TEN-YEAR REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BEIJING+10)


April 2004
PART ONE: OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT

Like other countries which took part in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, Burkina Faso signed the Conference’s recommendations and conclusions and undertook to give effect to them.

To this end, Burkina Faso established priorities among the action areas. Bearing in mind the country’s social and economic situation, it chose 10 of the 12 critical areas of concern: women and poverty (poverty-economy-employment); education and training of women and girls; women and health; human rights of women; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; violence against women and girls; women and decision-making; women and the environment; and women and the media.

- A National Monitoring Committee was established to ensure the application of the Beijing recommendations;
- A National Plan of Action was adopted by the Government to facilitate the Committee’s monitoring work;
- Since its creation in 1997 the Ministry for the Advancement of Women (MPF) has been responsible for implementing and monitoring the Government’s policies for the social and economic advancement of women. The Ministry also provides a framework for discussion and coordination of all the activities for women.

The following actions for the benefit of women have been carried out since 1997:

At the political level
The Ministry has been organized so as to enable it to address all the areas of concern to women. The following specific offices were created to this end: Office of Legal Affairs; Office for the Coordination of Women’s Associations; Office of Communication and Advocacy for the Advancement of Women; Office of Gender Development; and Office for the Oversight and Monitoring of Initiatives for Women and Girls.

The Ministry ensures that the gender dimension is mainstreamed in all the Government’s projects and programmes. Hence the nomination of focal points in the various other ministries and collaborating agencies to integrate the gender dimension, among other factors, in the studies conducted as part of their sectoral work. To this end, the Strategic Framework to Combat Poverty adopted by the Government in 2000, which states the priority objectives for the decade and is intended to provide a frame of reference and harmonization for all the anti-poverty measures, was revised in 2003 and now gives greater attention to the gender approach. However, the specific characteristics of the situation of women are not always taken into account at some levels. For example, where the regional and local budgets are concerned, the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies such as the municipal councils means that women’s concerns are not always heeded in the formulation of the budgets.

- Creation of the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (CNPF) in 1998: for greater efficiency, this Committee was replaced by the steering and monitoring bodies of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women. These bodies are the Permanent Secretariat of the Plan of Action and the Sectoral Committee.
• The formulation in 1998 of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women. The failure to mobilize sufficient financial resources prevented the successful implementation of this Plan.

• With a view to determining the main policies for the implementation of the recommendations of Beijing+5, the Ministry for the Advancement of Women convened a national forum in October 2000, which resulted in a broad measure of agreement between the Government, civil society and the development partners and the issuance of a consensus paper on ways of improving the status of women and girls.

• In the light of this paper and of the difficulties encountered with the first Plan of Action, a second Plan was adopted in 2003. This new Plan is coordinated by the Prime Minister, who presides over the Committee, and the Minister for the Advancement of Women, who is the vice-chairman. Of course, the Permanent Secretariat of the Plan of Action works to ensure its successful implementation. Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is addressed in programme 5 of the Plan of Action, which aims at reducing the inequality suffered by women. The 8 March topic stems from Goals 4 and 5. The Plan of Action is the outcome of broad agreement between the Ministry and all the partners in this field.

• The Ministry’s work has increased women’s awareness and prompted them to create a large number of associations and networks for the purpose of improving their living conditions.

• Conduct of advocacy in collaboration with women’s associations to improve women’s access to decision-making posts: this led to the establishment of a trade union of women civil servants to endeavour to secure their rightful status.

• Close collaboration with the Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy (MEBA), which has taken on board the fact that girls’ education should occupy an important place in the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Programme; this means raising the level of school attendance by girls.

• An initiative by Burkina Faso led to the establishment of the International Centre for Women’s and Girls’ Education in Africa (CIEFFA) as a means of building up women’s capacities.

At the social and economic levels
The Government has boosted women’s economic power in order to reduce poverty by:

• Augmenting the Support Fund for Women’s Income-Generating Activities (FAARF);
• Establishing a FAARF project;
• Constructing social and economic infrastructure such as the women’s centres (maisons de la femme) with funds provided under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HPIC) scheme;
• Provision of technology for women’s associations, also from HPIC funds. Many of the NGOs working to improve women’s living conditions offer them micro-loans;
• Women’s capacity building by means of training in management techniques. However, there are difficulties of communication connected with market liberalization and the Internet. Some people place their orders on the Internet, but the majority of the women are illiterate. Even for the ones who can read and write, the cost of this technology places it beyond their reach.

With regard to women’s human rights
The establishment of the National Committee to Combat Discrimination against Women (CONALDIS) in the Ministry for the Advancement of Women provides a guarantee that all
the relevant texts are in conformity with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Ministry works in close collaboration with several women’s organizations, such as Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), to ensure the application of legal instruments and other texts supporting the cause of women.

The Criminal Code was amended in order to make men subject to the same adultery provisions as women.

Despite all these efforts and the Government’s affirmation of its will, the following challenges remain:
- Social and cultural backwardness;
- Poverty;
- Illiteracy;
- Women’s excessive burden of work;
- Lack of training;
- Failure to apply the law effectively;
- Women’s under-representation in decision-making spheres.
PART TWO: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE FURTHER INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED AT THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

I. WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING

The principal legal instruments regulating members of the public administration and private individuals contain no examples of discrimination based on sex:

- The Civil Service (Employment and Employees) Act (No. 013/98/AN of 28 April 1998);

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects

(a) Successful measures

Burkina Faso has shown its determination to implement the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, by adopting the following measures:

At the national level

- The Constitution of June 1991;
- The Agrarian and Land Reform Act (No. 41/96ADP of 23 May 1996);
- The Code on Individuals and the Family; adopted in 1989, entered into force in 1990;
- The creation of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women by Decree No. 97-270/PRES/PM of 10 June 1997;
- The Establishment of CONALDIS in 1992;
- The nomination of the focal points;
- The creation of steering and monitoring bodies for the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women;
- The initiation of the decentralization process;
- The support given to these national initiatives by development partners (international institutions, NGOs and other associations).

