

## ANNEX VIII

## MEDIA ARTICLES

Editorials

### **FROM BEIJING TO AFRICA - IMPLEMENTING THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

Barbara Lopi

The year 2005 marks the 10th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing, China, in 1995, and processes to review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) are gaining momentum.

Recently, a southern African intergovernmental Sub-Regional Meeting for the decade review of the BPFA was held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 26 to 28 April 2004 under the auspices of the southern Africa Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Prior to the sub-regional review meeting, representatives of women's human rights, women's empowerment and gender and development non-governmental organisations from eleven countries met in Lusaka, Zambia on 25 April 2004, at a special session devoted specifically to reviewing the achievements, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of BPFA.

The objective of the working session, which was convened by the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness programme (WIDSAA) in collaboration with the Non Governmental Organisation Coordinating Council (NGOCC) in Zambia, was to consolidate civil society input to the intergovernmental decade review meeting.

The NGO meeting achieved their objective by producing a communiqué, which was presented to the sub-regional intergovernmental decade review meeting. The communiqué outlined constraints and challenges encountered in implementing the 12 critical areas outlined in BPFA. While acknowledging the region's progresses, the Gender NGOs expressed deep concern about the rapid spread of HIV infection in the SADC countries and the millions of deaths caused by AIDS, which they described as a testimony to the continued unequal power relations between women and men.

The communiqué highlighted several constraints and challenges hampering the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern outlined in the BPFA as obstacles to the advancement of women and gender equality. Key among the constraints is the failure to operationalise established gender equality frameworks and implement national and regional policies. A majority of countries in the region have adopted national gender policies and developed attractive strategic plans for their implementations, but these have remained unimplemented. Reasons include a lack of financial and human resources.

The established mechanisms for the advancement of women have also been less productive due to unclear mandates, understaffing and limited skills in gender mainstreaming. Only a few experts have the requisite gender competencies and awareness on gender equality instruments to implement policies and assist in mainstreaming of gender.

Another major concern expressed was the misconception surrounding gender mainstreaming, which was reported to be hindering the promotion of gender equality.

To clear the current misunderstanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming, the NGOs in their communiqué called for a strong review of 'gender mainstreaming' at the continental, regional, national and civil society levels within countries and for the development of approaches that result in transformation, rather than mere reform, of the patriarchal structures.

“Gender mainstreaming has been simplistically defined as the social roles of women and men without any analysis of the unequal power relations within structures, which hinder women's effective participation.

This interpretation of the approach has led to situations where gender mainstreaming is viewed as the sole responsibility of women, and it is seen as a 'favour', rather than as a strategic means to bring about gender justice and equality.

“We note with grave concern the misconceptions that have arisen around 'gender mainstreaming' as the identified approach to give women equal access to opportunities in all sectors. Some governments have interpreted the approach to mean mainstreaming 'traditional gender roles' whereby women are still unable to break through the 'glass ceilings' into decision-making positions,” read part of the communiqué.

Gender experts define gender mainstreaming as the (re) organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

Gender mainstreaming means that gender equality is part of common policies and thus it (gender mainstreaming) implies a broader and more comprehensive definition of gender equality, giving value to differences and diversity. In stressing the need to (re) organise, improve, develop and evaluate policy processes, gender mainstreaming must be able to challenge the male bias that characterises society and the structural character of gender inequality. Mainstreaming must involve more and new actors in building a balanced society.

Concern about the lack of gender specific job descriptions, and the limited knowledge on gender issues, was also expressed. This was coupled with low working morale that defeated the good intention behind established gender focal points in the ministries in most SADC countries. Personnel at these focus points are usually overburdened by other responsibilities, and in some cases lack gender-mainstreaming skills, thereby rendering them unable to influence policy changes in their respective sectors. These problems are compounded by the high turnover of gender specialists.

Recommendations regarding the other priority areas of concern in the BPFA were as follows:

\* In order to effectively reduce the prevalence of HIV and AIDS, governments must make gender equality central to all strategies, policies and programmes.

\* Declining economies and poverty remain big challenges for the region. It was recommended that by December 2006, women form no less than 50% of all bodies that make decisions on economic policy; and enact laws that guarantee that women form no less than 50 percent of the beneficiaries of land redistribution schemes and have access to and control over ownership of land in their own right.

