

BOLIVIA

BEIJING REPORT

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART ONE

Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

a) Has a policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women been adopted and at what level? Was a plan of action developed to support its implementation? What mechanisms were established for monitoring and how are different actors held accountable for its implementation? Is there a national coordination mechanism at the highest level to ensure that the policy is implemented in all sector areas?

Concern to institutionalize policies for women in Bolivia dates back to the 1970s and the establishment of a body dedicated to women's and children's issues, overseen by the First Lady and characterized by a welfare approach. The National Social Policy Council was established in 1991 and it drew up the Ten Year Plan of Action for Children and Women, which led in 1992 to the establishment of the National Agency for Minors, Women, and the Family. That body produced the National Women's Program, which signaled a radical shift from a welfare approach to a social investment and efficiency perspective, complete with government policy proposals recognizing the multiplier effect of improving conditions for women.

The Ministry of Human Development was established in August 1993, with a division called the National Secretariat of Ethnical, Gender and Generational Affairs and an Assistant Secretary of Gender Affairs. From then on, the State had a structural mechanism for the advancement of women, responsible for formulating policies for women, in which gender was a conceptually, analytically and operationally core dimension of human and sustainable development.

The Executive Branch was restructured in 1997-2002, giving rise to the Vice-Ministry of Gender, Generational and Family Affairs and the Directorate of Gender Affairs, within the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning. The policies pursued were largely geared to social issues, but they also included poverty reduction and, conceptually, were closely tied in with the empowerment of women and the democratization of the reproductive sphere.

From 2002 to 2007, a period marked by severe economic, political and social crisis in Bolivia, gender policy-making was entrusted to state entities known for their work on behalf of vulnerable groups, a category that included women. Nevertheless, gender affairs have been reassigned to the Vice-Ministry of Women (VMM), a dependency of the Ministry of Sustainable Development, with policies directed toward the full exercise of women's rights and focusing on the economic sphere.

During this period, considerable progress was made with gender mainstreaming in Bolivia's regulatory framework and the promulgation of specific laws, such as Act No. 1674 Against Family or Domestic Violence. Nevertheless, that political will on the part of governments still fails to translate into budget appropriations, much to the concern of the authorities responsible for the advancement of women, who constantly fight for them.

A brief historical résumé, based on recent studies¹, highlights the progress made and the enormous challenges still to be faced with respect to government policies with a gender perspective and their institutionalization.

In 1992, for the first time ever, the historic fact of the inequality between men and women featured on the government agenda, within the conceptual framework of "women in development." It formed part of a sector-oriented approach, which, in line with social policies, focused on health, education and social services and targeted two specific groups: minors in particularly difficult circumstances and women in general.

The period from 1993 to 1997 was characterized by recognition of the effects of structural adjustment, a deepening of poverty and social exclusion, and acknowledgment of the existence of specific minorities with distinct needs depending on their ethnic, generational and gender status. At the same time, gender equity became a mandatory component of human development policies and a prerequisite for the legitimacy of the State and the political system. Attention focused on the importance of participation for municipal development. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Gender Affairs (SAG) coordinated the demand expressed by the women's movement with the political will of the government to address the issue of inequalities and historical inequity and find a place for it in its macro policy agenda.

Between 1997 and 2002, government policy included Bolivia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, which acknowledged the feminization of poverty and the need for a gender perspective cutting across all sectors, and led to the promulgation of Supreme Decree 24864 on Equal Opportunity for Men and Women.

Then came the first gender-mainstreaming plan to be drawn up and implemented in Bolivia: the 2001-2003 National Gender Equity Plan, backed by Supreme Decree 26350, which combined sectoral commitments in order to attain joint objectives. Agreement was reached with civil society on a Minimum Gender Platform and, based on a civil society initiative, a mechanism was established and promoted by the State for monitoring and evaluating compliance with government policies on gender issues.

In October 2003, the Constitutional President of the Republic was forced to resign and a new government took over led, to this day, by the then Vice-President Carlos Mesa.

It will be up to the new government to implement the latest Plan for Equal Opportunities and Full Exercise of the Rights of Women, which has already been negotiated with the sectors concerned.

¹ ¹Ministry of Sustainable Development, VM, "Analysis of Gender Equity in Bolivia, 1992 – 2002". July 2003.

This umbrella programme integrates the economic, social, political and environmental dimensions of development in such a way that economic and social development are complementary. It is based on the tenet that economic growth that is not people-centered is unsustainable and is directed to achieving equity and the creation of opportunities for those who lack them.

Once the subject of the divides between the status and position of men and women has been placed on the public agenda, the challenge consists of consolidating and institutionalizing mechanisms and entrenching policies in the execution of a National Plan aimed at diminishing the obstacles to women's contributions and to the redistribution of profits and of economic growth.

Plans:

By Supreme Decree No. 26350 of October 11, 2001, the Bolivian State adopted the following as state policies: the National Gender Equity Plan, the National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Gender-related Violence, and the Programme for the Reduction of Poverty in relation to Women 2001-2003.

Mechanisms:

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Gender Affairs (SAG) was established in 1993, as part of the National Secretariat of Ethnical, Gender and Generational Affairs (SNAEGG). It was the first official institution of this kind in the Executive branch and a response to longstanding demands by women's movements. The SAG was assigned responsibility for drawing up policies on women's issues.

The restructuring of the Executive in 1997 led to the establishment of the Vice-Ministry of Gender, Generational and Family Affairs (VAGGF) in the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning. Its functions were to promote policies and standards, with particular attention to the dissemination and assimilation of the gender perspective and monitoring compliance with existing laws and regulations through the Office of the Director General of Gender Affairs.

The Vice-Ministry of Women was set up in August 2002, as part of the (LOPE Act) restructuring of the Executive. Until March 2003, it came under the Ministry of Campesino and Indigenous, Gender and Generational Affairs. Then it became part of the Ministry of Sustainable Development. The Vice-Ministry of Women is the body responsible for formulating government policies on behalf of women.

b) What is the status of the national action plan developed after the Fourth World Conference on Women? Is the plan in use or has a new plan been drawn up? How is implementation being monitored? What constraints exist to using the plan as an effective instrument for the promotion of gender equality?

In the aftermath of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, 12 major areas of concern were taken up and addressed in the Follow-up Plan to the Recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It was applied to the entire country at the initiative of the National Liaison Committee of NGOs and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Gender Affairs (December 1996), and focused on the following subjects: institutionalization, leadership and access to power, social policies, labor, employment, production and the urban economy, and development and rural [*campesina*] and indigenous women (this last item was added to reflect Bolivian reality).

Subsequently, general guidelines were provided in government plans and put into effect through an Equal Opportunities for Bolivian Women Plan (PIOMB.- 1997), designed by the SAG and partially incorporated into the Gender Equity Plan 1998-2002 (PEG), drawn up by the Vice-Ministry of Gender, Generational and Family Affairs.

The National Gender Equity Plan, the National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Gender-related Violence, and the Programme for the Reduction of Poverty in relation to Women 2001-2003, which were established by Supreme Decree 26350 as government policies on gender issues, are in line with international recommendations and in this case with the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women. This makes it easier to monitor and ensure continuity in the actions taken, which have varied as a result of the circumstances that Bolivia has gone through recently and of performance lags caused by constant changes in the authorities.

