

# **DJIBOUTI**

**Republic of Djibouti  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Ministry for the Promotion of Women,  
Family Well-Being, and Social Affairs**

## **NATIONAL TEN-YEAR EVALUATION REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

**June 2004**

## Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AFD	Association des Femmes de Dikhil [Dikhil Women's Association]
AFT	Association des Femmes de Tadjourah [Tadjourah Women's Association]
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CNP	Comité National de Pilotage [National Steering Committee]
CRIPEN	Centre de Recherche, d'Information et de Production de l'Education Nationale [National Education Research, Information, and Production Centre]
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FS	Family Stability
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GED	Gender and Development
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MPF-NGO	Ministry responsible for the Promotion of Women, Family Well-Being, and Social Affairs – Nongovernmental Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NICT	New information and communication technologies
PA	Platform for Action
PANE	Plan d'Action National pour l'Environnement [National environmental action plan]
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RFP	Risk-free pregnancy
SFPR	Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction
SNIFD	Stratégie Nationale pour l'Intégration des Femmes dans le Développement [National Strategy for Women's Integration in Development]
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFD	Union Nationale des Femmes Djiboutiennes [National Union of Djiboutian Women]
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
WHO	World Health Organization

## **INTRODUCTION**

Like most of the countries that participated in the major international conferences on women and committed to actions in, above all, the 12 principal areas of concern addressed in Beijing in 1995 and confirmed five years later in New York, the Republic of Djibouti has taken some markedly progressive steps to address gender equality issues.

Thus, looking ahead to the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women scheduled for March 2005, the Republic of Djibouti set about drafting a report on implementation of the African Plan of Action to accelerate the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, adopted at the end of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

In order to arrive at a preliminary assessment of government actions and projects for achieving the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action, this report draws on the various scheduled studies carried out in Djibouti in the different fields involved and, especially, on the document dealing with the National Strategy for Women's Integration in Development in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

The strategic approach adopted by the government to improve the standard of living of Djiboutian citizens undoubtedly reflects its desire to go beyond declarations of intent and apply a policy of effective evaluation and further development of the established programs. Moreover, as the inclusion of the millennium goals in various action plans since 2002 shows, it intends to accomplish this within the broader perspective of achieving global development objectives.

This report attempts to follow as closely as possible the strategic objectives defined by the Beijing Platform for Action by addressing them under the following headings, which are also used in the questionnaire distributed to the States parties:

- Overview of achievements and challenges in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment;
- Progress in implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action and the further initiatives and actions identified in the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;
- Institutional development; and
- Main challenges and actions to address the m.

This report has served to highlight the considerable efforts of the government and of all local players to combat poverty and, in so doing, to lay the foundations for the advancement of women and girls. Because it transpires that extreme poverty is, to a large extent, reserved for women and that only the successful culmination of the measures put in place to eliminate their inability to read and write can improve their health, economic, and political status.

Even though much remains to be done and the road ahead is fraught with social and traditional pitfalls, the march toward gender equality and the empowerment of women in Djibouti is well under way. From now on, it is up to the women, with the help of men, to keep up the pace.

## **PART ONE – OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT**

### **A) Efforts made over the past ten years to achieve gender equality and women’s empowerment**

Above all in the past five years, the advancement of women in the Republic of Djibouti has gathered clear and increasing political momentum since Mr. ISMAEL OMAR GUELLEH became President in 1999. This period has seen a surge of both institutional and legislative measures designed to bring the young Republic into line with the most advanced developing countries and with the specific targets arising out of the Beijing Platform for Action (PA 1995) and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000).

The political will to support the integration of women in Djiboutian development has led to a series of measures including, first and foremost, the establishment in 1999 of a Ministry responsible for the Promotion of Women, Family Well-Being, and Social Affairs, which replaced a Directorate created the year before. It is also evident in manifest support for the drawing up and implementation of the National Strategy for Women’s Integration in Development (SNIFD).

Using a participatory approach, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women mobilized other ministries, civil society, the private sector, and the population as a whole to prepare and complete the SNIFD and to organize the Round Table of development partners (a unique event in the region) on October 4-6, 2003.

The four priority areas broadly addressed by the SNIFD are decision-making, health, education, and women’s participation in the economy.

The SNIFD entered into force in July 2002, with the passing of Law N°173/AN/02/4<sup>ème</sup>L, which established national policy with respect to the integration of women in development. The National Steering Committee installed following the adoption of the SNIFD is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of both the SNIFD and the directives contained in the Beijing Platform for Action. The Ministry for the Promotion of Women also plans to provide Gender and Development (GED) training for all focal points as well as other participants.

Another major step taken by the government was the adoption in August 2003 of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which establishes four core development areas:

- Reinforcing Djibouti’s competitiveness and creating the conditions for strong and sustainable economic growth;
- Expediting human resource development, through programmes targeting poor areas and vulnerable sectors;
- Reducing poverty;
- Promoting good political, local, economic, and financial governance and strengthening the administration’s planning and management capacities, by providing modern tools and resources.

The gender issue and analysis of disparities between the sexes are addressed in the paper's main sections, such as those on health, education, employment, and decision-making.

As regards utilization of the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Declaration Goals as a framework for development, a report drafted in 2003 cites the shortcomings and whole set of measures taken by the Djiboutian government to fulfil the Millennium Goals, and, in particular, to achieve a reduction of extreme poverty and hunger, expand primary school education, and promote gender equality and women's autonomy, etc.

Referring to this last-mentioned goal, the report takes as its starting point the finding that over half (56.3 per cent) of Djiboutian women are illiterate, compared to only one third (35 per cent) of the men. This disadvantage appears to be exacerbated among non-single women between the ages of 15 and 49: while the illiteracy rate for this segment of the population, according to the survey, is 71 per cent for urban women, it is 97.5 per cent – practically all those interviewed – for rural women.

In terms of laws and policy, Djibouti has made considerable progress in recent years, manifested both in the promulgation of specific laws and in the fact that women's and gender concerns are taken into account in more general laws. The most significant advance in legislation is the **June 30, 2002 Family Code law**, which fills a legal void and guarantees women and children, especially girl children, respect for certain rights. Thus, by establishing a minimum age of 18 for marriage, the law prohibits the marriage of minors, makes repudiation illegal, and improves the terms for divorce.

Other laws address specific women's rights:

- The 1995 Penal Code is egalitarian with respect to parents, without distinction between father and mother. The punishment for numerous offences is more severe when they are perpetrated against women, and female genital mutilation is penalized. (Article 333 of the Penal Code);
- The Labour Code in force since December 15, 1952 upholds the principle of non-discrimination between the sexes (Article 1) as well as the "same work, same pay" principle (Article 91).