At the regional and international level

- Accession to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Accession to Convention No. 111 of the International Labour Organization;
- Accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Accession the African Charter of Human and People’s Rights.

(b) Measures carried out

- The establishment of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women marked the beginning of the translation of words into action: the dissemination, publicizing and application of the instruments on women and the creation of local offices for coordination of women’s affairs in the country’s 45 provinces;
- The establishment of 13 regional offices for the advancement of women.
B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

(a) Obstacles
- Social and cultural backwardness;
- Organizational constraints ( politicization of certain senior posts);
- Illiteracy;
- Low level of training;
- Lack of qualifications;
- Lack of ambition;
- The burden of social and family responsibilities;
- The failure to apply legislation;
- Ignorance of legislation.

(b) Challenges
- Securing changes of attitude;
- Effective application of the positive-discrimination legislation;
- Increasing the amount and quality of women’s training;
- Persuading women to take posts of responsibility.

C. Lessons learned
- Efforts are being made to increase women’s representation in decision-making bodies;
- Some women have become leaders of public opinion;
- Some women have won elected office.

Nevertheless, the policy of positive discrimination in favour of women remains necessary to the embryonic emergence of women in decision-making spheres in Burkina Faso.

II. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

The political will to improve the situation of women by means of education for all has been manifested in the ministerial decrees and the plans of action and in the establishment of institutional arrangements for the implementation of education policies for women and girls.

A. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and policies

The establishment by decree No. 96-351/PRES/PM/MEBA of 11 September 1996 of an office with specific responsibility for the improvement of women’s and girls’ education through back-up measures such as:
- The creation of satellite schools and informal basic education centres to improve girls’ access to education and the introduction of equal quotas for the two sexes (50 per cent boys and 50 per cent girls at the time of enrolment);
- Since its launch in June 1994 the “1,000 Girls” project, currently consisting of a training centre for girls under the “Six commitments” programme, has in fact trained 1,000 girls a year and integrated them in working life;
- The introduction of free education: from the 2003/2004 school year the State is paying the costs for all girls enrolling for the first year; this has produced unprecedented results in the country’s education system: the number of girls enrolling in the first year rose from 89,000 to 127,000, an increase of 41 per cent;
• The formulation and implementation of a project for girls under the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Programme, which has delivered appropriate solutions to the many problems still impeding girls’ access to education.

The following priority activities have been identified:
• Advocacy and awareness-raising to overcome social and cultural backwardness and change attitudes;
• Training in the gender approach for all the education system’s stakeholders (teachers, parents, grass-roots communities) in order to eliminate the sexist stereotypes in people’s attitudes and behaviour;
• Combating violence against girls at school and at home (sexual harassment, early and forced marriage, etc.); this is a long-term task, and the results cannot be evaluated at the present stage of the programme.

More and more women are joining the teaching profession; this development receives broad encouragement and support from the Government, which sees in it a means of promoting greater equality between the sexes.

**In secondary and higher education and scientific research**

After the establishment of the coordination office of the Committee for Study and Promotion of Girls’ Education, the following measures were introduced to encourage girls to attend school:
• Adoption of the plan in July 1994;
• Training of teachers and care personnel in the problems of education and schooling for girls;
• Award of scholarships exclusively for girls, with priority given to the 10 provinces which have the lowest attendance rates:
  - 1,500 scholarships awarded in 1996-1997;
  - 1,000 scholarships awarded in 1997-1998;
  - 750 scholarships awarded in 1998-1999;

**Progress achieved:** The award of scholarships has produced a fairly substantial increase in the number of girls attending school (girls account for 40 per cent of the total enrolment).

• Priority allocation of 60 per cent of rooms in the university cities to girls in order to provide them with good accommodation and an ideal setting for study:
  - 184 rooms in 1996-1997
  - 269 rooms in 1997-1998
  - 407 rooms from 1998-1999
  - 407 rooms in 2000-2001
  - 497 rooms in 2001-2002
  - 621 rooms in 2002-2003
  - 699 rooms in 2003-2004
Literacy
Informal education and literacy training

The enrolment of girls rose from 61,198 in 2000-200 to 71,710 in 2001-2002 and to 111,738 in 2002-2003. The enrolment rate for girls is higher than for boys and their drop-out rate is lower. But the pass rate has been higher for boys, except in 2002-2003 when the trend was reversed and a larger number girls passed the exams.

The highest drop-out rate is found in the South-West region, with 47.2 per cent, while in the other regions it rarely exceeds 20 per cent. There are few girls taking specialized and technical training courses. The East-Centre, West-Centre, North and Centre regions have no girls enrolled in such courses, and their general drop-out rates are higher.

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

Parents’ poverty, social and cultural backwardness, institutional and educational constraints, and sexist stereotypes are the main obstacles to girls’ education.

It goes without saying that the remaining challenge is to make a success of the enormous undertaking represented by the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Programme, with the aim of achieving a gross school attendance rate of 70 per cent (65 per cent for girls) and a female literacy rate of 40 per cent.