The current guidelines are those contained in the National Plan on Government Policies for the Full Exercise of the Rights of Women 2004-2007, currently being discussed with the different social sectors in Bolivia with a view to subsequent adoption as government policy with the corresponding legal framework. However, there are undeniably political, social, and economic scenarios that could delay compliance and implementation and prevent the plan from being used. This plan covers the areas addressed in the World Plan of Action.

c) To what extent are the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs) utilized as the national framework for development? What attention is given to Goal 3 on gender equality? Are gender perspectives and the concerns of women considered in all other MDG goals? Are links made to the Platform for Action and outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly as well as to the national action plan developed to implement the Platform for Action?

Millennium Declaration:

In the national policy-making framework, the MDGs are reflected in government policies and in the plans and programmes of government bodies, which carry over into private sector policies.

Goal 3) “Promote gender equality and empower women” targets the education sector, in particular, and is included in the Educational Sector Plan as a goal to be pursued till 2015, when progress will be assessed.

Monitoring of implementation is carried out by government units in each ministry, above all with regard to priority items in the fight against poverty. This process is negotiated through dialogue with civil society and the outcome is used to tailor policies to the goals to which the National State has committed itself. At the same time, the Millennium Goals are clearly of a general nature and only two (3 and 5) explicitly target women, although the rest also incorporate gender equity.

d) To what extent have the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the concluding comments of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on States parties reports, affected national legislation and implementation?

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:

The framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee's reports on states calling for actions by them have had a marked impact on national legislation. They made it possible to introduce a gender perspective in the content of laws.

e) What are the main legislative and policy-making achievements in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment over the past decade? Please provide details.

Laws:

- **Political Parties Act** (Art.19, guaranteeing that 30 percent of the candidates are women)
- **Electoral Code** (Art.112, by including conditions such as preferential rights for women in lists of candidates, alternation in the case of municipal elections).
- **Act No. 1674 Against Family or Domestic Violence** and its implementing regulations, which define different forms of violence and ways of preventing and punishing them.
- **The National Agrarian Reform Service Act - INRA** (Art.3, paragraph V, which stipulates that equitable criteria with respect to women must govern the distribution, administration, holding, and exploitation of land as a right guaranteed under the Constitution. Article 146 of the Act's implementing regulations establishes equal participation of men and women in the land tenure regularization process).
- **The Popular Participation Act** promotes the participation of women and men in the drawing up, supervision and monitoring of municipal development plans.
- **The Municipalities Act**, inasmuch as it established integral municipal legal services as precautionary mechanisms on behalf of women and the family and built women's as well as men's concerns into municipal development plans.
- **Supreme Decree 24864 on Equal Opportunities**, which promotes gender mainstreaming in government policies.

Policies:

Supreme Decree No. 24864 of October 1997 on Equal Opportunity for Men and Women provides a suitable legal framework for gender equity policies based on international conventions

and aimed at overcoming legal lacunae in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. It provides for the empowerment of women and renders the State jointly responsible for prioritizing and developing programmes and services in which women participate fully in the planning and execution of sustainable development.

One of the main legislative achievements was persuading civil society, the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary to negotiate a minimum gender platform, which then became a Legislative Agenda for 2002-2007. Its 13 core Acts are being reviewed and possible amendments to them are being proposed. They are also being monitored, evaluated, and checked by the appropriate authority (the Legislature), as well as being agreed upon with the bodies charged with implementing them (the Women's National Political Forum, the Association of Councilwomen of Bolivia, the Union of Women Parliamentarians of Bolivia, the Women for Equity Coordination Office, and the Vice-Ministry of Women).

A gender perspective was also included in the Need to Reform the State Political Constitution Act (Art. 6 prohibited all forms of discrimination against women; Art. 12 established punishments for family and sexual violence; and Art. 38 provided that female, as well as male, citizens could grant their spouses Bolivian nationality, when marrying foreigners: a major gain for women's rights.) However, so far, that perspective has merely been announced and is once again in the process of being rescued during the Constituent Assembly, since the aforementioned reform proposals were not taken into account in the State Political Constitution Reform Act.

f) To what extent have gender perspectives and the concerns of women been taken into account in preparation of budgets at national, regional and local levels? Describe efforts to monitor budgetary allocations related to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women.

The economic policies of governments are best seen in their general budgets, which show what public funds are earmarked for what. Thus, the National General Budget is potentially a tool for efforts to eradicate gender inequalities.

The impact of budgetary decisions on women's lives cannot be gauged unless data broken down by sex for relevant headings are available. In fact, this information does not exist, which makes both the contributions to the economy of men and women and the impact of economic policies on gender difficult to assess. National General Budgets only indicate the amounts that the State allocates to the specialized government body at central government level, and not at the prefecture or municipal level.

Assistance from cooperation agencies was an important factor in the development, institutionalization, and advancement of gender mainstreaming in the State and in civil society.

Another factor has to do with the status of the Vice-Ministry of Women (the body responsible for gender issues) within the state hierarchy. The fact that it is far removed from the decision-making spheres limits the extent to which it can influence budget decisions and planning.

g) Provide information on major government policy discussions and/or parliamentary debates where gender perspectives and the concerns of women have been taken systematically into

account. What recent major reforms have taken place in the country where these perspectives were taken into account, and what major problems are being debated in the country where these perspectives are considered as part of the overall debate?

Government Policy Discussions and/or Parliamentary Debates:

The Sexual Harassment bill triggered extensive debate in the Chamber of Deputies, where it was rejected on the grounds that it was an instrument that “curtailed the free will of persons and had been written from a feminist point of view,” even though it focused more on prevention than on punishment. The bill currently proposed is more punitive than preventive.

Act No. 1674 Against Family or Domestic Violence and its implementing regulations were also pruned and amended during debate by the Chamber of Deputies and by the Senate, becoming more preventive than punitive in the process.

In 2002, when Act 2010 on the Need to Reform the State Political Constitution was being passed, there were several discussions about the appropriateness of articles proposed by the women running the Vice-Ministry of Women in the preliminary draft bill presented to the Legislature by the Citizens’ Council. Several items proposed in the three above-mentioned Articles (6, 12, and 38), out of the 45 Articles originally proposed, were eliminated (public hearings and national debates were held, etc.).

i) How has globalization (for example, the use of information and communication technology, market liberalization, changes in trading patterns, etc.) affected the empowerment of women and girls and the promotion of gender equality?

Over the past few years, Bolivia has undergone a structural adjustment reform process aimed at opening up the country to foreign direct investment. Capitalization and privatization are ultimately geared to transferring to the private, largely foreign, sector the public enterprises that previously contributed most to the national budget.

These structural adjustment policies played a decisive part in the loss of the State’s legitimacy as a regulator of the economy, provider of social protection, and guarantor of the rights of citizens. That impaired the State’s ability to attend to society’s demands.

The new measures entailed the loss of the State’s economic sovereignty; economic decisions are taken at the international level, and economic policy is shaped by international public institutions.

The impact of adjustment hit labor hardest and gave rise to a huge pool of unemployed, estimated as 25 percent of the labor force (67 percent of the unemployed being women), as well as swelling the ranks of unpaid workers in the commercial sector. Another sphere in which women predominate, domestic service, is also constantly expanding.

j) In which sector areas have specific policies, strategies and/or action plans for promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment been developed? Describe progress in

implementation. To what extent are gender perspectives and the concerns of women routinely taken into account in legislation and policy making and programme development in other sectors?