A new Code, confirming these advances, is about to be promulgated.

One of the principal objectives in the broad guidelines for economic and social development (2001-2010) is the integration of women.

- Law n°48/AN/99<sup>ème</sup> L of July 3, 1999, which establishes health policy guidelines, covers reproductive health and family planning, screening for sexually transmitted diseases, awareness campaigns regarding female genital mutilation, and social welfare benefits for mothers.

As for policy, there has been extensive public debate since 2000: a national seminar to ponder government actions (February 2002), the Justice Forum (February 2001), the Education Forum (...), and the National Forum on Human Rights (May 2004).

The Ministry for the Promotion of Women also organized a workshop to brief women candidates in parliamentary elections on constitutional rights as well as gender training for members of parliament elected in January 2003, 10 per cent of whom are women following the enactment in 2002 of the law establishing a minimum 10 per cent quota for women in elected offices and administrative positions.

Furthermore, the Head of State manifests his determination to see women integrated into Djibouti's development whenever he has an official occasion to do so. On February 3, 2000, for instance, he established "The Head of State's Grand Prize for the Advancement of Women," which affords Djiboutian women an opportunity to compete every year and win the prize for a contribution on a specific topic.

In addition, in her capacity as President of the National Union of Djiboutian Women (UNFD), the oldest established militantly feminist NGO, Djibouti's First Lady works tirelessly to improve the daily lot of Djiboutian women by combating illiteracy and female genital mutilation, and promoting micro credit to combat poverty. This organization does its utmost to lend support to disadvantaged strata and to defend their rights.

Similarly, the associations network has, in the past few years and with the support of international agencies, resolutely taken its cue from the government's actions. Even though these are not exclusively women's associations, certainly the majority of their members are women. To name just a few, UNFD helps women in particular to obtain micro credit, the women's associations of Ali Sabieh, Dikhil, Tadjourah, Obock, and Arta; ATU YOO FAN which helps distribute and sell craft products made by women; the IFTIN Associations and OUI A LA VIE, which look after people living with HIV/AIDS, the former caring for the hospitalized, the latter those living at home; the Al Biri and Bender Djedid ASSOCIATIONS, which lend support to widows and orphans; and Association IRIS, which provides legal and judicial assistance for women.

The fact that men and women work together both in the associations and at the ministerial focal point level ensures that men are sensitized and trained in issues related to the promotion of gender equality.

## **B) Constraints and ongoing challenges for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment**

Despite the leap forward observed in Djibouti with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment, in practice women are subject to numerous restrictions, which prevent them from taking full advantage of the beneficial effects of the national policy of promoting gender-related activities. These restrictions are:

- Illiteracy and women's ignorance of their rights;
- The poverty that continues to afflict most of the population, especially women;
- The weight of traditions and social pressure, the productive and reproductive role of women in society, and the practice of female genital cutting, which has a disastrous effect on the physical and mental health of girls.

The causes giving rise to these restrictions are numerous and, in the case of education, for example, they may be social and cultural, structural, or economic. In actual fact, the status of women and the place reserved for them in society revolves around their reproductive role and education is not considered a relevant qualification. In rural areas, the shortage or lack of household water supplies in the vicinity means that girls are called upon to collect and fetch water.

The absence of toilets, increased dropout rates between the ages of 10 and 11 when the first menstrual periods occur, and the impossibility of privacy for girls for hygienic reasons, all constitute constraints. Furthermore, in both towns and in the bush, enrolling children at school involves outlays that may be considered a relatively large portion of a low-income family budget; in such cases, priority is often given to the education of boys, who are looked upon as future heads of household.

The government has recently made a major effort to reduce the incidence of such problems by building roads, fitting out lots of land with basic services, providing toilets in schools, and so on.

The inability of poor women to read and write constitutes an almost insurmountable obstacle to women's access to the new information technologies at a time when Djibouti enjoys a telecommunications network that is practically unique in Africa, thanks to its two earth stations and its position as the landing site for three submarine cables linking Asia to the Middle East and Europe, which give it a key role as main station (*station maîtresse*) and traffic hub (*nœud d'éclatement du trafic*).

However, generally speaking, this tool is not fully exploited and the Ministry of Communication and Culture has been working since May 2002 on a number of measures designed to increase the awareness of new information and communication technologies (NICTs) among the various strata of Djiboutian society. Based on a wide consensus, the broad lines of a national policy on state-of-the-art technologies have been developed. In this sector, the chief objectives are to facilitate the general public's access to the various services provided by the new information and communication technologies; to continue to lower the cost of telecommunication in order to enhance Djibouti's competitiveness vis-à-vis the rest of the world; to reinforce the part played by telecommunication in regional integration and poverty reduction; and to generate jobs by developing NICT-related activities.

Finally, the process of building a gender perspective into laws and policies and the perfecting of programmes in the different sectors is well under way and palpable in every sphere. The combined efforts of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and of international organizations led by the UNDP and guided by the Millennium Goals are rendering the gender issue an inescapable component of laws and programmes in every facet of development: in education, health, culture, associations, and so on.

**PART TWO – PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM OF ACTION AND THE FURTHER INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**A) Women and poverty**

**1) Examples of successful policies, legislative change, and programmes and projects**

Over the past two decades, Djibouti's economic performance has been uneven, punctuated by a series of political crises (regional wars, internal armed conflict) and economic shocks (above all, drought) that led to a continuous decline in the country's competitiveness, finances, and economic and social infrastructure.

In addition, the main sustainable human development indicators, the gross school enrolment rate, the infant, under-five, and maternal-child mortality rates, and access to potable water, all steadily worsened.

The main step taken by the government to introduce an effective tool for combating poverty was its support for the establishment of a strategic framework for poverty reduction aimed at boosting growth and the accumulation of human capital in such a way as to bring about a sustainable reduction in poverty and unemployment and an improvement in the living conditions of the population as a whole. It relies on long-term exploitation of the country's competitive advantages, geographical location, and port, and on developing its human resources to bring about a marked increase in the competitiveness of the Djiboutian economy, thereby enabling it to benefit from its insertion into the global economy.

This general paper is of crucial importance for women, who suffer the combined effects of a dual inequality: in their standard of living and as regards their status as women.

To address this situation, in 1996 the government embarked on economic adjustment and restructuring programmes supported by the IMF and the World Bank and carried out reforms in several key areas including, above all, public finance, social security, state-owned enterprises, education, and health. In 2000, the government prepared an interim PRSP, in which the chief objectives were to: sustain economic growth; develop human resources; strengthen social safety nets; streamline government; and promote good governance.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper completed in August 2003 was approved by the Boards of the World Bank and the IMF in May 2004 and the next step will be a round table of Djibouti's development partners.