C. Lessons learned in the implementation of girls’ education projects

- Where access is concerned, the main obstacle is the extreme poverty of parents;
- The grass-roots projects are having a positive effect on the establishment of equality of opportunities and a major impact on the efforts to expand girls’ education;
- Ways of increasing girls’ attendance, with a target increase from 30.50 per cent in 1995 to 56 per cent in 2006;
- Ways of improving girls’ access to the sub-system, with a target increase from 35 per cent in 1995 to 45 per cent in 2006;
- Ways of increasing girls’ secondary education rate, with a target increase from 9.66 per cent in 1995 to 25 per cent in 2006.

III. WOMEN AND THE MEDIA
(a) Summary of achievements

Burkina Faso has made great efforts in recent decades to improve the situation of its women, especially with regard to their access to new information and communications technologies (ICT):

- Formulation in 2000 of a national communications policy for development;
- Formulation and implementation in 1999 of a global communications strategy by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women (MPF);
- Formulation and adoption of the Five-Year Plan of Action (2003-2007) by MPF, with an advocacy component entitled “Reduction of the inequalities suffered by women”;
- Adoption in 2003 of an Advertising Code to regulate the use of language in the media;
- Adoption by the Government in 2000 of the Plan for Development of the National Information and Communications Infrastructure;
Creation in 2003 and 2004 of two websites to improve the image of women (the MPF website and the Femmes Leaders website);
Training provided by MPF for senior personnel of communications and information associations;
Conduct by MPF of a study on positive and negative stereotypes of women in Burkina Faso;
Production by MPF and staging in various locations in 2004 of theatre forums on women’s image;
Organization of a discussion conference on enhancing women’s image in the media;
Introduction of awards for women communicators;
Appointment of women communicators to senior communications posts in ministerial departments.

(b) Progress achieved
In the media
- Improvement of the language used in radio and television broadcasts in order to present a positive image of women;
- Expansion of the space allocated to women’s concerns by the media (more articles in the press and more radio and television programmes);
- Improvement of women’s status in media bodies (appointment of women as managing directors, editors-in-chief, station heads, etc.);
- Injection of fresh energy into radio and television broadcasting and introduction of new topics.

In civil society
- Creation of a pressure group to enhance women’s image in the media;
- Reinforcement of the capacities of members of the Association of African Communications Professionals (APAC) by means of various forms of training (use of computers and new ICT, gender and development);
- APAC support for the communications activities of women’s associations;
- Contribution of the Union of Women and Image to awareness-raising and communications activities for women in the form of film shows;
- Conduct of a study on women’s access to new ICT by the Information, Communications and Training Network for Women in NGOs (RECI/ONG);
- Establishment of a community radio station (Radio Munyun) by women in Banfora.

(c) Main obstacles to women’s access to new ICT
- Women’s ignorance of their right to information;
- Problems connected with basic infrastructure (computers, electricity supply, telephone lines, etc.);
- Costs too high for women;
- Illiteracy rate of 80 per cent;
- Social status impaired by social and cultural backwardness;
- Unavailability of training for girls;
- Poor national coverage of the radio and television networks;
- Production of information having little relevance to life in the rural world, especially the lives of women.
(d) Remaining challenges

Challenges for the Government

In order to improve women’s access to information and new ICT for the purposes of equality and development, the Government, specifically the Ministry for the Advancement of Women supported by its technical and financial partners, must give emphasis to the following activities:

• Provision of material and financial support to associations of women communicators;
• Encouragement of women to inject fresh life into the women’s platforms in the media (more broadcasts and articles on the advancement of women);
• Increasing the awareness of women leaders of the advantages of new ICT;
• Installation of new ICT in locations to which women have easy access, such as women’s NGOs, health centres and training centres.

Challenges for women

The country’s women must acquire information and communications tools by:

• Mastering new ICT;
• Identifying their many real ICT needs and using ICT to satisfy these needs;
• Performing as true stakeholders on the networks and enriching the content of the Internet with news of their activities and projects.

IV. WOMEN AND HEALTH

(a) Summary of the evolution of women’s and children’s health indicators

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<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>484</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antenatal coverage (%)</td>
<td>47.77</td>
<td>61.05</td>
<td>54.08</td>
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<td>Postnatal coverage (%)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>16.30</td>
<td>18.64</td>
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<td>Contraceptive use (%)</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>14.48</td>
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<td>Attended confinements (%)</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>39.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incidence of HIV/AIDS among pregnant women (%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abortion rate (%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tetanus vaccine coverage of pregnant women (%)</td>
<td>71.00</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47.05</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malnutrition (%)</td>
<td>13.62 (1992)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attended confinements (%)</td>
<td>24.50</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>39.90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low birth-weight (%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vaccination coverage (%)</td>
<td>66.00 (BCG)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>90.96 (BCG)</td>
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With regard to the HIV pandemic, like all other countries Burkina Faso has experienced a resurgence of cases of AIDS among women of childbearing age: six to seven out of every 100 pregnant women are infected with HIV, and two to three of them will transmit the infection to their babies if no preventive action is taken.

According to the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee to Combat HIV/AIDS/STI, the incidence of HIV among pregnant women was 4.8 per cent in 2002. Three quarters of the infected persons are children and young adults aged 15 to 40. The number of notified cases of AIDS continues to rise, in spite of the under-notification of cases.

**Steps taken to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality**

With regard to political commitment

- Revision of the national health policy document and formulation of the National Health Development Plan, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in September 2000;
- The health reforms include:
  - Decentralization of the health system;
  - Hospital reforms;
  - Reform of the pharmaceutical system (supply of medicines);
  - Quality control (drafting of reproductive health rules);
- Funding of the health system: the amount of the health budget as a proportion of the general State budget for the years 1996 to 1999 was 10.7, 9.9, 8.9, and 10.5 per cent respectively; the State is making commitments as part of the reforms.