Strategic partnerships with other sectors are essential as they provide an opportunity to introduce gender issues. One much-needed partnership of this kind is with the educational sector, with the people who strive to keep girls and adolescents attending school by establishing rural boarding schools. It is also important to train male and female teachers to be more sensitive to the need for inclusive education, in the sense of one free of discrimination on grounds of gender, ethnic origin, or class. Scholarships and other appropriate incentives are needed, together with efforts to heighten awareness among parents of the value of educating girls and to eliminate the disparity in male and female retention rates in primary and secondary education. Such efforts are supplemented by full use of nonacademic forms of education. Work is also being done on arrangements to permit pregnant adolescents to stay on at school, as a fundamental right of women.

k) What important partnerships have been established with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, as well as the private sector and other stakeholders, in support of gender equality and empowerment of women?

The relationship between the State and society is mediated through grassroots organizations, which take up social demands and fight to have them built into the framework of the State. A third sector consists of the NGOs, which generally provide logistical and financial support to the grassroots and political organizations.

There are several kinds of grassroots organization. Some are trade union organizations, like the National Federation of Rural Women of Bolivia (*Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas de Bolivia*) “Bartolina Sisa” FNMCBBS, whose demands tend to address long-term inequalities and, as such, call for a strategic response from the State itself. Another important trade union organization in recent years is the National Federation of Domestic Workers (*Federación Nacional de Trabajadoras del Hogar*) FENATRAHOB, whose demands revolve around the need to recognize the civic status of domestics, on terms that reflect a labor relationship between peers, governed by rational rules of the game. There is also another organization, which ranks as a trade union, called the Federation of Sex Workers, who coordinate their efforts to combat police violence, practiced in this case on women who are victims not only of male abuse, but also of social and family stigmatization.

Then there are the economic organizations, most of which were formed during economic crises and as a sequel to the mothers’ club organizations of the 1970s. They also have ties with NGOs, and most are associations of artisans. Resettlement (*relocalización*) has also given rise to organizations of women artisans producing textiles, confectionery, and other products.

Among the women producers’ organizations of an entrepreneurial nature, the rural women’s economic organizations, OECAs, are particularly noteworthy. There are neighborhood and communal organizations and indigenous women’s organizations, which have grown considerably in recent years, voicing land tenure and regional concerns.

All these organizations make demands of their own on the State, backed technically or logistically by institutions dedicated to social development and supporting the strengthening of women's organizations in different sectors: productive, services, artisan skills development, loans, leadership, and others. They have helped build and legitimize a gender perspective, in the form of a discourse disseminated through networks, where women's claims are generated and the State challenged to respond.

The Government is currently maintaining close ties with grassroots organizations, the idea being to work jointly on demands already posed by women and especially on topical issues, such as the Constituent Assembly, in which women's participation is to be sizable, according to an agreement already brokered between the State, civil society, and NGOs.

1) What efforts have been made to actively engage men and boys in the promotion of gender equality? What successes have been achieved and what constraints have been identified?

Information and communication were the chief tools used to heighten awareness of the parts to be played by men and boys. Educational reform was another vehicle, with its emphasis on non-discrimination between girls and boys, for working on the roles to be played by both sexes. The second part of this document has more on this aspect.

PART TWO

Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

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

- a) *In relation to the critical areas of concern in the Platform for Action and other key issues, what successful actions (such as legal measures, policy reforms, media campaigns, and pilot programmes or projects) have been taken by the Government or other actors (NGOs, civil society, the private sector) to achieve these objectives?*

Education:

The passing of the Educational Reform Act in 1994 marked the beginning of the transformation of Bolivia's school system through a series of pedagogical and curricular, administrative, and financial measures. Together, they amounted to one of the most continuous social policy experiences in Bolivian history. Under the "equal opportunities" banner, intercultural values and gender equity were intertwined. The policy was intercultural and bilingual because it acknowledged the socio-cultural heterogeneity of the country in an atmosphere of respect among all Bolivians, of both sexes.

Clearly, these measures gave rise to a scenario implying recognition of ethnical, cultural and linguistic diversity, social participation, and contextualized activity learning (*aprendizaje situado y activo*). They were an attempt to cater to the demands and educational needs of segments of the population that had long been disadvantaged.

The Reform Act established the principal policies to govern the sector for the following 10 years:

- Educational reform geared to achieving a substantial improvement in the educational system.
- Reduction of the average illiteracy rate to that found in urban areas.
- Halving (at least) of the average rate of illiteracy among women in rural areas.
- Increase of at least 50 percent in the average enrollment rate for the population as a whole.
- Enhancement of the quality of education through two basic mechanisms: revamping of the curriculum and institution building.
- Expansion of primary education coverage to facilitate the enrollment and retention of girls and boys in rural and poor urban areas.
- Education and technical training for women, adolescents, and young people in hazardous circumstances, with emphasis on both formal and alternative education and technical training aimed at developing skills that will enable them to participate in the new processes of a changing economy and productive sector. They will be geared to increasing productivity and worker competitiveness and will include training in the use of technology and technical and vocational guidance programs.

Progress with gender policies in the education sector

Current discussions in education circles revolve around the quality and achievement of education, construed as the possibility for both boys and girls to gain access to and control the resources that affect their standard of living. It also involves boosting their self-esteem, their ability to express their concerns and feelings, and the development of skills and abilities without conditions or restrictions.

Within the general framework of the Educational Reform, educational policy is to include the expansion of opportunities and generation of socio-economically equal conditions for girls, boys, and adolescents (from six to 13 years of age). The policy promotes the knowledge needed to overcome discrimination, inequality, and the exclusion of indigenous peoples, original inhabitants (*originarios*), campesinos, and other groups on account of gender or for generational reasons (*de género y generacional*).

In Bolivia, as in other countries in the region, discrimination against women in the educational sector is not reflected in enrollment, because the rates for males and females are fairly similar (88.3 percent and 85.3 percent, respectively).

It is important to note that in schools gender is being taught not as a course or subject, but as an approach that cuts across the entire curriculum.

The cross-cutting theme of Education for Gender Equity highlights three sets of issues to be addressed in the curriculum: identity and self-esteem conditioned by stereotype images of feminine and masculine identities; sexual division of labor, and inequitable allocation of responsibilities between men and women; and historical discrimination against women in the social, political, and scientific spheres.

There are many reasons why the school retention rate for girls is low, including constraints on the provision of educational services, demand, and social circuits. The program has been modified with a view to improving service provision, because otherwise the solutions would overwhelm sector capabilities, which would render changing the status quo impossible.

[One step to improve the retention rate for girls is] Ministerial Resolution No. 457, which prohibits the expulsion of pregnant students from the National Educational System, regardless of their marital status.

Since 2002, substitute teachers for those expecting a baby are paid by the State, a reform that, through Bi-ministerial Resolution 001/02 and specific regulations, does away with an historical injustice to pregnant teachers.

Within the general framework of the Educational Reform, educational policy at the primary school level is to include the expansion of opportunities and generation of socio-economically equal conditions for girls, boys, and adolescents by:

- Enhancing the quality of education through two basic mechanisms: revamping of the curriculum and institution building;
- Expanding primary education coverage to facilitate the enrollment and retention of girls and boys in rural and poor urban areas; and
- Providing education and technical training for women, adolescents, and young people in hazardous circumstances, with emphasis on both formal and alternative education and technical training aimed at developing skills that will enable them to participate in the new processes of a changing economy and productive sector.

In health, policies over the past 10 years have accorded priority to primary and preventive health care, by expanding coverage especially in peri-urban areas and improving the quality of health services in rural areas.

The gender approach has made some headway, as policies have attempted to address the high rates of maternal and child mortality, the high fertility rate, and life expectancy for men and women, the emphasis being on women, especially poor women.

The Pan American (and World) Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) recognizes that health/illness is a process influenced by gender systems that render women vulnerable to preventable health problems, because of their particular productive, biological-reproductive, family and, in general, social roles.