## **2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining**

The programmes in place since 1996 have had mixed results. Significant macroeconomic progress included reducing the budget deficit and the current account deficit in the balance of payments to 2.1 per cent and 4.3 per cent of GDP, respectively, in 2001.

The incidence of relative and of extreme poverty rose between 1996 and 2002 from 64.9 per cent to 74.4 per cent of households and from 34.5 per cent to 42.2 per cent of households, respectively. The survey findings also show that poverty is widespread, affecting all geographical areas and all social groups. Human poverty in Djibouti has become structural: tied in with insufficient income and insufficient access to education, health, potable water, and basic infrastructure. Under such circumstances, poverty in Djibouti is not only a social problem but a veritable challenge for development.

Women still play an invisible and inaudible role in development. The work they do at home looking after the family is unpaid and not recorded in accounts, even though it contributes to the country's GNP. Indeed, more women than men live in poverty; hence the term "feminization of poverty."

The principal problem here is that, for lack of data, there are few well documented comparative analyses broken down by sex for certain sectors (for instance, data on the macroeconomic framework, port activities, transportation, water, housing, new information and communication technologies, energy, natural resource management).

## **3) Lessons learned**

It is in the interest of women in the more vulnerable social groups that overall economic performance should be satisfactory, as this will improve their personal circumstances.

The PRSP aims to achieve 5.2 per cent annual economic growth, compared with weak or even negative growth over the past five years. Moreover, the PRSP's goal is to reduce extreme poverty to below 40 per cent in 2005 and to 10 per cent by 2015, while reducing relative poverty from its current level of approximately 74 per cent to less than 35 per cent in 2015.

To implement the first dimension of the strategy, the government plans to pursue the stabilization policies contemplated in the macroeconomic framework and structural reforms; to put in place a legal and institutional framework that encourages investment and to remove obstacles to private sector development; to promote Djibouti as a competitive economic and financial hub in the region; and to make the most of the country's growth potential, develop infrastructure, and lower the cost of the factors of production.

For the second dimension (human resource development, the idea is to improve access for the poor to health care and education; to implement a policy to generate employment by developing labour-intensive methods, promoting microfinance, expanding vocational training, and supporting sectors that directly benefit the poor (agriculture, livestock, fishing...); and to

establish social safety networks for the most vulnerable segments of the population (street children, nomads, and displaced persons). The strategy specifically targets women.

The third dimension (poverty reduction) will entail improving access for the poor to water and basic services. Policies and programmes will focus on the districts on the outskirts of Djibouti City (especially *arrondissements* 4 and 5), inland towns, and rural areas.

Finally, for the fourth dimension (political, local, economic, and financial good governance), the priorities will be to strengthen public expenditure management and enhance its equity and effectiveness in such a way that it can become a useful tool in the fight against poverty.

To monitor and evaluate the SFPR, the government plans to establish an Advisory Committee on Growth and Poverty Reduction and a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

## **B) Education and training of women**

### **1) Successful policies, legislative change, and programs and projects**

In the Republic of Djibouti, the right to education is recognized in Article 4 of Law N° 96/AN/00/4<sup>ème</sup> L establishing guidelines for the Djiboutian educational system. Existing laws and regulations do not privilege either of the sexes with regard to education and training.

A study investigating the obstacles to parity in school education was carried out in 2004 and an Action Framework for the Promotion of Girls' Education is nearing completion. Its chief objective is to eliminate gender-specific differences with respect to access to and retention in basic education as well inequalities in orientation in basic education and vocational and technical training courses, in order to guarantee observance of girls' right to education and training by 2010.

Specific steps are also being taken to lower the dropout rate, which is higher for girls than for boys. Thus, since 2002, one day a year is devoted to raising awareness of the needs for girls to attend school. This exercise generates considerable attention in all schools, particularly in schools in rural areas in which the enrolment rate for girls is particularly alarming.

Other actions, such as the lunch provided for children in school canteens, the distribution of school stationery, clothes for newly enrolled girls, and food allowances for families that send their girls to school, are incentives designed to promote enrolment of girls.

The effort to combat feminine illiteracy (56 per cent) takes the form of vast functional literacy campaigns followed by post campaign programmes (income-generating activities).

### **2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining**

Despite the government's efforts, gender disparities subsist.

In 2002, a school education, which has always been free in Djibouti, became obligatory for all children **up to the age of 16**. While there is no discrimination between the sexes at the time of

enrolment, the gross enrolment rate for girls (34.7 per cent) is lower than for boys (45.9 per cent). Thus, school attendance by girls, reducing the dropout rate, and narrowing gaps between the sexes are some of the priorities in the education sector.

The following constraints should be noted:

- Marked demographic pressure (fertility rate of 3.8);
- Difficulties in building the schools required to meet educational needs;
- The very high cost of education; and
- Shortage of resources.

### **3) Lessons learned**

Djibouti has embarked on an across-the-board overhaul of the school system and is attempting to improve adult literacy rates. In this field, the government has set interim (2005) targets as well as targets to be met by 2015.

At the same time, specific literacy programmes have got under way, to introduce in the short term an intersectoral strategy geared principally to teaching 14,500 girls and women to read and write between 2001 and 2005, at a rate of 2,900 per annum. The considerable advantages expected from educating girls, including a reduction in the fertility rate, underscore the need to raise today's weak enrolment rate for girls.

Under the SFPR, the government plans to improve the quality of education through four kinds of intervention:

- Programme reform: a programme tailored to Djibouti's development needs is to be drafted by a local team;
- Availability of school textbooks: for 2001-2005, the idea is to devise and adopt a national policy for writing and producing school books at the local level, using know-how developed by the National Education Research, Information, and Production Centre (CRIPEN). This policy will emphasize cooperation with printshops and the Action Plan contemplates procurement of machinery for the national printing press. Moreover, the programme will be completed in the classrooms. Finally, the government undertakes to eschew customs duties on imports of textbooks and other materials for schools and libraries.
- Teacher training and motivation: an effort is to be made with respect to initial and ongoing training in a bid to increase the number and quality of teachers. Steps have already been taken to boost teacher training and supervision. Special attention will be paid to the recruitment and training of science teachers and contract staff. As for teacher motivation, the government is still striving to catch up with its past-due salary arrears, improve management of teaching staff, and establish career plans.
- Reform of the evaluation system: exams and competitions merely designed to classify students will gradually be phased out in favour of practices designed to assess knowledge acquired, along with plans to correct and/or prevent early on any difficulties pupils might have.