Steps taken by the Family Health Department (DSF) to help women and children


The other steps taken by DSF to cut the maternal and child mortality rates include:

- Prevention of the transmission of infections from mother to child;
- Integrated treatment of childhood diseases;
- Provision of obstetrical care not covered by some other arrangement.

(c) **Obstacles encountered**

The obstacles encountered in the implementation of the various measures mentioned above amount to problems of an organizational nature (difficulty of executing the planned activities) and shortage of financial resources:

- Women’s scant involvement in the health management bodies and their consequent lack of decision-making power are still not perceived as obstacles to the improvement of the health of women and children;
- The negative impact of the AIDS pandemic on human and financial resources aggravates the problems of women’s and children’s health;
- The referral and counter-referral system is inefficient;
- The commitment of the players is insufficient at all levels.
(d) Challenges and prospects

Challenges

There remain many challenges to be taken up in the promotion of the health of women and children:
1. The access to maternal and child care services is limited;
2. The services are of poor quality;
3. Traditional practices harmful to maternal and child health persist;
4. There is insufficient coordination of the activities and little collaboration within and between the services.

Prospects

Possible solutions to the problem of reducing maternal mortality have been taken into account in the strategic plan for safe maternity for the period 2004-2008, the general aim of which is to cut maternal and neonatal mortality by 30 per cent by 2008.

- **Indicator 1**: availability of services
- **Indicator 2**: accessibility of services
- **Indicator 3**: use of services and adequate coverage
- **Indicator 4**: quality of services

V. HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Burkina Faso has had the pleasure of establishing relations with the United Nations, in particular under CEDAW. These relations have been manifested most recently in the submission of the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports to the CEDAW committee in July 2003. There is thus little new to report with respect to women’s human rights, but it will be useful to recall the situation in terms of the main points raised in Part Two of the questionnaire.

Burkina Faso has ratified all the international human rights instruments, including CEDAW. The promotion of women’s human rights is a component of the implementation of these instruments. The preamble to the Constitution refers to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and People’s Rights. The Constitution prohibits any discrimination on the basis of sex.

It follows from this position that subsidiary laws and regulations and policies and projects in all fields embody the principle of the prohibition of sex-based discrimination. This applies to the Social Security Code, the Labour Code, the Criminal Code, the Civil Code, the Code on Individuals and the Family, the Electoral Code, the Agrarian and Land Reform Act, and the acts on the comprehensive reform of the civil service.

A. *Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and policies*

Judicial matters

In the course of 2000 the judicial system, the guarantor of human rights, underwent a basic reorganization of its upper echelons designed to provide citizens with better access to justice. Burkina Faso now has:
- Administrative and district courts (more than 500);
• Courts of minor instance (13);
• Courts of major instance (13);
• Labour courts (4);
• Administrative courts;
• Courts of appeal;
• A Court of Cassation;
• A Council of State;
• A Court of Audit;
• A Constitutional Council.

Under urging by women voiced at a forum in October 2000, the Government created the National Legal Aid Commission to enable disadvantaged persons, many of whom are women, to have access to these various courts without having to pay the legal costs, which had constituted in the past a big obstacle to such access.

Access to decision-making posts

The embodiment of the principle of gender equality in the Electoral Code has led to steady but clear progress in the number of women securing elective posts. In 1995, for example, 152 women were successful in the commune elections, as against 1,546 men. In 2000, 232 women and 860 men were elected. In 1992 the National Assembly had four women members; in 2002 (during the current term of office) it had 13.

Women and men have equal rights in access to credit and with respect to jobs and remuneration. Moreover, women enjoy maternity protection care, both public and private.

Many awareness-raising campaigns are carried out, both by the Government and by civil society, to publicize all the legislation favourable to women. Criminal and civil penalties are imposed by the courts in respect of violation of women’s rights, in the following cases in particular:
• Excision;
• Forced marriage;
• Abandonment by the family;
• Adultery;
• Beatings and deliberate wounding;
• Rape;
• Procuring; etc.

The NGO Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) and the Burkina Faso movement for human and people’s rights, in conjunction on the governmental side with the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, have carried out training and awareness-raising activities country-wide, with emphasis on activities aimed at women.

All the country’s provinces have paralegal personnel to provide guidance and counselling for persons in difficulties and to make referrals to the competent legal services.
B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

The obstacles come in many shapes and sizes:

• Women’s high illiteracy rate and their consequent unfamiliarity with the content of legislation even when it is intended for their benefit;
• The poverty which obstructs all promotional activities in the legal and in other fields;
• The social and cultural backwardness which still imposes customary practices harmful to women;
• The State’s and civil society’s lack of the human and material resources to publicize and apply the legislation favourable to women.

The biggest remaining challenge is to secure for the country the economic development which will provide solutions to the problems mentioned above.

VI. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Many different forms of violence are inflicted on women and girls in Burkina Faso: excision, rape, trafficking in prostitutes (procuring), forced and early marriage, levirate marriage (compulsory marriage of one’s brother’s widow), wife beating, and sorcery.

A. Measures taken by the Government to combat violence against women and girls

Burkina Faso ratified CEDAW on 26 October 1993.

The amendment of the Criminal Code in 1996 resulted in provisions enabling women to institute legal proceedings in certain cases of involving violence:

• **Articles 380 to 382** of the Code, on excision, criminalizes any act of damage to a woman’s genital organs by ablation, excision, infibulation, desensitization or any other means;
• **Article 408**, on adultery, imposes the same penalties on both men and women convicted of adultery, whereas the previous legislation punished a man only when he maintained a mistress in the conjugal home;
• **Article 377**, on bigamy;
• **Article 422**, on incitement of minors to commit acts of indecency;
• **Article 376**, on forced marriage and levirate marriage;
• **Article 404**, on custody and visiting rights of separated parents.