Gender equity in health policies is urgently needed in the framework of a health care system addressing both what is normal and what is abnormal and repairing (treating) damage already done. Currently, equity is construed as overcoming inequalities and to achieve equity an effort is being made to promote universal access of the population to health services and, in particular, the access of women to health care promotion, preventive health care, and treatment.

Gender-related difficulties encountered in designing and implementing health policies include the mismatch between internationally established macro policies and the particular circumstances of Bolivia and the failure to adjust those policies; the neglect of cultural considerations; and failure to take gender systems into account in the design and organization of services.

Three health plans have been drawn up in two government terms:

- The so-called “Plan Vida” or National Plan for a Fast-Track Reduction in Maternal, Perinatal, and Infant Mortality in Bolivia, addresses the maternal mortality issue and acknowledges the gravity of the situation for women in Bolivia, which has the highest rate of maternal mortality. It lacks a vision but does have a target of cutting mortality by half. It is a slight improvement over maternal-child health policies of previous plans, in that it introduces the concept of the right to health and the right of women to determine their own sexuality and to take part in decision making.
- The New Health Model (*El Nuevo Modelo Sanitario*)

- The Strategic Health Plan aimed at Combating Poverty with Family and Reproductive Health Medication, Combating Domestic Violence, and Promoting Maternal-Child Health through Basic Health Insurance and the National Mental Health Program.

This plan reduces the disparities in the conditions governing access to health care. It is cognizant of the existing inequalities and ethnical, gender, and generational discrimination. It sees itself as an intersectoral and cross-cutting policy, with the following tools at its disposal: food and basic nutrition, health promotion and preventive medicine, universal primary health care, sexual and reproductive health, epidemiological surveillance and early childhood education.

- The National Health Plan included in “Plan Bolivia 2002 – 2007,” combined with an expanded Basic Health Insurance in the form of Universal Maternal-Child Insurance. Under this Plan, investment focuses on primary health care via health sector reform in the context of decentralization of the Social Security System and coordination with the private sector and with NGOs. The defining characteristic of this period is the attempt to link the health system with grassroots participation on the basis of economic, geographical, and cultural accessibility criteria.

Bolivia is at an important crossroads in its history, because during the lifetime of this government the country will see new policy instruments being negotiated, such as Bolivia’s new Poverty Reduction Strategy and its Overall Economic and Social Development Plan in the framework of the Millennium Goals agreed upon at the United Nations Summit in 2000 and its platform for action geared to getting governments and institutions working together on the global development agenda. Policy guidelines will also be drawn up in connection with the referendum on Bolivia’s gas, the “Productive Bolivia” National Dialogue, and the Constituent Assembly which will lay the foundations for a new Bolivia.

As these opportunities for participation open up, the gender perspective is seen as an analytical tool, but also, and above all, as a political stance designed to consolidate recognition of women’s contributions to the economic, social, and cultural spheres, their authority and leadership. However, it is not merely a question of achieving recognition. There has to be progress toward redistribution of the different strategies for generating wealth through broad-based growth and redistribution of the benefits of sustainable development.

Violence:

Violence against women has been, and continues to be, a human rights concern of countries all over the world that have signed international legal instruments and ratified them in domestic legislation.

Bolivia’s policy for dealing with violence against women or on grounds of sex is outlined in Plans. It also promulgated Act 1674 against Family or Domestic Violence and its implementing regulations, which are now being evaluated eight years after they entered into force. The State is being asked to address the problems encountered in enforcing the Act, with respect to both institutional action and socio-cultural factors.

The delegation of broader powers to municipal governments (“*municipalización*”) has been the chief vehicle for policy implementation. Comprehensive Legal Services (*Servicios Legales Integrales* -SLIs) thus became the decentralized mechanism for implementing the policy against violence and the Municipalities Act of 1998 made municipal governments responsible for organizing such services. This represented both progress and a constraint inasmuch as the organization of the SLIs depended on the political will and financial capacity of the municipal authorities. Steps therefore need to be taken to promote coordinated governmental and community actions aimed at strengthening the 65 existing SLIs and establishing others.

The quest for integral solutions to the problems associated with violence led to the creation of the Networks for Addressing and Preventing Domestic Violence, particularly violence against women. They are the liaison vehicle between services dealing with violence and community organizations. Currently, there are 53 such networks, which also need strengthening in terms of institutional participation and sustainability in a municipal environment.

At the same time, education sector policies have reinforced the understanding of violence as a facet of gender-related discrimination and have built family violence prevention and detection tools into educational plans and programs, institutionalized in the Educational Reform Program.

Violence in the home is considered a health problem and included as such in national health policies. Current rules and procedures provide for appropriate care and epidemiological surveillance in this area.

A law directed against domestic violence has been on the books since 1995. There is also a Protection of the Victims of Crimes against Sexual Freedom Act, in which the offenses include rape, incest, pimping, and forced prostitution. This aspect needs to be given all due attention and incorporated into future government policy, along with the development of methodologies for measuring the magnitude and assessing the characteristics of family or domestic violence.

Governmental actions against violence, especially that directed against women, have been strengthened and fine-tuned under several governments, drawing attention in both governmental and broader social circles to the ongoing need to address this appropriately as a social problem. The Vice-Ministry of Women strives to contribute to the overcoming of violence as a traditional obstacle to the advancement and participation of women in political, economic, and social life, by fostering solidarity in society and respectful and tolerant interpersonal relationships.

Economic sphere:

Against this backdrop, and given the historical challenge of overcoming economic crisis without losing sight of the need for social inclusion and respect for gender-related, generational, cultural and ethnic differences, the government policies currently being negotiated are aimed at joining forces specifically to create the conditions for equity in economic growth.

In a systemic and integral approach, proposals for boosting the economy are related to the expanded exercise of social and cultural citizenship, through the issuing of IDs (*carnetización*), literacy campaigns for adult women, the strengthening of sexual and reproductive rights, health,

the prevention, treatment, and punishment of domestic and sexual violence, and other improvements that can lead to an increase in women's income.

Combining and coordinating these social and economic policies presupposes a form of governance imbued with a gender perspective and institutionalized through shared visions, the development of viable methodologies, and of human and financial resources, and the political will to transform power relationships and overcome resistance, on behalf of both men and women.

The idea here is to facilitate access to and control of resources by introducing crosscutting mechanisms and inter-institutional partnerships within the government and with civil society; an agenda backed by the financial resources needed to implement it; and the joint commitment and political will needed to forge the agreements on gender mainstreaming throughout the economy.

Accordingly, the goal is to achieve a redistribution of the benefits of sustainable development with equity between the sexes and among women, in such a way that women in general, and rural and indigenous women in particular, participate with decision-making powers in natural resource use and management programs, with legally secured tenure of land and territory and strengthened capacities and income from farming, trade, and appropriate management of biodiversity.

The strategies favored by the line ministries are aimed at enhancing regional development by linking food security to the market and the generation of surpluses through competitive production networks. As the Ministry of Agriculture (MACA) Plan states, [the goal is to promote] family and community subsistence farming, coordinated with organized production systems in areas such as the exploitation and processing of timber resources, chestnut farming, ethnological and ecotourism enterprises, research into and exploitation of opportunities afforded by biodiversity, in which women decide on multiple production and management strategies.

The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and Native Peoples (MAIPO) is responsible for seeing that development in indigenous areas is managed as a system in which planning, organization, administration, execution, monitoring and evaluation are carried out with the participation of all stakeholders in such a way as establish the institutional conditions for shared responsibility.