## C) Women and health

### 1) Examples of successful policies, legislative change, and programs and projects

The Republic of Djibouti has adopted the World Health Organisation's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" and in Law N°48/AN/99/4<sup>ème</sup> L of July 3, 1999 on Guidelines for Health Policy ratifies the principles of "everyone's right to health" and "solidarity and equality for all."

In February 1995 the Ministry of Health prepared a national policy document on family stability. That policy document was followed by the drafting of a National Policy on Family Stability (March 1995), together with a National Reproductive Health Programme, which included an important section on risk-free pregnancy (RFP), family stability (FS), STDs/AIDS, and the eradication of genital mutilation.

In Chapter 8 of the law on health plan guidelines, which establishes health policy priorities, an important segment of Section 2 on Prevention deals with maternal-child health protection (Article 115).

A national risk-free pregnancy programme got under way in February 1998. It analyzes the current status of maternal health and maternal health care.

The consequences of female genital mutilation may include the death of the girl, women's health problems, menstrual pains that a woman may endure all her life, complications during childbirth, and sterility.

Also notable in the fight against this harmful practice were the establishment in 1988 of the National Committee to Combat Harmful Traditional Practices as part of the National Union of Djiboutian Women (UNFD) and the signing by the Republic of Djibouti of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. Article 15 of the Constitution condemns torture, physical abuse and inhumane, cruel, degrading, or humiliating treatment, while Article 333 of the Penal Code punishes acts of violence involving genital mutilation.

An institutional frame work has been established to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Within that framework, an Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat AIDS was installed and entrusted with choosing the broad lines of a strategy to fight AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis and working with national and international partners to secure funds and support for the fight against the three diseases. In addition, the President of the Republic recently set up a Solidarity Fund to look after HIV/AIDS orphans.

There are also vertically structured national programmes fighting AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. The Ministry of Health's STI /HIV/AIDS programme is more specifically responsible for the clinical, therapeutic, psychological, and social care of HIV/AIDS patients, for putting in place and testing a follow-up and management system, and for evaluating its performance.

The Executive Secretariat to Combat Aids, Malaria, and Tuberculosis is a permanent body looking after the day-to-day planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation. It comprises three units in charge of administration and management; planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the Intersectoral National Plan; and coordination of community interventions.

The work of this Secretariat has led, in the past two years, to improvements in the health-related and social situation of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

## 2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining

The environment and lack of sanitation, on the one hand, and poverty and malnutrition, on the other, exacerbate the overall health situation. Conditions for mothers and children are particularly worrisome. The percentage of persons fully vaccinated against the diseases targeted by the expanded vaccination program is only 45.0 country-wide and remains very low in rural areas (11.1 per cent) ; 21.9 per cent of children under the age of 5 suffer from malnutrition; diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections are the most frequent causes of infant morbidity and mortality. Infant mortality and infant-child mortality rates apparently fell to 103.1 and 124.4 per thousand, respectively, in 2002, from 114 and 154 per thousand in 1989. However, it should be noted that infant and infant-child mortality rates are much higher among girls, that is to say 100.5 per thousand and 110.4 per thousand, respectively [sic]. The high fertility rate, restricted obstetrical care coverage, and ongoing harmful social practices (excision, infibulation), seriously undermine maternal health and explain why the maternal mortality rate remains very high: 690.2 per 100,000 live births in 2002.

Poor women are the hardest hit, with 9 percentage points more maternal deaths than the average. Women are also particularly vulnerable to the propagation of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. According to a 2002 survey, the incidence of HIV/AIDS is 2.9 per cent, but as high as 6 per cent in the 15-35 year age bracket.

## 3) Lessons learned

The advancement and empowerment of women depend on their and their children being in good health throughout their life cycle.

The national action plan established when the SNIFD was drawn up identified three priority objectives for improvements in health in line with the Beijing Platform for Action targets:

- Target 1: Work to achieve an integrated approach to community health by protecting the environment, strengthening the role of women and youth, disseminating a health education program, and expanding access to high quality health care;
- Target 2: Help improve the reproductive health of women at different stages of their life cycle and reduce maternal-child illness and mortality rates;
- -Target 3: Institutionalize the struggle against practices that are harmful for women's health and that of the community, including the various forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation;

- Target 4: Work to achieve social and political involvement by the government and its national and international partners in drawing up strategies for preventing and combating AIDS.

## **D) Violence against women**

### **1) Examples of successful policies, legislative change, and programs and projects**

The Djiboutian Penal Code punishes acts of violence against women, such as rape, assault, torture, or acts of barbarity (Articles 324ff.).

For certain offences, pregnancy that is either apparent or known to the perpetrator is an aggravating factor, as is legal infancy or special vulnerability due to illness or infirmity. The fact of being a spouse or common law husband of the victim is an aggravating factor in two offences: torture and acts of barbarity (Articles 324 and 325) and unintentional manslaughter (Articles 328 and 329).

Article 333 of the Penal Code also punishes acts of violence involving genital mutilation with five years imprisonment and a DF 1,000,000 fine.

The President of the Republic also issued a reminder on March 8, 2004 that juridical institutions do not permit violence of any kind against women and thereby encouraged women to take legal action and defend their rights with respect to acts of violence.

### **2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining**

As in all other areas, there is a shortage of studies and reliable statistics about the violence women endure, particularly since the subject is culturally taboo.

The two principal obstacles to progress are:

- Sexual violence and aggression, as reported by medical personnel and the associations, especially against minors;
- Women victims of conjugal violence often simply accept their fate and refuse to file a complaint against a violent husband, either because of family pressure due to social and traditional considerations, or because they think they might put their household at risk.

### **3) Lessons learned**

It follows from the above that, while the indispensable legal framework for protecting women victims of violence exists, it needs to be improved through both social and enforcement measures:

- Efforts to change existing mentalities by adopting measures aimed at modifying the social and cultural behaviour patterns of men and women;
- Establishment of a reception and first aid centre for women victims of violence, with an office providing legal information and advice on how to bring a case to court;
- Strengthening of legal measures for the protection of women and actions to ensure effective enforcement of existing legislation by the authorities.

## E) Women and the economy

### 1) Examples of successful policies, legislative change, and programs and projects

In the structural adjustment context, the need for a second wage or supplementary income in order to maintain a household's standard of living has led to a marked surge in female employment in both the structured and non-structured private sector, as well as in their participation in the informal economy.

### 2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining

Women's participation in economic life is still limited. They constitute 52.6 per cent of the non-nomad population, yet they only account for 35 per cent of the labour market (men: 73 per cent [sic]). More women (68 per cent) are unemployed than men (54 per cent).