B. Examples of successful policies, legislative change and programmes and projects

• Study on sexual violence against children, conducted in October 2001 by the Ministry of Social Services and National Solidarity (MASSN) in collaboration with UNICEF;
• Implementation of a pilot project to combat trafficking in children (2000-2001);
• Adoption of the Trafficking in Children (Definition and Suppression) Act (No. 038 of 27 May 2003);
• Provision of training for 236 mothers of children victims of trafficking or exposed to trafficking and award of loans for their activities from the Support Fund for Women’s Income-Generating Activities (FAARF), with a reimbursement rate of 98 per cent;
• In the period 2000-2003, conduct of 623 talks, counselling sessions, conferences and cinema debates, which reached 39,213 persons: 11,809 men, 5,248 women and 15,655 children;
• Poster campaign on violence against girls.

C. **Obstacles and problems encountered**

• Persistence of social and cultural backwardness;
• Ignorance of ratified legal instruments on the part of the beneficiaries and some of the players;
• Lack of resources for implementing policies by applying criminal legislation;
• Poverty and unemployment among girls;
• Exodus of women victims of early and/or forced marriage;
• Shelter of displaced persons fleeing armed conflicts;
• Immigration of women from bordering countries in search of work.

D. **Challenges**

• Formulation of information programmes;
• Determination of a strategy for conveying information to the players and the beneficiaries;
• Combating poverty;
• Combating prostitution and sex tourism;
• Carrying out information and awareness-raising campaigns.

Much further effort will be required in order to eliminate the scourge of **violence against women and girls**, and measures will be needed to restore the victims’ confidence and enable them to take a full part in the country’s genuine development.

**VII. WOMEN AND POVERTY (POVERTY - ECONOMY - EMPLOYMENT)**

Whatever indicator is used, Burkina Faso is classified among the poorest countries of the world. For more than a decade it has occupied the 172nd or 173rd place among the 174 countries classified by UNDP. The priority survey of household living conditions demonstrates the degree of the discrimination between men and women, which can be expressed as a gap of 1.4 points in favour of men on the poverty index. Women also make a bigger contribution than men to the overall national poverty index (52 against 45 per cent), and the poverty among women is slightly more severe than among men. However, it appears that households headed by men are the poorest of all (46.9 against 36.5 per cent for households headed by women); this situation is due, amongst other factors, to the numerical superiority of households headed by men.

But what is the reality of women’s poverty? Do they have access to resources and jobs?

(a) **Women and poverty**

The situation of women in Burkina Faso has been and remains a source of concern. In fact, despite the existing positive factors for women (in the institutional, legal, organizational and formal fields), poverty has an essentially female face. This is why the revised Strategic Framework for Combating Poverty (CSLP) gives particular emphasis to the mainstreaming of the whole array of women’s concerns by incorporating the gender dimension as one of the main principles of poverty reduction.
Furthermore, three of the six general objectives of the revised National Population Policy (PNP) are concerned with improving people’s health, in particular their reproductive health, and improving their knowledge of issues connected with population, gender and development, and the upgrading of human resources.

Since 2000 the State has made funds from the HIPC envelope available to certain ministerial sectors. These funds, totalling $US 700 million for the period 2000-2017 with an annual tranche of $US 35.4 million for 2004, is shared among the social ministries, including the Ministry for the Advancement of Women.

(b) Women and the economy

Although women make a big contribution to the national economy through their many different activities in both rural and urban areas, their economic power remains constrained by their low incomes. A number of measures have been taken to improve this situation by the enterprise-promotion agencies, such as: the establishment in 1999 of an integrated programme for the development of small-scale cotton processing (90 per cent of the beneficiaries are women), the earmarking of prizes specifically for women at trade events (Ouagadougou International Handicrafts Fair, local fairs) in order to stimulate their commitment, and the provision of marketing back-up in many areas (creation of a “trade point”, work of the national standards organization (FASONORM)) to give women access to external trade at low cost, increase their output and streamline its movement, and augment their incomes. The counselling and management support has led, amongst other benefits, to the creation in 2003 of a mutual guarantee company by the Weavers and Dyers Association of Kadiogo. However, the principal means of boosting women’s economic power remains the provision of financial instruments which meet their requirements.

In spite of the efforts made to improve the level of funding available through the Support Fund for Women’s Income-Generating Activities (FAARF), the needs of its target population are not being satisfied to a sufficient extent. There is therefore a need to augment still further the credits allocated to FAARF.

(c) Women and employment

For women, access to jobs is a great advantage, for amongst other benefits it reinforces their economic power and thus enhances their social status.

There are few women in the civil service, where they account for about 23 per cent of the personnel. Most of them are employed in the middle categories. They are also under-represented in the private sector (37.4 per cent in 2002).

It is in the informal sector that women predominate (58.1 per cent), for the entry conditions are easily met. They account for 45.39 per cent of workers in agriculture. One example of the steps taken to improve women’s access to credit is the amendment of the lending conditions of the National Programme for the Re-employment of Redundant Workers to take account of the particular concerns of women: for example, acceptance of moveable property as surety, including such items as household electrical appliances and means of transport (bicycles, mopeds, etc.).
The strategy formulated by the Employment Department to improve the employment situation has specific programmes for disadvantaged groups, including women. In addition, the number of occupations covered by the training courses for women in the vocational training centres has been increased.

