

## LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

In accordance with the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries, to make progress towards the global trends of poverty eradication, peace and development of the LDCs, programming focused on improving the lives of women living in poverty in three areas: strengthening women's economic security; building women's leadership in governance and peace-building; increasing awareness of the human rights and gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and eliminating violence against women. Recognizing that the Africa region has the greatest number of LDCs and the highest poverty rate in the world, UNIFEM's Consultative Committee approved a formula, in 2000, whereby the Africa region is allocated double the core resources allocated to other regions.

During 2002, UNIFEM focused on reviewing legislative impediments to women's economic security and increasing women's access to business and employment opportunities, through support to the formation of women's economic and entrepreneurial networks in the region, including the Network of African Women Economists in Senegal and the National Forum for Women Entrepreneurs in Nigeria. It worked with Statistical Bureaus in Southern Africa to value and make visible women's unpaid work in households and family businesses. A regional initiative, "Africans in the Digital Diaspora" is building linkages with CEOs to promote an enabling environment for women's access to ICTs.

Last year also UNIFEM supported building women's leadership in peace and reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi, Somalia and Sudan, and developed guidelines for gender-sensitive election monitoring and promoted women candidates in Morocco, Ghana and Nigeria. UNIFEM supported a 4-month reconciliation program for displaced women and returnees in Burundi and the participation of Women in the Inter Congolese Dialogue and collaborated with UNFPA and UNAIDS on bringing a gender and human rights dimension to work on HIV/AIDS in post-conflict Sierra Leone. It supported regional and national networks to monitor constitutional reform processes and analyse gender equality legislation in the Southern African (SADC) region and in Kenya.

UNIFEM supported the government of Nigeria to complete and submit its periodic report to the CEDAW Committee and brought together government and NGOs in two states to publicize the gender and human rights dimensions of HIV/AIDS. In Kenya, UNIFEM capacity building on CEDAW has led to a draft constitution that articulates women's human rights in relation to affirmative action, citizenship, property and marriage, and makes customary law subsidiary to the constitution. The Fund also formed new partnerships with women living with AIDS in Zimbabwe, young people in Senegal and Liberia, and faith-based organizations in Kenya and Nigeria.