The need to reconcile work with family chores and their reproductive role limits, for most Djiboutian women, their chances of advancement, of fulfilling their professional potential, and of occupying decision-making positions.

That being so, the strategic objective pursued in this area consists of striving to achieve equal participation of men and women in economic activities and combating poverty by creating needed opportunities and eliminating discrimination in employment and in access to funding.

How economically active women are appears to depend on three factors: the rate grows in line with the level of education, confirming the impact of education on women's integration in the economy; it is influenced by status within the household (thus the ratio is much lower for married women); finally, the limited prospects of finding a job discourage numerous segments of this active population. More women (68 per cent) are unemployed than men (54 per cent), even though their activity ratio is lower. A major gender discrepancy persists, whatever the level of education, reflecting discrimination against women in terms of access to the labour market.

The discrimination against women affects not only their ability to find jobs, but also their access to capital. Financial intermediation mainly benefits large enterprises in the formal sector and only recently have there been cases of lending (micro credit) to small income-generating activities, targeting women.

### 3) Lessons learned

Promoting a coherent and integrated employment policy is clearly a keystone of poverty reduction strategy. There are numerous reasons why women continue to have an unequal share in economic participation in the country's development:

- Women's impact on the Djiboutian economy is far from negligible; it is visible, recognized, but not recorded in any accounts;
- Limited access to technical and scientific education;
- Very limited access to even minor credit;

- Above all in rural areas, the social division of labour assigns the most tiresome tasks to women;
- Lack of data and of qualified human resources;
- Shortage of financial resources;
- Illiteracy; ignorance and lack of qualifications;
- Absence of any incentives and qualification policy;
- Prejudices, traditions, and ignorance with respect to these issues and priorities; and
- The limited human, material, and financial capacities of NGOs.

However, these factors can be remedied and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper lists some of the priorities, which are: expanding access to resources; strengthening women's professional and entrepreneurial potential; adoption of appropriate institutional measures; and information and awareness campaigns.

## **F) Women and decision-making**

### **1) Examples of successful policies, legislative change, and programs and projects**

In terms of both domestic and international legislation adopted by the Republic, the conditions for equality between men and women have been established.

Article 5 of the Constitution states that all adult Djiboutian citizens, of both sexes, may make use of their civil and political rights to vote in elections, in accordance with the law. This Article is confirmed by Organic Law N°1 of October 29, 1992 (Article 3).

Article 11 of this law further specifies that any Djiboutian aged 23 or older, who is entitled to vote and knows how to read, write, and speak French and Arabic correctly may be elected a member of the National Assembly.

Article 6 of the Constitution prohibits political parties from identifying with a particular race, ethnic group, sex, sect, language, or region. Article 46 of the Constitution establishes that National Assembly deputies are elected for a five-year term by universal, direct, and secret suffrage; and that all Djiboutian citizens in the exercise of their civil and political rights may be elected, provided they are at least 23 years of age.

For many years, there was no improvement in the status of Djiboutian women with respect to decision-making positions. However, there has been promising progress in this regard over the past five years.

Thus, when a woman was appointed to head a ministry (that for the Promotion of Women) in 1999 and seven women deputies (a 10 per cent quota) entered the National Assembly in January 2003, women felt themselves freed from a traditional constraint, which unofficially blocked their access to high-level and symbolic decision-making posts.

Moreover, the highest judge in the country is a woman and since Article 29 of the Constitution stipulates that "in the event that the Presidency of the Republic is vacated for whatever reason,



the President shall be replaced on an interim basis by the President of the Supreme Court,” women’s value and abilities are explicitly recognized.

The body in which Djiboutian women have the highest representation is the *magistrature*: eight of the country’s 24 judges (i.e. one third) are women. There are more women clerks of the court (52 per cent) than men (48 per cent), and the trend continues to favour women.

In addition, there are two women technical advisors (one in the Ministry of Youth and Sports and one in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs); three female directors in ministries (one in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, another in the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, and the third in the Ministry of Transport); and two women directors of state-owned enterprises (the National Printing Press and the International Hydrocarbons Company of Djibouti -SIHD). As part of the decentralization policy, women have been appointed to the Regional Councils in the different districts (two in each Regional Council) and seven have been named assistant district chiefs.

Women’s eligibility is also guaranteed in the law on decentralization and the status of regions of May 30, 2002. Article 1 states that “the region and the commune... shall be administered freely by councils elected by universal, direct suffrage...”

## **2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining**

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the legal framework and political will are strongly in favour of equal participation, women are still under-represented in positions of responsibility in ministries such as Justice, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Defence.

Women are almost totally excluded from decision-making spheres in the public sector and make up only nine per cent of government officials in Category A. Moreover, women managers in the Administration are often appointed only as Department Heads or Assistant Directors.

Even today, there is not a single female diplomat. Nor are there any women Secretary- Generals in the ministries.

## **3) Lessons learned**

Given that the level of women’s participation in political and decision-making spheres is largely a function of cultural factors, the strategy required to integrate them will have to be an act of will (as in the case of the National Assembly quota rule, which includes women’s access to administrative functions) and accord priority to sensitization and training of all social players in order to expedite a change of mindsets.

The National Strategy for Women’s Integration in Development has established three major objectives:

- Establishing an institutional framework to ensure equal and equitable participation of women and men in decision-making through generalized implementation of Gender and Development (GED) goals;

- Taking appropriate steps to ensure that existing and future laws are consistent and enforced;
- Introducing a civic culture of equality and equity in society and putting an end to women's ignorance of laws and rights.

### **G) Human rights of women**

Djiboutian women have a whole arsenal of laws and institutions guaranteeing protection and effective enforcement of their rights. Apart from laws and regulations passed for each specific area (health, education, justice), the overall legal framework is highly supportive of women fulfilling their potential in society, in whatever walk of life they choose.

Thus, since it became independent, Djibouti has subscribed to the Universal Charter [sic - Declaration?] of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which recognize rights and freedom for all, especially:

- a) Equality before the law;
- b) Equal protection of the law;
- c) The right to respect for the dignity inherent in each human being and to recognition as a person before the law.

Article 18.3 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights establishes that the State shall ensure the elimination of every kind of discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of the woman and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions.

The Djiboutian Constitution of September 15, 1992, laws, and regulations all guarantee women equal rights with men. Article 1 of the Constitution stipulates in paragraph 2 that the State guarantees for all equality before the law without distinction as to language, origin, race, sex, or religion. Article 10 of the Constitution adds that all human beings are equal before the law.

The institutional mechanisms women can resort to if their fundamental rights are violated are the Ombudsman (*Médiateur de la République*), the judiciary, the Constitutional Council...