\* Recognising the high maternal mortality rates in the sub-region, provision of quality reproductive health services is paramount. It is recommended that user fees for all women including pregnant girls seeking health services be removed; that a broad range of female controlled protective devices such as microbicides and condoms be provided as contraception and protection from HIV and STIs and legislative reforming permitting access to safe and affordable delivery and abortion be effected.

\* On gender violence, it was recommended that all SADC countries provide post sexual violence medical therapies for women and girls and especially those therapies that prevent and reduce the transmission of HIV and STIs; all countries enact legislation that criminalizes domestic violence and sexual offences committed in both the public and private spheres; all SADC countries ensure that they make and protect budgetary provisions for implementing measures to protect women and girls from violence; that governments enact stiffer penalties for all forms of sexual violence against the girl-child including trafficking, and protect girls from child labour.

\* On women in decision-making positions, it was recommended that governments adopt measures within the framework of the elections which are unfolding in the region over the next 18 months, to fulfil the commitment of reaching the target of a minimum of 30 percent women in strategic political and decision making positions by December 2005; domesticate all regional and international instruments that are legally binding, and transform declarations into Protocols; and amend all constraints urgently to

eliminate the provisions that currently exist for the discrimination of women and girls through customary and personal law.

\* While recognising the growing acceptance of women's participation in decision-making, the NGOs recommended that governments make a concerted effort to: meet the African Union's target of 50% women in managerial and decision-making positions in all parastatals, public institutions, regional bodies, media institutions, the judiciary, the public service and trade unions; and enact special measures to increase women's participation in structures and policy-making processes at all levels.

\* On women in the media, government and media were recommended to set targets for the advancement of women in the media; and set up an independent regulatory media authority to monitor the implementation of these targets. The media were also urged to develop editorial and employment policies, which prohibit discrimination against women in the workplace, and ensure their promotion to key positions.

Lastly, Southern Africa - and the African continent - must begin to operate on a new gear, which ensures that all commitments agreed upon, including protocols and declarations signed, are adhered to. As the continent prepares for the African Union meeting in July, governments and heads of states that have not signed, ratified or acceded to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa must do so.

Few countries have so far signed, ratified or acceded to the Protocol, which holds lots of opportunities to squarely address a number of interconnected issues on violence against women, based on African women's experiences. The Protocol is crucial for enacting gender sensitive legislation that is rooted in local experience and responds concisely to women's lived realities.

\* Barbara Lopi is Project Manager/Editor the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness (SARDC WIDSAA) programme. "This article first appeared in Pambazuka News, an electronic newsletter for social justice in Africa, [www.pambazuka.org](http://www.pambazuka.org)".

### **SADC gender experts review progress after Beijing**

by Singy Hanyona

Gender experts in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have urged leaders in the region to domesticate international human rights instruments and gender frameworks in order to promote equality among women and men. One such framework is the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

A SADC Sub-regional Decade Review meeting held in Lusaka-Zambia from 26-28 April recommended that there should be concerted efforts to eliminate harmful cultural and traditional practices if gender policies were to be effectively implemented in the region.

SADC has joined the rest of the world in evaluating the state of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2004 in preparation for the decade Beijing +10 in 2005. The meeting devised some strategies on measures to address the obstacles encountered in the implementation of the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The objective of the statutory meeting was to review and appraise progress made in the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action in Africa, during the past 10 years in the SADC region (Beijing+10).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) organized the inter-governmental meeting for Africa in conjunction with SADC. The meeting brought together experts from national gender machineries, ministries of finance, planning, industry and trade, health, agriculture and foreign affairs.

Representatives from Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, noted the critical need to develop a mechanism to ensure gender mainstreaming in line ministries, with own budgets.

The meeting recommended that governments must adopt affirmative action to protect women and this should be enshrined in national constitutions. According to resolutions of the meeting, SADC should also revisit the 30 percent representation of women in decision-making, and as per African Union (AU) requirements, upgrade to 50 percent.

Dickson Mzumara, ECA Southern Africa Officer-in-Charge, says the decade review was important, especially since it is now almost 30 years after the first Global Women's Conference, held in Mexico in 1975.

A communiqué from the SADC gender and women's empowerment NGOs to the meeting called on all SADC countries to adopt pro-poor gender responsive budgeting as the approach for allocating resources at the national and local government levels by December 2006.