The National Strategy for Agricultural, Livestock and Rural Development (*Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Rural -ENDAR*) attempts to persuade the economic organizations of indigenous inhabitants of the lowlands to enter into joint ventures with national and international enterprises, which not only provide any missing productive inputs but also put the indigenous peoples of the lowlands in touch with modern and more dynamic settings.² What the women hope to gain from this scenario is the possibility of exporting their handcrafts and other products with value added.

Local Economic Development (DEL) in the highlands is linked to production chains for the domestic market, to agro-exporting circuits and to communities with lower economic potential,

²Ministry of Campesino, Indigenous, and Agricultural Affairs, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning, Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy. Coordinator General, José Valdivia, June 2003.

in which opportunities need to be created, given the feminization of poverty, the high incidence of male migration, poor living standards, and the lack of coordination among guilds (*organizaciones funcionales*) of women producers, women owners of local small and medium-sized enterprises, and male or female traders, truckers and service providers. The DEL's rationale is based on associations (*mancomunidades*) and support for such guilds.

The areas chosen by the different sectoral authorities as offering the most economic potential, especially for women, involve expanding and enhancing irrigation and potable water systems, electricity grids, communications, roads, domestic gas connections, and basic services in settlements in which economies of scale need to be boosted.

Also envisaged is the provision of financial services; technical assistance; technical and technological change; more extensive legal security in respect of immovable assets, such as land and housing; linkages to markets, with feasibility and pre-investment studies and support for the formation of producers' associations or urban and rural enterprises through direct transfers of resources geared to raising productivity and competitiveness.

The idea is for rural economic organizations, and especially the women in them, to be able to afford technical assistance and financial capital services, leveraging their own income with venture capital provided by the State in joint responsibility arrangements with associations of municipalities and prefectures. These funds will be set up via policies and instruments imbued with a gender perspective and with monitoring and evaluation by the Vice-Ministry of Women.

In urban areas, the emphasis is on enhancing the employment eligibility of women, by helping the sectors concerned to encourage the matching of the supply of goods and services with the various national and international sources of demand. Within this framework of matching government procurement and the supply of products of micro and small enterprises, support is being provided to enable women to take part in the Inverse Auction (*Feria a la Inversa*) in El Alto, referred to in the Supreme Decree on "I Buy Bolivian".

Once women have been linked up to the market, consideration will be given to the possibility of setting up a venture capital fund for the purchase of machinery and infrastructure. Ongoing training will also be offered in business management techniques and quality certification.

The role of the Vice-Ministry of Women is to provide instruments and technical assistance and to train officials in local governments and institutions to promote trade linkages, income generation, skills building, and improvement in the living standards of low-income women.

With respect to land tenure, the proposal to grant title without red tape expedites the legal rehabilitation of small properties based on actual possession, exact geographical location of the property, and determination that no prior ownership rights exist or are superimposed. As far as gender is concerned, an attempt is made to secure joint titling of the members of a couple, in coordination with the INRA.

"As regards the special 'internal reorganization' (*saneamiento interno*) procedure, the proposal is to consolidate application of customary law, above all in establishing boundaries and solving

disputes within settlements (*colonias*) and rural and indigenous communities” (10:2003 Plan Nacional de Saneamiento y Titulación [National Land Reclamation and Titling Plan]). Precautions will be taken to prevent this law from restricting women’s access to land management. Their access to and supervision of the internal reorganization is designed to ensure that both members of a couple are registered as owners in the paperwork.

At the same time, priority has been given to promoting access to land by women heads of household, during the processes involving the distribution of public land, although the INRA recognizes that “given the complexity of land distribution, joining, and redistribution mechanisms through reversion and expropriation procedures, the reorganization process has become the principal mechanism for granting land to those who lack or who have too little of it; via regular or special allocation mechanisms or adjudication.” (15: 2003 National Land Reclamation and Titling Plan).

b) To what extent have specific commitments made by the Government at the Fourth World Conference on Women, in the National Actions Plan, or in other contexts, been met?

Despite significant progress with gender policies, they have not put an end to gender inequalities and inequities nor have governments assumed full responsibility for them.

The policies of this nature adopted by Bolivia were the result of pressure from abroad and from women’s movements, feminist organizations, nongovernmental organizations committed to gender equity and equality, and the government authority responsible for gender (the Vice-Ministry).

The main effect of the gender policies is to have drawn attention to women’s demands, thanks to the influence exerted by international standards, which are themselves the product of the international feminist movement, actions by women’s organizations within Bolivia, and the financial support of international cooperation agencies. Without those factors, putting gender issues on the national agenda would definitely have been a major odyssey.

Although some headway has been made with the regulatory framework, gender mainstreaming is still only loosely tied in with Bolivia’s national development aspirations and hence only applied on a limited scale. Such a linkage would guarantee the human and financial resources that are permanently siphoned off to deal with competing emergencies and pressures.

c) To what extent are gender perspectives and the concerns of women given attention in the follow-up to other global conferences, such as the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (New York, 2001); the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, 2001), the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2002), the Second World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, 2002), and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002)?

With respect to HIV/AIDS, the Bolivian Government has adopted a National Plan, developed by the Health Ministry, to prevent and combat STDs and SDIs [ITR], as well as a national STI and HIV/AIDS program.

HIV/AIDS has had much less of a demographic, economic, or social impact than it has had in other countries, in which the number of those infected is alarming. Nevertheless, primary prevention measures need to be taken to prevent its expansion, especially information and awareness campaigns for adolescents and young adults. By 2003, 1,117 cases of HIV/AIDS had been reported.

The Ministry of Health is running the National Program for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Surveillance and steps are being taken to try and have the State defray the substantial costs involved in treating patients, in addition to procurement of drugs at reduced prices via agreements with other countries.

Nongovernmental organizations also play a key part in dissemination, education, and support for persons living with HIV/AIDS. They also run awareness campaigns and provide counseling.

However, all this is not enough. Much more work needs to be done on massive prevention campaigns, making sure that appropriate information reaches as many people as possible.

B. Examples of obstacles encountered and remaining gaps and challenges

d) Describe the obstacles, and gaps, and challenges encountered in implementation in each critical area of concern and other key issues identified.

Violence:

According to a Vice-Ministry of Women study of domestic violence conducted in September 2000, seven out of every 10 women suffer psychological and physical violence in the home from three to five times a year. At the same time, three out of every 10 women suffer psychological and physical violence in their homes with considerable frequency; nine out of 10 suffer violations of their individual rights by their partners; and four out of every 10 women are economically maltreated by their partner (in terms of decisions regarding the handling of family funds). The incidence of violence against women between the ages of 28 and 38 is 75 percent points higher than for men of the same age.

Another alarming statistic is that 49 percent of female homemakers and students suffer violence from their partner and 53 percent of those who do so do not do anything about it: only 14 percent turn to relatives for help and 10 percent file a complaint with the Family Protection Police Brigade.

Social indicators:

Bolivia has a total population of 8,274,325 inhabitants, of whom 50.16 percent are women. The fertility rate is 4.4 children per women. However, this rate varies according to region, level of

education, and other factors. Among illiterate women the fertility rate is 6.9 children per woman; among women who speak only their indigenous language it is 6.5.

The death rate per 1,000 live births is 66. However, for illiterate mothers the rate is 92 deaths per 1,000 live births, a difference that has much to do with the level of education of the mothers and their access to health care.

Another health statistic is that 52.92 percent of women in urban areas gave birth to their last child in a health establishment. For women in rural areas the figure was only 22.03 percent.