### **H) Women and the media**

Considerable progress has been made in this area, thanks to the appointment of a woman to be editor in chief of TV and Radio and an increase in the number of women reporters. Moreover, the media play an important role in establishing a positive image of women as true agents of development in society.

### **I) Women and the environment**

#### **1) Examples of successful policies, legislative change, and programs and projects**

The environment first became an important issue in the Republic of Djibouti in the 1990s following publication of the National Report on the Environment, prepared for the Rio Summit.

Since then, protection of the environment is considered a national priority. A Ministry of the Environment was established in 1993 and numerous environmental planning papers have been produced:

- A National Environmental Action Plan (PANE);
- A Strategy and Platform for Action to Conserve Biological Diversity;
- A National Programme to Combat Desertification
- Initial National Report on Climate Change

## **2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining**

Even though women are the principal victims of environmental degradation in both rural and urban areas, and despite their key role in managing environmental resources, there is too little gender perspective in environmental policies and strategies.

The main stumbling blocks are:

- Water and firewood chores that have a disastrous impact on women's economy, education, and health; and
- The lack of an autonomous sanitation authority with sufficient financial resources to maintain sanitation facilities; and the development of housing quarters on sites ill-suited for drainage systems (health hazard).

## **3) Lessons learned**

Poverty reduction is a key factor in environmental protection. It is poor women who bear the brunt of deteriorating environmental conditions, especially the depletion of natural resources and the decline of ecosystems and of the services they provide. It is essential to pay special attention to the needs of women, whose very survival depends on natural resources and the uses they make of them, by:

- Taking the female dimension into account in environmental conservation policies and strategies;
- Devising a water access policy for rural areas and poor urban districts in order to alleviate women's water chores;
- Implementing a renewable energy policy in order to put an end to women's firewood gathering chores;
- Conducting an awareness campaign focusing on the part women play in household waste disposal; and
- Reducing poverty in such a way as to enable women to use natural resources in a sustainable manner

### **J) The girl child**

#### **1) Examples of successful policies, legislative change, and programs and projects**

Positive steps taken on behalf of girls include:

- Ratification by the Republic of Djibouti on the Convention on the Rights of the Child;

- The importance attached to school enrolment and retention of girls at school in the Education Master Plan;
- The protection afforded young girls by Article 333 of the Penal Code, with respect to female genital mutilation.
- The preparation (currently under way) of a strategy for the All-round Development of Young Children of Djibouti (*Développement Intégral du Petit Enfant Djiboutien* - DIIPED), which aims to develop the intellectual, emotional, social, and physical potential of young children, that is to say, girls and boys up to six years of age, along with their parents and the local community.

## **2) Obstacles encountered and gaps and challenges remaining**

In the area of education and training, there are some specific programmes for girls. UNICEF also supports a project run by the National Education Research, Information, and Production Centre (CRIPEN), entitled “Toward a New Approach to the Education of Girls in Djibouti,” which focuses on girls who have dropped out of the educational system or were never enrolled. The programme aims to reduce the high illiteracy rate, fight discrimination against girls with respect to education, mitigate the detrimental effects of ignorance, and contribute to women’s emancipation.

The obstacles encountered are:

- Customs and traditions that extol the reproductive role and train girls to perform household chores;
- The difficulty of eradicating female genital mutilation despite all the awareness campaigns and pleas against these harmful traditional practices;
- The remoteness of schools in rural areas;
- Family pressures imposing restrictions and hindering children’s right to a basic education (by giving them, especially girls, jobs to do at home, early marriage, etc.)
- Ignorance; and
- Poverty.

## **3) Lessons learned**

The differences in the level of education provided to boys and girls are undoubtedly the principal cause of Djiboutian women’s lack of integration in their country’s development, given the fact that education is known to be the most effective tool with which to ward off disease and to enable women to control their own economic future.

Specific efforts are therefore needed in this area in order to improve the quantitative and qualitative aspects of education, by increasing enrolment and re-examining curricula.

## **PART THREE: INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **1) Implementation of mechanisms for the empowerment of women**

The first institutional mechanism for integrating women in development was the Directorate for the Promotion of Women and the Family established in July 1998, reporting directly to the Office of the President.

Less than a year later, it was upgraded to a Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Family Well-Being, and Social Affairs, attached to the Office of the Prime Minister. Its job is to:

1. Help the government draft policy on women's empowerment and the strategy for implementing it;
2. Put forward draft laws and regulations on women's and family rights;
3. Promote measures designed to enforce respect for women's rights in society and to guarantee equality in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.
4. Create a database on Djiboutian women's progress, centralizing all the documentation and data gathered by all departments on the status of women in Djibouti;
5. Prepare and propose projects and programmes designed to enhance the integration of women and promote the family in the development process and decide on the best ways to bring it about in cooperation with the ministries and agencies concerned.

The Ministry for the Promotion of Women comprises:

- The Cabinet, including a technical advisor;
- A Directorate made up of:
  - An economic affairs department, which is also in charge of relations with NGOs; /women's organizations (one executive);
  - A social affairs department (three executives); and
  - A human resources and accounting department (one executive).

The Ministry was assigned the following specific mandates: coordination and monitoring of actions taken to implement the national policy of integrating women in development and promotion of family well-being. Consequently, it is responsible for:

- Arguing in favour of women's interests in all areas;
- Applying national policy for integrating women in development;
- Backing measures in support of women's rights; and
- Seeing that women are integrated into spheres in which they are under-represented (decision-making), and supervising equal rights for women in education, training, employment, etc.

### **2) Drafting the National Policy for Women's Integration in Development**

The National Policy for Women's Integration in Development is based on a law promulgated by presidential decree. It covers four areas that are considered priorities in SNIFD: education, health, the economy, and decision-making. Its chief objective is to narrow the gaps between men and women by executing programmes and projects mainly directed at women. Indicators have

been drawn up for each area. SNIFID envisions gathering data broken down by sex and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

The four priority areas for SNIFD are: decision-making, health, education, and the economy.

Each area has its own objectives, namely:

- In the decision-making area, the idea is to:
  - Establish an institutional framework to ensure equal and equitable participation by women and men in decision-making processes through widespread application of GED objectives;
  - Take appropriate steps to ensure that existing and future laws are consistent and enforced;
  - Introduce a civic culture of equality and equity in society and put an end to women's ignorance of laws and rights.
  
- In health, the idea is to:
  - Work to achieve an integrated approach to community health by protecting the environment, strengthening the role of women and youth, disseminating a health education program, and expanding access to higher quality health care;
  - Help improve the reproductive health of women at different stages of their life cycle and reduce maternal-child illness and mortality rates;
  - Institutionalize the struggle against practices that are harmful for women's health and that of the community, including the various forms of violence, such as female genital mutilation;
  - Work to achieve social and political involvement by the government and its national and international partners in drawing up strategies for preventing and combating AIDS.
  