(d) Obstacles

A number of obstacles persist despite the action already taken to combat poverty among women:
- Insufficient loans granted by FAARF;
- Lack of funding for the specific programmes on women’s employment;
- The rigidity of the loan-guarantee requirements for bank loans;
- The lack of a national “gender” policy;
- The failure to take women’s true outgoings into account in the calculation of standard income tax rates;
- The failure to promote women’s entrepreneurship;
- The need to decentralize the FAARF lending system;

The achievements include the increase in the number of occupations covered by the training courses for women in the vocational training centres.

(e) Lessons drawn

Thirty years after the inauguration of International Women’s Year by the United Nations and 10 years after the Beijing meeting, the economic situation of women in Burkina Faso remains precarious and fragile. It is therefore to be hoped that the proclaimed political will be followed by more practical results for Burkina Faso’s women and consequently for the whole country.

VIII. WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

(a) Women’s participation in decision-making

Very few posts of responsibility are held by women in the Ministry of the Environment and Infrastructure (MECV): only three women currently hold such posts, out of a total of 84 ranging from minister to provincial director.

Women take a very active part in women’s and mixed professional, environmental and general-interest associations (Information, Communications and Training Network for Women in NGOs (RECIF/ONG), Coordination Committee of NGOs and Associations in Burkina Faso (COA/FEB)) in the design and implementation of action plans, such as the National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PAN/LCD) under MECV auspices, and in the village, provincial, regional and national committees set up in this connection.

The remaining challenges include creating an awareness at the central level of the problems of securing women’s advancement through increased responsibility, making rural women understand what is at stake for the environment and what skills and opportunities are being offered to them, and generally improving the means of action.
(b) Integration of women’s needs and concerns in the policies and programmes

1. Employment and internal promotion of women in MECV
   • There are 139 women on a staff of 920, including 47 in senior posts and 62 in the paramilitary Water and Forests Corps;
   • Women are represented at all levels and in all the paramilitary grades and social-vocational categories;
   • Burkina Faso has Africa’s only female hunting guide;
   • Another remaining challenge is the need to increase vocational training for women, for it is currently insufficient.

2. Action programmes and plans
   The female dimension has been mainstreamed in all the programmes for implementation of the environmental conventions ratified by Burkina Faso since the early 1990s. Woman’s role as the principal users of natural resources, their traditional willingness to involve themselves in local development activities, their status as the prime means of transferring knowledge to young people, and their experience and skills are acknowledged. Activities for the benefit of women are planned in:
   • The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan;
   • The National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification (PAN/LCD);
   • The national strategy for implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change;
   • The national environmental education strategy;
   • The National Forestry Policy (PNF);
   • The various departmental strategic action plans in MECV;
   • The policy memorandum on decentralized rural development.

3. Measures for women carried out between 2000 and the present
Mainstreaming of women in the measures and collaboration with MECV
   • Participation of women in the village land management committees (CVGT) in rural areas: support is provided for socio-economic activities of women (soap making, dyeing, etc.) from the Community Action Fund (FIC) constituted by revenue from wildlife activities;
   • Personnel training at a workshop and two sessions, in 2000 and 2001, for all the female secretaries;
   • Regular employment of 300 female day workers in the harvesting and pre-treatment of seeds at the National Forest Seeds Centre, and collaboration with rural women in the harvesting of shea nuts (karité) from good plants;
   • Participation of the GAFRED Bobo women’s association in the training offered by MECV to other women in the recycling of plastic waste into useful items;
   • Training, support and collaboration for almost 1,000 women working in the recycling of plastic waste;
   • Census of women flower growers with a view to providing them with sales outlets;
   • Installation and equipment of hygienic facilities for women game processors;
   • Establishment of more and more drinking water supply points;
   • Discussion of questions relating to women sand collectors, organization of the recycling of wastes, and the establishment of women’s vegetable gardens in all the regions.
Organization and training of women, and support for the implementation of micro-projects

- Arrangements for women to participate in mixed groups or for them to create groups of wood producers and vendors, wood-charcoal vendors, and fish and game processors, in various places in the country’s 13 regions;
- Harvesting of forest seeds: Cascades region;
- Harvesting of forest products (nuts, tamarind, etc.): West Centre;
- Plant production, establishment of nurseries, reforestation: Sahel, West Centre, North, Cascades, Centre;
- Local beer production and wood industry: Centre;
- Harvesting of forest seeds: Cascades region;
- Harvesting of forest products (nuts, tamarind, etc.): West Centre;
- Plant production, establishment of nurseries, reforestation: Sahel, West Centre, North, Cascades, Centre;
- Local beer production and wood industry: Centre;
- Market gardening, reforestation with fruit trees: South-West, North;
- Small dikes, anti-erosion areas, Zaï and crescent techniques, market gardening: Sahel, Central and Eastern Plateau; awareness-raising to prevent the filling of manure pits with household wastes: all over the country;
- Construction of improved ovens: West Centre, North, Sahel, Cascades;
- Non-traditional livestock-raising: training for four women wildlife experts; fish processing: Cascades and South Centre; bee-keeping, soap manufacture, dyeing: Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, West and East Centre;
- Fire management: Cascades, Boucle du Mouhoun;
- Literacy: Cascades;
- Collection of household wastes and manufacture of compost at Saaba: Centre;
- Use of plant-health products on developed areas around villages and awareness-raising to prevent the washing of pesticide containers in watercourses for re-use and the consequent poisoning of family members using the containers, pollution of the immediate environment and the water, and poisoning of the water’s users;
- Collection and recycling of plastic waste: East and West Centre, North, East, Hauts Bassins.

Achievements: Boosting of women’s enthusiasm and determination to succeed.