The overall literacy rate for women is 80.65 percent, but female illiteracy is highest in rural areas (37.9 percent).

The percentage of women of working age is 50.72 percent, compared to 49.28 percent for men. Yet 63.55 percent of men have jobs as workers or employees, compared to 36.45 percent of women, an indication that there are still restrictions on women's access to employment.

Economic status:

Base line studies³ reflect the economic exclusion of indigenous and rural women, most of whom live at or below the poverty line.

These studies recognize the exclusion of indigenous and rural, mixed-descent (mestizas) and non-indigenous women, living mostly at or below the poverty line and reproducing the same situation from one generation to another. Poverty and social exclusion render it impossible to strengthen constitutional democracy and preclude the full exercise of citizens' rights and sustainable development based on mutual recognition and fair distribution between men and women.

As the ILO points out⁴, the term social exclusion may describe a negative individual situation manifested in low levels of well-being (economic disadvantage) and in inability to play an effective part in social, economic, political, and cultural life through work, etc. "Social exclusion manifests itself in societies through recurrent patterns of social relations that prevent certain individuals and groups from gaining access to (productive and nonproductive) resources, services, activities and institutions that, in general, are associated with the exercise of rights and citizenship...Social exclusion is not synonymous with poverty (in terms of levels of income or unsatisfied basic needs), but rather a broader notion of multi-dimensional poverty, in which material deprivation, labor status and social relations are major components of the disadvantages people suffer from."

At the same time, exclusion has connotations of discrimination and inequality, particularly in a society like Bolivia's, which is built upon links forming a chain of domestic colonialism.

³ Ministry of Sustainable Development, Vice-Ministry of Women, "Análisis de equidad de género en Bolivia. 1992 – 2002" [Analysis of Gender Equity in Bolivia 1991 – 2002]. July 2003.

⁴ Programa modular de capacitación e información sobre Género, Pobreza y Empleo, 2001 [Modular training and information Package on Gender, Poverty and Employment, 2001 ILO. Module 1, p. 29.

The current status of women and the gaps vis-à-vis that of men can be seen in the activities they perform, in terms of participation in social reproduction – that is to say, in the production of goods and services for the market or for direct consumption – and in the daily production of human life itself.

Poor women in urban areas participate less in the labor market, due to their lower level of education, more numerous children, lower chances of obtaining help with household chores, a less appreciative environment, fewer and more precarious job options, underemployment, low level of qualifications, and ignorance of the market, techniques, and technology, etc.

Gender development

The Gender Development Index measures life expectancy, literacy, school enrolment and income for men and women.

The Gender Equity Index covers literacy, school attendance, participation in politics, public administration, and enterprises, as well as the proportion of men and women who are economically active, professionals or specialists, with a view to comparing each sex's economic and political participation status and the part each plays in decision making.

Both indicators were used in the Human Development Report on Gender in Bolivia 2003, and show that over the past 10 years the status of women in Bolivia has improved in areas such as education, health, the labor market, political participation, and efforts to combat domestic violence. On the other hand, women still lag behind in the distribution of income. (Duhaimé, Jacques. Press release accompanying the Human Development Report on Gender in Bolivia 2003).

Activity status

The possibilities here are: working, studying, and not working. Work is both commercial, in the sense of income-generating (the economically active population – EAP), and domestic, unpaid labor, performed in order to produce goods and services for household consumption almost exclusively by “homemakers,” who form part of the economically inactive population (EIP). This distinction thus already disguises a major contribution by women to the national economy.

In 1992, the EAP was composed of 38.83 percent women and 61.17 percent men. Today, the proportions are 39.03 percent women and 60.07 percent men (INE [National Statistics Institute] 2003: p. 128)⁵.

The working population consists of 39.33 percent women and 60.67 percent men, increasing in 2001 to 40.58 percent women (59.42 percent men).

⁵ INE, UNFPA. Bolivia: Características de la Población con Enfoque de Género. [Bolivia: Characteristics of the Population from a Gender Perspective] 2003.

The non-working population evolved as follows in the period between censuses: initially, 19.35 women and 80.65 percent men, while in 2001, the number of unemployed persons increased to 135,757, of whom 25.57 percent were women and 74.43 percent men.

62.49 percent of the economically inactive population (i.e. persons who are neither working nor looking for a job) are women.

The dependency index for women has declined: for every 100 economically active women, there are 237 who are not (INE 2003: p. 134). In rural areas in 1976, this index was 8.11 among women and 0.89 for men, declining sharply by 1992 to 1.78 for women (0.88 for men). In the 2001 Census, the dependency rate increased to 2.58 for women and 1.14 for men.

The overall participation rate in urban areas (economically active population divided by the population of working age, multiplied by 100) increases for women and declines for men. In rural areas, the overall participation rate declined from 52.53 percent in women and 78.20 percent in men in 1992 to 40.18 percent among women and 68.50 percent for men in the 2001 Census.

One significant datum is that 83 percent of rural women included in the EAP are engaged in farming and livestock activities.

Employment

According to the 2001 Census, 46.04 percent of the population were self-employed. Of them, 42.69 percent were women and 57.31 percent men.

In 1992, 30.90 percent of women were workers or employees. By 2001, that percentage rose to 36.45.

In urban areas, 42.93 percent are domestic workers or unpaid apprentices. Of this segment, 52.95 percent are women and 47.05 percent men.

In rural areas in 1992, 12.86 percent were domestic workers or unpaid apprentices and, of them, 63.22 percent were women. In 2001, 62.27 percent are self-employed, of whom 37.17 percent are women. 17.7 are workers or employees and, of them, 20.84 percent are women.

5.95 percent are domestic workers or unpaid apprentices. Of them, 48.29 percent are women. (INE 2003: p. 136)

Only a very small percentage of women are bosses, partners, employers or members of cooperatives: 2.15 percent and 0.16 percent, respectively, in 2001.

Occupation

In 1992, 38.36 percent of the working population was engaged in farming, livestock breeding and fishing. Of that group, 36.70 percent were women. In the 2001 census, these figures were

lower: 28.45 percent and 30.72 percent, respectively. The next most numerous group were workers in mining, construction, and manufacturing: 14.34 percent in 1992, of whom 17.84 percent were women. By 2001, those figures had risen to 18.19 percent of the working population and 23.33 percent, respectively. The percentage of those engaged in services and sales rose to 17.12 percent, according to the last census, 65.35 percent of them women.

The percentage of women specialists and professionals rose to 8.95 between the two Censuses. The share of unskilled women workers increase to 16.27 percent.

Economic activity

The principal economic activity in Bolivia is agriculture, cattle breeding, and fishing. The second most important sector with respect to the working population is wholesale and retail trade. The third is manufacturing, which employs 330,871 people, of whom 38.45 percent are women.

One of the occupational sectors in which women are more numerous than men is household and domestic services, in which the percentage rose from 10.13 percent to 11.33 percent, compared with 0.36 percent in both periods.

Men predominate in transportation, warehousing, communication, constructing, and mining, including quarrying.

Income

The Beijing + 5 report points out that unpaid female workers account for 75 percent of the female EAP in rural areas, while the corresponding figure for the male workforce in rural areas is 29.8 percent.

Unpaid commercial work accounts for 25 percent of all the work done in Bolivian markets and women perform 66.5 percent of it (baseline).

Statistics show men continuing to garner executive positions in the public administration and in the corporate sector. Currently, 69 percent of executives are men and the remaining 31 percent women. The segregation of women also affects income, whenever there is discrimination on gender or ethnic grounds.