The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness (WIDSAA) convened the working session for SADC gender and women's empowerment NGOs a day before the UNECA meeting. This was in collaboration with the Non-Governmental Organisation Coordinating Council (NGOCC), the umbrella body of gender and development-oriented NGOs in Zambia to consolidate the NGO input to the bigger meeting.

Regarding women in power and decision-making, the meeting heard that progress has been registered. For instance, Swaziland has elected a woman as Deputy Speaker in the House of Assembly, and a woman Deputy President in the House of Senate.

The DRC and Zimbabwe also have women Deputy Speakers. Zambia has a woman Clerk of the National Assembly, a woman Director of Public Prosecution and Auditor General. The country also has the first woman State Counsel in the history of the republic.

Experts at the meeting proposed that mechanisms to hold parliaments accountable for any gender disparities should be developed. They also proposed that networks for gender mainstreaming should be established at community level in SADC.

"Parliamentarians should be targeted for training to utilize gender equality instruments, which should be translated into local languages," reads one of the resolutions from the meeting.

Delegates also tackled the impact of HIV and AIDS and poverty on the struggle to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women in southern Africa, as a serious emerging issue.

According to a SADC study presented at the meeting, the region accounts for over 70 percent of the people infected globally.

"Women and children suffer disproportionately as the scourge is hitting women hard," says the study.

After the Beijing international women's conference in China in 1995, the affirmative action resolution, urged countries to strive for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The impact of HIV and AIDS and the growing poverty exacerbated by economic structural adjustment, have frustrated these efforts. Individuals, men and women, families, communities and entire nations are destabilized by the epidemic.

Ministers responsible for gender and women affairs in the region also met to validate the outcomes reports of experts.

The outcomes of the meeting will be fed into the Southern Africa Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) and will constitute the SADC position in the Africa Regional and Global Review of Beijing +10. The experts' meeting comes six months before the 7th African Regional Conference on Women, to be held in November 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The conference will be hosted by UNECA and is designed to enable Africa to assess progress made and to make decisions on the advancement of women, within the framework of Beijing +10. (SARDC)

**Political will key to gender development, says Mbula (Zambia Daily Mail, 27/04/2004)**

By PAULINE BANDA

POLITICAL will is key in meeting the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) declaration on gender and development, Secretary to the Cabinet Leslie Mbula said in Lusaka yesterday.

Opening a sub-regional meeting of experts, which is reviewing the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action, Mr Mbula said gender equity and equality was important for SADC and the globe as a whole. Zambia is a signatory to the SADC declaration, which sets out a target of 30 per cent female representation in decision-making and politics by 2005.

The Lusaka meeting, which has been tasked to lay ground for a ministers' meeting, is reviewing progress made in the last 10 years after the Beijing Declaration. The Beijing world conference on women took place in September 1995.

"A sustainable political will is essential if the SADC heads of state are to translate into action the SADC declaration on gender and development signed in 1997," Mr Mbula told participants at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel.

He lauded Mozambique, which recently appointed a woman as Prime Minister and Swaziland and Malawi, which have female speakers of their National Assemblies.

He said the contribution of women to development was a necessity adding that although women across the region had been appointed to high positions, there was still room for improvement.

He commended gender technocrats for keeping the gender momentum alive in Africa. The review meeting, which ends on Thursday will zero in on the obstacles and achievements of the post Beijing era.

The Beijing Platform for Action raised 12 critical areas of concern, including health and HIV/AIDS, poverty, education and Women and the Media.

The meeting will also look at national gender policies and implementation processes. All the countries represented at the meeting are expected to give a post-Beijing report for networking purposes.

Almost the whole of SADC and East Africa is represented at the meeting, which has drawn over 50 participants from governments and civil society.

And Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) director of the African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) Josephine Ouedraogo said she was happy that women had registered their presence in decision-making.

"We take note of the unprecedented increase in the number of women in Parliament as exemplified by Rwanda with women holding 45 per cent of Parliamentary seats. We are also reliably informed that women have achieved equal representation in the South African Parliament," Ms Ouedraogo said.

She said women still faced major challenges and their status was closely linked to that of general development on the African continent. The government gender machinery the Gender in Development Division headed by permanent secretary Sr Auxillia Ponga is actively participating in the review meeting.