Remaining challenges: Mobilization of substantial financing to complete women’s organization and training.

(c) Improvement of arrangements for evaluating the impact of the policies on women

The mainstreaming of the female dimension in the environmental management plans and programmes already provides a good basis for evaluation in future years. But for the moment, the MECV statistical service is generally defective.

Remaining challenges
- Establishment of an efficient statistical service in MECV;
- Drawing the attention of all stakeholders to the need to collect statistics on women.
PART THREE: INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) National mechanisms and institutional arrangements for the advancement of women

1. The various mechanisms and their mandates

The Ministry for the Advancement of Women (MPF) was created in 1997 with a mandate to implement governmental policy for women’s social and economic advancement. The mandate of the National Coordination Committee of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (CNPAPF) is to coordinate the activities and projects for the advancement of women in the other ministries and institutions and in civil society.

The National Committee to Combat Discrimination against Women (CONALDIS) is responsible for:
- Monitoring the application of legislation benefiting women and girls;
- Production of global reports on women’s living conditions and submission of these reports to the authorities and to the United Nations.

The Observatory’s function is to observe, describe and analyse the situation of women and disseminate information about it.

The Centre for Information, Training and Research on Women (CIFRAF) is a permanent forum for exchanges of information and ideas on:
- The production and analysis of reliable and relevant information;
- The formulation and establishment of training and further-training programmes with teaching support;
- The production of studies and research on the situation of women.

The 27 focal points are the driving belts of communication between MPF and the other ministerial departments and the development partners.

The main purpose of the national shea nut (karité) project is to rehabilitate and reactivate this sector to enable it make a better contribution to the improvement of the social and economic standards of rural women. The Support Fund for Women’s Income-Generating Activities (FAARF) helps to improve women’s living conditions by making loans and providing training in management techniques.

The Ministry of Social Services and National Solidarity (MASSN) has a training and production centre for rural girls who have not attended school or dropped out of school, the purpose of which is to contribute to their social and economic advancement.

The mandate of the Office for the Advancement and Education of Girls in the Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy (MEBA) is to improve girls’ access to primary school and ensure that they stay in the system and graduate.

The MASSN National Committee to Combat Excision has a mandate to:
- Collect and publish data on excision practices;
- Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of all the measures.
2. In women’s associations

There is increasing awareness on the part of organizations of civil society of the importance of concerted action. Accordingly, there has been a steady increase in networking and the creation of a framework for concerted action. The existing networks include RECIF/ONG, COA/FEB and WiLDAF. They work in collaboration with MPF.

3. The resources available to each of these mechanisms consist of their human, financial and logistical resources.

4. The Ministry alone is a member of the decision-making bodies. The other institutional mechanisms and arrangements operate as agencies for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies, programmes and strategies for the advancement of women.

5. The main partners of the national mechanisms are the ministerial departments, the technical and financial partners, and the NGOs and women’s associations.

6. The human and financial resources of the national mechanisms are provided from the State budget and by the technical and financial partners.

(b) Focal points

1. Focal points exist in the form of the contact groups on gender equality and empowerment of women established in the line ministries.

2. The ministries provide support by appointing a staff member and contributing his or her time.

3. The national machinery provides support by training the focal points and integrating them in the MPF activities.

4. Their effectiveness remains at a low level owing to the lack of resources and their remoteness from decision-making.

(c) Monitoring mechanisms

1. The monitoring mechanisms established to measure progress in the implementation of initiatives include: meetings with women’s associations and other NGOs, focal points, technical and financial partners, organizations of civil society, and technical personnel from the various ministerial departments.

2. Accountability for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is determined on a sectoral basis.

3. The activities are coordinated by CNPAPF, which is chaired by the Prime Minister and is attended by senior officials from the various ministerial departments and agencies and any other bodies running sectoral projects.
(d) Capacities

1. Women are represented in all decision-making bodies (Government, Parliament, upper echelons of the civil service, etc.), even if still in insufficient numbers.

2. The mechanisms consist of the women nominated and elected and depend on the actual capacities of the women themselves.

3. The remaining challenges are the poor standard of women’s education, their limited access to education, their low incomes, and social and cultural prejudices.

(e) Indicators

1. Basic indicators have been established in the education system. The Office for the Advancement of Girls’ Education is responsible for monitoring.

2. The main difficulty encountered with regard to statistics is the dearth of sex-disaggregated data.

3. The failure to disaggregate data by sex is still a problem in the economic and social fields.

4. New types of educational data need to be collected (higher education and especially in the scientific series).

5. The National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) and the statistical services of the line ministries are able to supply the necessary desaggregated data when requested to do so and if funding is available.

6. Sex-disaggregated data are used in the education and health systems in the formulation of policies and plans.

(f) Roles of the different stakeholders

1. The Government has demonstrated its will to promote gender equality by creating a favourable environment in the shape of all the mechanisms established for the implementation of its policies and strategies in this area.

2. Parliament contributes to the advancement of women by ensuring that it is represented at all the international conferences, creating a favourable legislative framework, and lobbying the Government on this issue.

3. These roles could be strengthened by means of increased commitment and a firmer political will.

4. MPF collaborates closely with the women’s associations and NGOs in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies for the advancement of women.

5. The NGOs and associations are represented on CNPAPF in the context of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The achievements resulting from the establishment of institutional mechanisms and arrangements for the advancement of women include the
construction of women’s centres (*maisons de la femme*), which operate as forums for debate and exchange of information, and the training centres for women’s income-generating activities.
PART FOUR: MAIN CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THEM

The evaluation of the areas of the Beijing Platform for Action selected by Burkina Faso shows that significant progress has been made. However, action is still required in the following areas:

Women and health

Despite the efforts of the Government and the other players, the situation remains worrying. Indeed, the figures are alarming, with high maternal mortality rates of 484 per 100,000 in 1998 and 1999.