- In education, the idea is to:
  - Help reach the national goal of 65 per cent gross enrolment by identifying obstacles, providing incentives, and adopting sensitization measures;
  - Help to establish and implement a national policy for reducing illiteracy, through measures aimed at boosting participation by women and girls in literacy and informal education programmes;
  - Combat the various forms of discrimination against girls and women in education and promote a culture of equality in both the formal and informal education sector and in society;
  - Incorporating girls graduating from secondary school into socio-economic development by providing access to skills training courses tailored to market needs.
  
- In the economic sphere, the idea is to:
  - Help reduce female poverty by implementing specific mechanisms and measures;
  - Facilitate equitable access to employment for women and promote professional training and employability.

### **3) Degree of capacity to promote awareness of gender-specific issues and the principal challenges in this field.**

In implementing the SNIFD and in the monitoring and evaluation activities arising out of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women has

introduced a “gender” focal points strategy in the various ministries, its purpose being to promote gender mainstreaming in government institutions and organizations,

The notion of gender, which is relatively new in Djibouti, is becoming increasingly incorporated into fields such as agriculture, housing, the environment, and so on. Its incorporation into education and health sector policies and strategies took place somewhat earlier.

Gender mainstreaming at the ministry level is currently being assimilated, above all with the support of development partners. The UNDP and UNFPA pioneered these initiatives, especially by supporting the Ministry’s work on drafting the SNIFD between 1999 and 2003. An ADB project entitled “Support for the Advancement of Women” (*Appui à la promotion des femmes*), scheduled to come on stream in 2004, contains an institutional and technical capacity-building component consisting mainly of gender training for ministry officials and focal points in the various ministries and institutions. The idea is to contribute to the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming in sector policies and strategies. The project also provides for a series of studies on the status of women, for which specific topics have not yet been chosen.

Likewise, the government’s Strategic Framework for Poverty Reduction and the ADB’s – both of which are nearing completion – have been guided at all times by a concern to take the gender dimension into account for poverty reduction.

Since its inception, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women has regarded itself primarily as a coordinator. However, its human resource and budgetary constraints have proved to be a handicap and severely impair the effectiveness of its actions. As a result, there is still very little awareness of gender at the national level and in the various sectors. A major effort is therefore required within the Ministry, above all to establish a specific department responsible for institutionalizing gender.

Much still needs to be accomplished with respect to coordination mechanisms, rendering of accounts, and capacity building.

While the line ministries responsible for implementing the SNIFD are supposed to execute the activities contemplated in the national action plan, coordination of all those activities has been assigned to the Ministry for the Promotion of Women. To that end, a mechanism was established, consisting of a National Steering Committee for the SNIFD and an inter-sectoral Technical Committee to monitor and evaluate the SNIFD.

Established by Decree N° 2002-0220 / PRE in 2002, it is managed by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Ministry of Health.

The National Steering Committee (CNP) comprises high-level representatives (Secretaries-General) of the different ministries.

The Inter-Sectoral Technical Committee consisting of focal points assists the CNP. The mechanisms have been set up but have not yet had gender training courses and are not operational.

The Action Plan to implement the SNIFD was reviewed by a Round Table of development partners in October 2003, which constituted an achievement for Djibouti. These bodies do therefore need to be trained and start operating.

A capacity-building mechanism responsible for drawing up a capacity-building programme has been included in the draft organizational chart contemplated for implementing the SNIFD Action Plan. That organizational chart has not yet been adopted.

Achievements with regard to gender are the result of projects supported by development partners (a training plan is currently being explored with ECA, for instance, for 2005).



## **PART FOUR – MAIN CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THEM**

The law passed on July 7, 2002, setting out national policy on women's integration in development, established implementation of that strategy as a national objective to be accomplished by a fully participatory approach.

Indeed, Article 4 of this law specified that "Implementation of the National Strategy for Women's Integration in Development and of the National Action Plan shall be carried out by the line ministries and associations of national NGOs within the framework of a partnership with the ministry responsible.

Article 5 likewise specified that "All the line ministries involved in the four priority areas, state and parastatal agencies, as well as private sector entities shall be required to abide in all their actions by the National Strategy for Women's Integration in Development and the National Action Plan for Women's Integration in National Development, and to cooperate with and contribute to this national undertaking."

The marching orders for full and complete integration of Djiboutian women in development have therefore been issued. Now the mechanisms for implementing this policy need to come into play.

To that end, strategic goals and priority actions have been established in the four priority areas selected by the strategy, namely:

- **In the area of decision-making:**
  - The priority actions identified are:
    - The appointment and installation of a committee to monitor implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified by the Republic of Djibouti;
    - Affirmative actions and measures in favour of women to facilitate their access to decision-making positions, high-level functions and responsibilities in the political, executive, and legislative spheres, in civil society and in the private sector, through publication of an incentives and/or implementing decree;
    - Strengthening of the registry office and system for individual and family registration (civil status and family record book) in order to guarantee the rights of women and children, and pleas to religious leaders, members of parliament, decision-makers, and civil and political society in order to elicit support for development objectives and the principles of democracy and human rights;
    - Informing and sensitizing society and the different players in it, including youth, the media, and community groups regarding the benefits for the whole of society of democracy and the participation of women in development.
    - Strengthening the capacities of local and national NGOs and district committees with respect to arguments regarding Islamic principles, Djibouti's legal system, and the international conventions ratified by the state;
    - Extolling the place and roles of women by using the cycle of life in society approach, and especially audio-visual material; and