In terms of average income, women in Bolivia are at a marked disadvantage, especially in rural areas. In urban areas, the average income for men is Bs. 1, 315, compared to Bs. 773 for women; in rural areas it is Bs. 346 for men and Bs. 95 for women; the average income in Bolivia as a whole is Bs. 889 for men and Bs. 483 for women. Women's income is lower than that of men, even when they have the same level of education (baseline).

There is a trend toward increasing recognition of women heads of household, a status previously accepted only when the male spouse had migrated or died. The percentage of women heads of household has risen from 24 percent to 31 percent. This also affects the level of income of those households.

Progress in rural areas

In rural areas, according to data in the Beijing + 5 report, women take part in both traditional small-scale or subsistence agriculture and in the modern agricultural exports sector, where they are employed on a seasonal basis, receiving one quarter of the wages of male heads of household. Even when women are hired on an individual basis, they usually earn half the wages of a man.⁶

According to the 1998 ENDSA survey, 38.8 percent of the women who describe themselves as self-employed receive no pay for their work.

On average, rural women earn only half the wages for males. As mentioned above, the biggest gap is in agriculture, where women receive barely 29 percent of a man's wage. Indigenous women earn less than half the wages of non-indigenous women.

Nearly one in four rural households (24.3 percent) is headed by a woman. Of those homes, 24.8 percent are moderately poor, 23.3 percent suffer extreme poverty, and 22.9 percent are excluded from the mainstream economy (UDAPSO, INE, 1994).

Women have to come play a role in some agrarian federations, despite the fact that farmers' organizations are mostly male strongholds due to cultural norms and the fact that only 20 percent of landowners are women. (Bolivia, Five Years after Beijing, 2000 Report, VAGGF).

The principal obstacles to women's access to land ownership are: tradition and customs, illiteracy, lack of familiarity with the law and with their rights, ignorance of required procedures, and the lack of identity documents for women. (Pacheco 1999: Tierra del padre o del marido da lo mismo? [Does it matter whether the land belongs to the father or the husband?]

Land

The current INRA-sponsored land-titling campaign in nine departments has benefited 14,413 people, 6.08 percent of whom are women on their own, 23.8 percent men on their own, and 58.4 percent couples. These figures indicate that some progress has been made, in the sense that there is an increase in the tendency toward joint title deeds and toward recognition of women as owners of land on an equal footing with men.

The (not yet published) findings of ENDSA 2003 will throw light on the status of women with respect to land ownership, rental, or type of land use (family, communal, etc.).

In Kadaster's assessment, the current situation with regard to land, seven years after implementation of the INRA Act, hampers the constitution of a land market, access to credit, capital formation, etc. In effect, large tracts have been granted to indigenous communities

⁶ Bolivia 5 años después de Beijing. Poder, Oportunidades y Autodeterminación para las Mujeres en el Nuevo Siglo. Informe 2000. [Bolivia Five Years after Beijing. Power, Opportunities, and Self-determination for Women in the New Century. 2000 Report. VAGGF.

without complementary measures to ensure the availability of financial resources and training, and without incorporating them into departmental and national development policies.

Nor is information available on the procedures that according to tradition and customs govern the redistribution of the land within the Native Community Lands (*Tierras Comunitarias de Origen*) and, in particular, on how married or single women and widows have access to that land.

In the mountains, according to leaders in the highlands, widows may not live with a new partner if they wish to stay on the land that belonged to the deceased. Otherwise, they are forced to leave the property they use to maintain their children.

The current situation varies from one department to another. In Chuquisaca, for instance, where Kadaster carried out the land reclamation/reorganization (*saneamiento*), women will own titles to 44 percent of the land, compared to 53 percent for men, and 3 percent of the land will belong to legal entities. Kadaster's institutional database shows that more divorced (67 percent) and widowed (76 percent) women than men are receiving title. This facilitates their inclusion in opportunities for economic betterment.

Credit

Private financial services have mushroomed, with the number of financial service offices and branches more than quadrupling between 1995 and 1999, above all in the cities along the central corridor (*eje central*), in areas in which poverty indices are not so alarming (Beijing + 5 report).

Credit to women accounts for 58.7 percent of all credit in rural and urban areas. However, women have access to small loans, most of which are invested in commerce. The large loans are granted to men.

The information available is not broken down by sex, so that it is impossible to tell how credit to women has evolved until the 2004 data become available.

C. Lessons learned

e) Provide information on the main lessons learned in implementation in relation to each of the critical areas of concern and other key issues identified.

PART THREE

Institutional Development

a) What national mechanisms exist for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women – for example, ministry, national commission, parliamentary committee or commission? What mandates and resources does each body have and how do they work together? Describe the location of the national mechanisms and the access to decision-making processes. What are the main partners of the national mechanisms? What networks have been established and how effective are these networks? What resources to the national mechanisms have in terms of staff and financial support? What percentage of financial resources comes from international or bilateral donors?

Supreme Decree No. 26350 of October 11, 2001 recognizes the Plans and Programs of the Vice-Ministry of Women as state policies and at the same time enacts the Inter-Institutional Mechanism for Follow-up on Gender Policies (*Mecanismo Interinstitucional de Seguimiento a las Políticas de Género*). This led to the installation of National (CIG) and Departmental (CDG) Committees with civil society participation, which were granted independence and autonomy and proceeded to monitor compliance with both national and international commitments.

With the economic resources at their disposal, the Committees often cannot afford to carry out actions on their own, so that the question of their independence has yet to be resolved.

b) Have focal points for gender equality and empowerment of women been established within line ministries, and in which ministries? What support is provided from within the ministries? What support (training, advice, etc.) is provided by the national machinery? How effective are these focal points?

Once the various laws are enacted, it is up to each line ministry to work on the gender perspective. However, gender mainstreaming is not always achieved in all areas. Some sectors, such as Health and Education, are more successful in this respect, as their plans and programs already focus to some extent on women.

The Vice-Ministry coordinates with the different line ministries, since one of the major objectives is precisely to achieve gender mainstreaming in the Executive Legislative, and Judicial branches of government, with a view to introducing the gender perspective and establishing and placing the issue of gender firmly on the agenda of the various structures (gender and generational commissions and committees, through women's legislative agenda) and municipal governments (integral municipal legal services, of which there are 64, operating in 314 municipalities in Bolivia).

There are ongoing problems, such as the failure to have the gender perspective embedded in government bodies or economic development plans and programs. In rural areas, in particular, the political and civic participation of women is another area of concern, above all because so many women lack IDs and other documents. Other, social policy, concerns are that women

should have access to health care throughout their lives and not just during their child-bearing years; the school dropout rate; and domestic violence.

With respect to other factors, such as land ownership, the INRA Act recognizes women as title holders and with the same rights as men to own land, through joint titling, which is aimed at ensuring the survival of families and poses no threat to the organization of rural society. Nevertheless, the concentration of land in the hands of a few and the tedious process of land reclamation which involves returning or expropriating land, render the chances of women actually possessing and owning land increasingly remote.

c) What monitoring mechanisms have been established to measure progress in implementation? How is accountability for promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women established across all ministries? How is coordination achieved? What role does the highest level of Government play?

The monitoring mechanisms to measure progress by the Vice-Ministry of Women produce ongoing technical reports on the Annual Operating Plan and specific area plans, showing progress made and outcomes obtained. These reports may be bi-monthly, half-yearly, or whenever required by the Ministry of Sustainable Development, pursuant to the provisions of Act 2446 (Organization of the Executive Branch Act) and its enabling regulations.