## **Shikapwasha seeks support for SADC gender project - 30/04/2004**

By PAULINE BANDA

HOME Affairs Minister Ronnie Shikapwasha is seeking support for the implementation of the SADC target of 30 per cent female representation in decision-making and politics by 2005.

Lieutenant-General Shikapwasha who was opening a SADC Ministers' decade review meeting of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Lusaka yesterday, said SADC must move fast to meet this target and exceed it if possible.

The ministers' meeting was preceded by a meeting of gender experts, which started on Sunday and ended on Wednesday night. The experts were laying ground for the ministers.

"The 1997 declaration on gender and development which all SADC heads of state or government signed clearly commits SADC countries to ensure the equal representation of women and men in decision-making and the achievement of the SADC target.

"The year 2005 is only eight months away from now but frankly, how much have SADC member states done to translate this important commitment into action. The picture is mixed, presenting more challenges to be addressed rather than achievements and scores to propel the gender equality agenda," Lt. Gen Shikapwasha said.

Zambia has reached about 17 per cent female representation in decision-making and politics. He said women were an indispensable part of society and they must be accorded an opportunity to contribute to development.

Botswana, Zambia and Lesotho are represented at ministerial level at the meeting chaired by Zambia. Other SADC countries have also sent representation at diplomatic and other levels.

Lt. Gen Shikapwasha also expressed worry at the HIV/AIDS epidemic ravaging sub-Saharan Africa. He said the region has no choice but to step up the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"HIV/AIDS is not only a national problem but also a regional one. I am encouraged and pleased to know that experts addressed as a special theme the issue of HIV/AIDS and gender equality.

"HIV/AIDS is a menacing challenge which must receive all individual and collective attention," he said. Lt. Gen Shikapwasha said gender activists, who have already done a lot to lobby government to implement the Beijing Platform for Action must not relent in their efforts.

And SADC secretariat programme officer Christine Warioba said the sub-region had steep challenges ahead in implementing the Beijing Platform for action which sets out 12 critical areas of concern, including health and HIV/AIDS, poverty and women and the economy.

Ms Warioba said the majority of SADC countries were far from fulfilling the Beijing Platform for Action.

"Among the key challenges which members states face are poverty and HIV/AIDS. These impact differently on women and men and boys and girls but it is women and girls who carry the heaviest burdens. SADC must resolve these problems," she said.

The Beijing World conference on women took place in China in September 1995.

## **GENDER FOCUS – 06/05/2004**

### **Ten years after Beijing: HIV/AIDS still a menace**

BY PAULINE BANDA

HIV/AIDS is still the stickiest issue among the critical areas of concern identified at the Beijing World Conference on Women almost ten years ago.

The epidemic is causing a sense of despair in the sub-region because of its complex nature. Experts reviewing the achievements and challenges of the post-Beijing era at the just-ended sub-regional meeting in Lusaka dubbed Beijing+10 were visibly concerned at the supersonic speed the HIV/AIDS virus was ravaging sub-Saharan Africa.

HIV/AIDS is mainly transmitted through sexual contact, which is why it is doubly difficult to deal with. The experts, who are laying ground for a similar meeting of SADC ministers, are clearly finding it difficult to galvanise support for the fight against HIV/AIDS.

According to recent statistics, HIV/AIDS threatens to wipe out at least 72 million people from the face of sub-Saharan Africa by 2010.

Apart from HIV/AIDS and health, other critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action are women and the media, education and training, economy, poverty, gender-based violence, girl child, environment, decision-making, human rights of women, conflict prevention and management and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women.

Experts are having headaches over HIV/AIDS, which the co-chairperson of the Lusaka meeting, Gender in Development Division (GIDD) permanent secretary, Auxillia Ponga, says may "sink the region into oblivion."

During general discussions as the meeting progressed, Dr Ponga said the rate at which AIDS was spreading was "extremely frightening" and the only viable alternative was for people to check their sexual behaviour.

Dr Ponga was buttressing the point of a gender expert from the Botswana Tebatso Menyatso who said she was at a loss as to what to do about HIV/AIDS.

"How do you control something which happens between two people behind closed doors?" Ms Menyatso said, adding "This is the difficulty we have in dealing with HIV/AIDS. When emotions are involved, things become highly complicated."

Ms Menyatso is the principle gender officer in the department of women's affairs under the Botswana Ministry of Home Affairs.