- Informing women and their family members about their rights under Djiboutian law, in accordance with the principles of Islam and the international conventions ratified by the country.
- The outcomes expected by 2007 are:
  - Women are found in Parliament; in national, regional, and international bodies; and in political parties and trade unions. An incentives and/or implementing decree will have been issued. The quota system will be in place;
  - Gender focal points have been formed and trained, and are operational, at least in the ministries involved in the priority areas and in government institutions. The Gender and Development approach has been adopted;
  - Sensitization programmes are under way;
  - A national competition to promote democracy and egalitarian valued has been held for two consecutive years.
  - Training programmes are in effect for 10 local and national NGOs and district committees;
  - Televised broadcasts, twice a month, extolling the place and role of women in society; and
  - 1 or 2 association(s) per district make sure that women are informed and aware of the law affecting women and the family. The numerous women joining these associations are familiar with and begin to claim their rights in accordance with national laws and the international conventions ratified by the Republic of Djibouti.
- **In the area of health:**
  - The priority actions identified are:
    - Development of a participatory approach within communities, to administer health infrastructure (health centres, community pharmacies) and social infrastructure (markets, youth centres, fire hydrants, etc...);
    - Helping to establish a transportation system that takes into account the distribution of clinics and schools in the area, so as to ensure access to health and other services for the least privileged segments of the population and women;
    - Preparation of sets of lectures (*programmes intégrés de plaidoyer*) for sensitizing and involving the political authorities, civil society, and community leaders and members regarding the importance of gender and sexual and reproductive health programmes for family stability and development;
    - Encouragement of a responsible attitude in children (whether they attend school or not), whereby they see themselves as citizens of the future with respect to disease prevention and reproductive health issues, STDs/AIDS, gender, violence and harmful practices against women, tobacco addiction and consumption of khat, through sensitization, argument, and training.;
    - The strengthening of legal mechanisms designed to protect women from violence and adoption of measures to ensure that the authorities enforce existing laws;
    - Pleas to key players in society, including religious leaders, members of parliament, decision-makers in civil and political society, youth, the media, NGOs, and community groups to lend their support to efforts to combat acts of violence against women and harmful practices, including the various forms of pressure and harassment

- in different contexts (school, the workplace, etc.) and to protect children and girls, in particular;
- Involvement of the different ministerial departments responsible for carrying out the National Program to Combat AIDS (the ministries of Health, Education, Youth, Promotion of Women, Justice...) by establishing sub-programmes;
  - Consolidation of the solidarity among national and international development partners in implementing and financing anti-AIDS programmes, by actions to raise awareness in institutions and in society;
  - Sensitization of the most vulnerable groups, especially youth and women, to the risks posed by STDs/AIDS, by working through the institutions and associations involved; and
  - Strengthening both the capacities and resources of NGOS to look after and support those who are victims of infection or illness and, at the same time, of rejection by society, especially women and children; and setting up a solidarity fund to assist those who are hospitalized or dying.
- The outcomes expected by 2007 are:
- At least 20 NGOs will be taking part in the MPF-NGO partnership program and executing community health projects (water, sanitation, nutrition, breast-feeding, malaria .....);
  - The percentage of anaemic pregnant women will have fallen from 70 to 40.
  - An increase of 50 per cent in the population with access to potable water within 100 meters in urban areas and an increase of 40 per cent in rural areas;
  - A transportation system taking into account the distribution of schools and clinics in the area is implemented for Djibouti;
  - The new guidelines on reproductive health, in their entirety, including gender, reproductive rights, violence against women (such as female genital mutilation), life cycle, rights of women clients (respect, confidentiality, professional secrecy...), and the importance of prevention (prenuptial certificate) form an integral part of initial and ongoing training courses for health sector personnel;
  - All obstetrical emergencies are either dealt with at once or referred on time to an appropriate facility;
  - The laws protecting women from violence are effectively enforced by the authorities;
  - Politicians, religious leaders, youth, and the media join forces to combat violence against women;
  - At least one reception, monitoring, and legal assistance centre will be operating in Djibouti City and each district for female victims of violence, managed by a Coordination Committee of NGOs and local associations;
  - The government will have adopted a national program to fight AIDS;
  - At least 30 NGOs will be taking part in the MPF-NGO partnership program and conducting information and awareness campaigns, as well as projects to combat the spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS in the community;
  - Sectoral subprograms for the prevention of STDs/HIV will be under way, together with anti-AIDS programs run by the ministries concerned.

- **In the area of education:**

- The priority actions identified are:

- Lecture programs at the national, regional, and community level aimed at removing real obstacles and/or combating prejudices against the enrolment of girls at school;
- Implementation, with the help of national and international partners, of incentives and programs supporting the enrolment and retention of girls in the school system, by easing the economic and socio-cultural impediments;
- Ensuring that women are represented on the new bodies envisioned in the Master Guidelines (*Schéma Directeur*): the inter-ministerial coordination committee, the technical team, and the management, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation team, to see that curricula are imbued with the gender perspective and its objectives, a culture of respect for the rights of persons, reproductive health and family planning, and environmental protection;
- Awareness campaigns for parents, teachers, and the media on forms of discrimination, together with technical and political support for incorporating gender in the Ministry of National Education's *Master Plan and Action Plan (2001/2005)*, for incorporating the values and principles of equality and equity and the obligatory nature of education according to Islamic teaching, and for incorporating the gender perspective and its democratic objectives and education on population issues in school textbooks;
- A study of the employability and needs of girls graduating from secondary school;
- Encouragement of internships in the private and public sectors; and
- Support for initiatives by associations and the private sector to offer short training courses, especially on information technologies.

- The outcomes expected by 2007 are:

- A lecture program will have been worked out and be under way at the national, regional, and community level;
- A multilingual community awareness programme will be under way in rural areas and in the districts;
- Incentives programmes will be running and their impact evaluated;
- Reinsertion/insertion actions will be under way and supported by local authorities and NGOs;
- A guide on teaching women to read and write is regularly used by the Ministry and by NGOs;
- Literacy programmes are based on community participation;
- Training based on market demand is incorporated into girl's informal education courses;
- Negative images and depictions of the role of women have been removed from school books;
- Children regularly take part in school debates;
- A study of economic and job opportunities for secondary school graduates will have been completed and action plans developed and being put into practice in five districts; and
- At least one information technology and computer science training centre will be operating in each district.

- **In the “economy” area:**
  - The priority actions identified are:
    - Incorporation of the gender concept in the poverty reduction strategy;
    - Strengthening of the resources for the development of micro-credits, including the introduction of competition;
    - Development of women’s professional capacities and skills in financial management and planning, market surveying...;
    - An analytical paper on women’s quantitative and qualitative place in the labour market, as a means of identifying obstacles and opportunities for their insertion;
    - An awareness and lecture program for formal sector managers on the qualitatively and quantitatively inferior treatment of women on the labour market and on the importance of equitable access to employment for women; and
    - Incorporation in the law on economic and social guidelines (2001-2010) of indicators showing a trend toward parity in employment and professional training and insertion into the labour market.
  - The outcomes expected by 2007 are:
    - A poverty reduction strategy, imbued with a gender perspective, will have been developed and applied;
    - A “Women’s Creativity Centre” will have been set up in each district;
    - Training programs for achieving a better grasp of the new information technologies will have been developed;
    - A macroeconomic and sector policy providing for equal employment of men and women will have been developed;
    - Specific training programmes for improving the quality and raising the level of women’s education will have been established; and
    - The ILO’s international programme entitled “More and Better Jobs for Women” will have begun.

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