Means of contraception are widely available but remain unfamiliar to many women in rural areas and are little used in some circles.

There is a higher incidence of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections among women than among men because women are still too exposed to the risk of contracting such an infection owing to practices such as early or forced marriage, excision, unwillingness of their partners to wear condoms, levirate marriage and polygamy.

Women and poverty

Women make up more than half of the population (52%) and constitute the poorest population group. Poverty has a female face. Being aware of this situation, the Government has introduced many different measures to combat poverty. Attention may be drawn in this connection to the formulation of the Strategic Framework to Combat Poverty; this Strategic Framework was revised in 2003 to give special emphasis to mainstreaming the gender dimension as one of the fundamental principles of poverty reduction. The action in this field must be intensified as a matter of urgency in order to secure equitable development for all.

Education and training of women and girls

The Government has introduced incentives to encourage girls to go to school: free education for all girls enrolling in the first year, from the 2003-2004 school year; award of secondary-education scholarships earmarked for girls, with priority given to the 10 provinces with the lowest attendance rates.

Several types of training are provided for women. The efforts must be continued in this area in order to reduce the high female illiteracy rate, which is one of the biggest obstacles to women’s access to decision-making posts and to their awareness of their rights.

Violence against women

Despite the existence of legislation to suppress this kind of violence, women still fall victim to violent practices such as excision, rape, beating and deliberate wounding. This scourge is due to some extent to the persistence of social and cultural backwardness and to ignorance of women’s rights on the part of the victims and some of the players; it constitutes an obstacle to women’s full development. Accordingly, the efforts to eradicate it must be continued.
The efforts of the Government and the other players will be continued in order fully to implement the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The measures taken to this end include:

- The formulation of a second Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women, for the period 2003-2007. This Plan incorporates the conclusions of the Beijing Conference. It has six programmes:
  1. Improvement of women’s incomes and working conditions;
  2. Capacity building for women and promotion of women’s special skills;
  3. Promotion of the human rights of women and girls;
  4. Enhancement of women’s role in managing the environment and living conditions;
  5. Reduction of the inequalities suffered by women;
  6. Consolidation of the institutional mechanism for the advancement of women.

The implementation of this new Plan will involve all the ministries, civil society and all the other stakeholders working for the advancement of women, for gender is a cross-cutting issue.

- The formulation - currently under way - of a national policy for the advancement of women which will create a synergy among the activities of the various stakeholders in order to secure the mainstreaming of the gender dimension and the advancement of women.

The following are the priority areas of institutional development to improve the implementation of initiatives over the next five years:

- Fulfilment of the mandate of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, which is responsible for ensuring the implementation of governmental policy for the social and economic advancement of women;
- The work of the agencies responsible for directing and monitoring the action plans for the advancement of women: CNPAPF and its Permanent Secretariat, and the Sectoral Committee;
- The work of the focal points designated in the other ministries, which are the driving belts of communication between their ministries and MPF.

The human and financial capacities of these mechanisms will have to be strengthened to enable them to carry out their activities.

The Government will endeavour, with the support of its partners, to remove the obstacles to the implementation of the initiatives, specifically by carrying through the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women for the period 2003-2007.
## ANNEX I

### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APAC</td>
<td>Association of African Communications Professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIEFFA</td>
<td>International Centre for Women’s and Girls’ Education in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIFRAF</td>
<td>Centre for Information, Training and Research on Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNEFSS</td>
<td>National Commission on Girls’ Secondary and Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNPAPF</td>
<td>National Coordination Committee of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNPF</td>
<td>National Committee for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>COA/FEB</td>
<td>Coordination Committee of NGOs and Associations in Burkina Faso</td>
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<td>CONALDIS</td>
<td>National Committee to Combat Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CSLP</td>
<td>Strategic Framework for Combating Poverty</td>
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<td>CVGT</td>
<td>Village land management committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEP/Santé</td>
<td>Studies and Planning Office/ Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSF</td>
<td>Family Health Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAAGRA</td>
<td>Project on support for income-generating activities of women farmers</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAARF</td>
<td>Support Fund for Women’s Income-Generating Activities</td>
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<td>FIC</td>
<td>Community Action Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPIC</td>
<td>Heavily indebted poor countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communications technologies</td>
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<td>INSD</td>
<td>National Institute of Statistics and Demography</td>
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<td>MASSN</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Services and National Solidarity</td>
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<td>MEBA</td>
<td>Ministry of Basic Education and Mass Literacy</td>
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<td>MECV</td>
<td>Ministry of the Environment and Infrastructure</td>
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<td>MESSRS</td>
<td>Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education and Scientific Research</td>
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<td>MPF</td>
<td>Ministry for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>MTEJ</td>
<td>Ministry of Employment, Labour and Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAN/LCD</td>
<td>National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification</td>
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<td>PDDEB</td>
<td>Ten-Year Programme for the Development of Basic Education</td>
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<td>PNF</td>
<td>National Forestry Policy</td>
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<td>PNP</td>
<td>National Population Policy</td>
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<td>PSN</td>
<td>National Health Policy</td>
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<td>RECIF/ONG</td>
<td>Information, Communications and Training Network for Women in NGOs</td>
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<td>SP/PAPF</td>
<td>Permanent Secretariat of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>WiLDAF</td>
<td>Women in Law and Development in Africa</td>
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### ANNEX II

**Contributors to the national report (Beijing+10)**

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<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Service</th>
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