The responsibilities of the ministries are established in the Organic Law of the Executive Branch and its regulations, which assigns to the Ministry of Sustainable Development responsibility for promoting gender policies through the Vice-Ministry of Women in order to exert influence on decentralized institutions and public and private bodies in accordance with Supreme Decree 24864, which authorizes and guarantees equal opportunities for men and women.

Coordination is achieved through agreements and letters of intention, between line ministries and with private bodies and social organizations.

Communication takes place through the Vice-Ministry as a dependency of the Ministry of Social Development, which enables the information to flow through to the highest level of Government.

d) What levels of capacity for promoting gender mainstreaming have been achieved? Through which mechanisms? What are the remaining challenges in the area of capacity building?

The main internal and external challenges faced by the body responsible for advancing gender policies include:

- Substantial budgetary dependence on international cooperation agencies;
- Coordination between national, departmental, and local planning systems;
- Deficient data standardization systems generating data that are not always broken down by sex;
- Discontinuity and uncertainty regarding status of human resources in the process of being evaluated;

- Instability resulting from operational adjustments caused by the different liberalization programs triggered by short-term shifts in Bolivian politics;
- Lack of joint economic development sector financial resources to invest in gender equity;
- Shortage of specialized, permanent staff in each of the counterpart sectors;
- Political instability and rotation of officers and technical staff in the Vice-Ministry of Women; and
- The design and negotiation of several gender plans that were not then implemented.

e) Has a core set of indicators been established and where is responsibility for monitoring located? What gaps and challenges remain in relation to data and statistics? In which areas is lack of sex-disaggregation still a problem? In which areas do new types of data need to be collected? To what extent are the national statistical office and the statistical units in line ministries aware, committed and capable of producing the required data? In which sectors, and to what extent, are sex-disaggregated data being used efficiently to inform policy-making and planning?

As the body with responsibility for setting gender policy, the Vice-Ministry of Women promotes the implementation of indicators in coordination with the National Statistics Institute (INE) (in respect of family or domestic violence, household survey) and the National Health Information System (SNIS). These bodies are working on gender mainstreaming in the public investment system.

It is important to expand statistical coverage of the economy, rural development, access to health care and sexual violence in the family.

Also urgently needed are new data on micro and small enterprises, industry, tourism, the environment, and loan and nonperforming loan portfolios, all disaggregated by category and department.

Statistical information sharing agreements have been signed with various bodies, such as INE, so that the pooled data constitute the national information database. Other entities also produce statistical information for the general public. However, there is relatively little expertise in the different sectors in handling and interpreting statistical data.

In 2003, the National Statistics Institute published for the first time national statistical data disaggregated by sex. The document is called “BOLIVIA: Características de la población con Enfoque de género, extraídos del Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda 2001” [Bolivia: Bolivia: Characteristics of the Population from a Gender Perspective]. This document constitutes a major contribution as it reveals the part women play in society and the existing gaps in respect of access to health care, education, work, housing, and other sectors being researched, especially in the economy.

This recently published information is an indispensable tool for decision making. It also contains a comparative analysis of changes shown as having taken place between the censuses of 1976, 1992 and 2001.

Following are some data that the Bolivian Government, institutions, and society would do well to note:

While this valuable paper documents the differences between men and women in figures, much still needs to be researched and processed.

f) Provide information on the roles of different stakeholders. For example, what role does Parliament play in the promotion and monitoring of gender equality and women's empowerment? How could this role be strengthened? Describe the role of NGOs in planning and implementing the follow-up activities. Do NGOs participate formally in the mechanisms established to follow up the Fourth World Conference on Women?

One of the key mechanisms approved by Supreme Decree 26350 was the Gender Policies Monitoring Mechanism, which led to the formation of joint State and civil society bodies, known collectively at the national level as the Inter-Institutional Gender Committee (CIN). Under the Mechanism, all areas of the Executive undertook to incorporate the gender perspective in their plans, programs, and projects. At the departmental level, the Mechanism led to the Inter-institutional Departmental Committees (CID), whose functions and powers derived from regulations adopted and negotiated with institutions, with a view to monitoring and evaluating progress with the commitments built into the plans.

The Mechanism authorities received from the Executive a report on progress made with gender policies in Bolivia in the 1997-2002 period.

There is also an organized group in Parliament, known as the Parliamentary Women's Union, which promotes laws with gender content (the women's legislative agenda). The role of this organization (UMPABOL) should be expanded to allow participation by all parliamentarians from the different political parties, so that they can hear the demands and proposals put forward by women and build consensus for them in the different areas of civil society. UMPABOL is constantly in need of strengthening as it strives to work with gender instruments and build them into legislative proposals.

At the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Vice-Ministry, nongovernmental organizations have constantly offered suggestions and contributions to the Vice-Ministry's planning efforts. Coordination with NGOs takes place in various scenarios and at round table discussions, as well as in actions to monitor compliance with the World Conference on Women.

Nongovernmental organizations are probably at the forefront of the fight for gender equity; not all of them, naturally, but certainly those that are committed to women's issues and the gender perspective.

PART FOUR

Principal challenges and measures for addressing them

Bolivia's international commitments to the advancement of women provide the framework for guiding and influencing the government's domestic policies. To the extent that they are backed by existing laws, instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the World Plan of Action, international covenants on economic, social and cultural rights, covenants on civic and political rights, and the Millennium Summit commitments, with their respective goals and proposals are targets that Bolivia strives to achieve in order to lower the poverty index for women.

While much progress has been made with gender policies, they have not managed to eradicate the inequalities and inequities. Nor have governments fully espoused them. Nevertheless, one of the achievements is having -- since the creation of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Gender Affairs in 1993 -- a unit responsible for addressing women's concerns. Nowadays, that role is performed by the Vice-Ministry of Women.

The Vice-Ministry of Women's mission is to:

Promote gender equity and equal opportunities for women and men in access to and control over the resources and benefits of sustainable development, for the exercise of economic, social, political, and cultural rights in an ethnically and culturally diverse environment. To that end, its functions are to: formulate policies and standards, promote knowledge, train and provide technical assistance, develop information and mass communication campaigns and specific programs to promote gender equity and equal opportunity and to supervise their implementation. Its job is to ensure gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies and plans at the various levels of public administration and to oversee their application.

Its vision:

The Vice-Ministry of Women is an efficient, effective and transparent government institution working in close coordination with public and private bodies in a leading role recognized by both government authorities and civil society.

In that context, the Vice-Ministry of Women's goals for 2004-2007 are:

- To help narrow gender-related inequity gaps in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres, jointly and severally with other government bodies and civil society;
- Decentralized implementation, at the departmental and municipal level, of policies, plans and programs that incorporate a gender focus tailored to local circumstances;
- To build a gender perspective into government policies and plans, establishing co-responsibility for the achievement of objectives;
- To contribute to an increase in women's participation in decision-making in public sector labor policies (*ámbito público laboral*);

- To improve the quality of services designed to prevent gender-related violence, assist with the treatment and recovery of its victims, and punish the perpetrators;
- To foster economic practices for both women and men that could raise their incomes, improve working conditions, and broaden access to and control of financial resources.

A plan has been drawn up and negotiated with the different ministries and part of civil society. A consensus regarding it is currently being forged with departmental bodies and grassroots women's organizations, to ensure that the plan meets the needs of Bolivian women and fully reflects the cultural diversity of a country in which a majority of the population (over 62 percent) is rural and of indigenous descent (*indígena originaria campesina*).

The greatest challenge the country faces, and one that hits women hardest, is the current economic plight, with its lack of employment and declining incomes that are forcing women to eke out a living in highly precarious jobs.