building efforts for women’s leadership development, and facilitating the development and implementation of laws and policies on gender equality. In 2003-2004, UNIFEM supported women’s political participation at the national and district level in a number of Africa countries. Gender equality and women’s human rights are recognized as guiding principles in the African Union, as shown by the adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, implementation of the 50 per cent quota in the appointment of Commissioners and the establishment of the Gender Directorate in the office of the AU Chair of Commission. UNIFEM supported the process leading to the adoption of the protocol by promoting women’s organizing and lobbying as well as

through technical support. For example, UNIFEM supported the SADC Parliamentary Forum to build the skills of the Women's Caucus in leadership, gender and human rights and lobbying and advocacy, which culminated in an advocacy strategy to realize the 30 per cent target of women's political participation stipulated in the SADC Gender and Development Declaration. Since 2000, UNIFEM has been supporting the Legal and Constitutional Commission in Rwanda and providing technical and financial assistance to women parliamentarians to facilitate their participation in the constitutional reform process. In June 2003, the new constitution was approved, which safeguards women's rights and reserves 30 per cent of parliamentary seats for women.

Gender mainstreaming in NEPAD

UNIFEM has continued to support activities of knowledge-generation on methodological approach to fully integrate a gender perspective into the NEPAD framework, and advocacy activities aimed at disseminating information on the gender dimensions of NEPAD. Support has been provided both to civil society organizations and to governments to strengthen advocacy and public information activities related to NEPAD. For example, UNIFEM is part of a scientific committee set to prepare the organization of an upcoming seminar on 'The involvement of West African women in the implementation of NEPAD'. The seminar is intended to (i) define objectives, strategies, actions and projects to ensure that women's expectations will be taken into account in NEPAD, and (ii) set clear mechanisms for women's participation in the NEPAD process. UNIFEM and UNDP/SURF have carried out a gender analysis of the priority areas of NEPAD, which will be used as a working document for the seminar.

Supporting and strengthening regional and sub-regional organizations in their ability and capacity to support conflict prevention,

management as well as peace building programmes

Building on UNIFEM's successful experience of gender mainstreaming in SADC, a Women's Desk established in IGAD with UNIFEM's support began mainstreaming gender into IGAD's policy and planning processes in 1999. UNIFEM's cooperation with IGAD has expanded to efforts around gender mainstreaming in conflict resolution, gender justice in peace processes, early warning mechanisms, as well as HIV/AIDS. The adoption by the 9th IGAD Summit, 2002 of a resolution for the inclusion of women in the IGAD peace processes, is a landmark policy commitment of the regional body to implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. With this resolution in hand UNIFEM has continued to support IGAD efforts to respond to gender issues and facilitate women's participation in the Somalia and Sudan Peace Processes.

UNIFEM is also supporting a programme to mainstream gender within ECOWAS. A gender expert has been placed within ECOWAS to assist in the development and adoption of a gender policy. The policy, which has been endorsed by the Ministers of Women Affairs, is an important indication of the willingness of ECOWAS member states to ensure that sub-regional policies and agreements respond to women's needs and priorities. In January 2003, the 26th Session of the Commission the Heads of State and Government endorsed the establishment of a Gender Division in the ECOWAS Secretariat and the restructuring of the West African Women's Association (WAWA) as the ECOWAS Gender and Development Centre.

Facilitating and promoting South-South cooperation

UNIFEM has supported the creation of a network of African Women Economists (NAWE) in Western Africa, to harness the expertise and promote knowledge exchange

among African women to engage and contribute to economic policy processes. NAWE has national chapters in twelve West and Central African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, The Gambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo). The Network was also started in Southern Africa in 2004 and will gradually be extended to cover the whole African region, building a core group of women economists knowledgeable in gender equality and human rights issues, who can engender economic and trade policies in the region.

In the context of UNIFEM Gender Budgets programme, there has been an upsurge of regional and sub regional cooperation, knowledge sharing and networking among academic institutions, women's organizations, and other gender budgets advocates, with particular emphasis of South-South cooperation. The East Africa Gender Budget Network, supported by UNIFEM, UNDP and other partners, is a good example of a sub-regional knowledge network for South-South exchange visits, joint learning-training and multi-country projects on gender-responsive budgets in the sub region.

In the context of the Global Gender Budgets Projects, UNIFEM has also supported official delegates from Mozambique to undertake an exchange visit to Tanzania in September 2003, to engage in a dialogue with government economists of the Planning Commission and Bureau of Statistics on the issues of gender and macro-economic models for GDP calculations and to learn about gender-sensitive budgeting exercises in this country. This strategy provided the visiting delegation with practical analytical skills, advocacy strategies and knowledge of successful experiences in gender budgeting, providing a basis for future exchanges between the two countries in this area.

UNIFEM has also established a scholarship programme for Spanish-speaking African women to participate in on-line trainings on Gender and Macroeconomic policy organized by FLACSO-PRIGEPP in Argentina. In addition, UNIFEM is supporting a new initiative to establish a dialogue and exchange between Portuguese-speaking African countries and Brazil on issues of gender-sensitive budgeting.

NEPAD recognizes among its sectoral priorities the need to take action for bridging the digital divide in Africa. Furthermore, under the Human Resources Development Initiative, it emphasizes the need to "reverse the brain drain and turn it into a "brain gain" for Africa", specifically by developing "strategies for utilizing the scientific and technological know-how and skills of Africans in the Diaspora for the development of Africa". In this context, UNIFEM has provided support to an 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, harnessing the expertise of African ICT entrepreneurs. The Kampala Declaration on "Bridging the Gender Digital Divide in Africa through Strategic Partnerships", endorsed in May 2003 during the official launch of the initiative by Ministers and Parliamentarians from eight African countries, the NEPAD Secretariat, representatives of the African Diaspora, the private sector, NGOs and the UN system provided a platform for South-South and North-South cooperation to tackle the gender digital divide in Africa.

UNIFEM's financial commitment to NEPAD

UNIFEM's support is mainly channelled through African governments, sub-regional organizations and women's networks and organizations.

Additional comments

The prompt establishment of a gender task team, which is planned under the NEPAD framework is critical, particularly to ensure that the specific issues faced by poor women are addressed in the poverty reduction strategies of NEPAD. This calls for

a comprehensive, participatory gender analysis of NEPAD as a framework for development and action, so that NEPAD can be used at the implementation level as a tool for mainstreaming gender in all sectors.