She observed that even people who were well schooled and knew everything about the dangers of HIV/AIDS still have unprotected sex and contract the virus, which causes HIV/AIDS.

"I don't understand how two very intelligent and beautiful people can ignore all they have heard about HIV/AIDS. I personally don't know how we can get around this problem," Ms Menyatso said, shaking her head in despair and "straying" into her native setswana.

Part of the transmission of HIV/AIDS is attributed to ignorance but the expert said it was disheartening to know that highly educated people were knowingly getting themselves infected.

"It is such a pity that even educated people lock themselves up and eat the apple any way they like because they believe that they are expressing love," she said.

Ms Menyato was visibly moved, considering that Botswana is one of the sub-Saharan African countries worst hit by HIV/AIDS. The despair spread throughout the conference room at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel, igniting passionate discussions among participants.

The emotions were understandable because women are unable to negotiate safer sex and avoid contracting HIV/AIDS.

Their biological make-up doubles their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS infection. Women do not have the capacity to avoid infection because many are economically weak and resort to transactional sex for a living.

The Tswana delegate said human emotions were difficult to control and gender and HIV/AIDS experts in the sub-region have an uphill task to control the spread of the pandemic.

Adding her voice to the debate, Dr Ponga said women were putting themselves at an even greater risk by insisting on getting married for traditional and cultural reasons.

"There are women who believe that they can only walk with their heads high if they are married. So, they are going ahead to marry men who are half gone because they have to be Mrs somebody," Dr Ponga said.

"Is that normal, does it really make sense?" Dr Ponga said adding that she knew of women who were getting married to sick men out of sheer desperation for "social status."

"I really don't understand. This is a case of women getting into a union knowing fully well about their risk of infection," she said.

Dr Ponga said the advent of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) may well be "a passport" for some people who think they can now have sex the way they want.

"Some people are now thinking even if they contract HIV/AIDS, they can fall back on ARVs and prolong their lives. This is really sad," she told over 100 participants.

Dr Ponga said many people do not understand the complex nature of ARVs, which cannot be taken on an empty stomach. "Considering that ARVs go with food, we must now begin asking the people who are providing ARVs if these medicines will come with a food package otherwise they will be of little help," she said.

Dr Ponga said poverty had exacerbated HIV/AIDS. People who are on ARVs and do not have adequate food may end up dying earlier than expected. Even the distribution of drugs is not equitable. The rich have more access because they can afford the high costs. The poor, mainly women, die miserable deaths.

If both the husband and wife are suffering from AIDS, the husband is more likely to be on ARVs because he has more control over family resources.

There was also a clarion call on gender and HIV/AIDS activists to lead by example. There is usually a tendency for experts to be hypocritical. They preach one thing and do the exact opposite.

"We must be role models as experts. We must practice what we preach otherwise the people we are advising will not take us seriously," one participant said.

The post-Beijing gender picture is generally bleak and HIV/AIDS has just made things worse, the experts say.

HIV/AIDS has affected all and sundry and has a myriad of attendant problems, including maternal mortality. Some of the cases of maternal mortality, which is also on the upswing in the sub-region, are due to HIV/AIDS.



And stigma is not waning, even among people who are supposed to know better. It exists at all levels of life, making it doubly difficult for those who are infected to come out and seek help.

They would rather die in their homes than face torment from society. Stigma is a problem across the region and experts must double their efforts to reduce it and encourage those who are suffering to come out and educate others.

The experts want to see governments in the SADC dealing more pro-actively with HIV/AIDS by adopting various multi-pronged approaches.

The economic empowerment of women is key to reducing the infection rate. It is a notorious fact that many women resort to transactional sex because they are unable to feed themselves. It follows that if they are helped to access means of livelihood, they may dump commercial sex which puts them at great risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Sexual violence (rape, defilement, incest) are the other thorny issues related to HIV/AIDS. Experts are trying to draw the attention of SADC governments to sexual violence and its dangers. A communique of SADC gender and women's empowerment non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is emphatic on combating sexual violence.

The NGOs are demanding a pro-active approach to gender violence, including criminalizing wilful HIV/AIDS infection and marital rape and other forms of sexual violence which double the adverse impact of HIV/AIDS.

The meeting of experts has ended but the challenges facing women in the post-Beijing era are very much alive and begging for even greater attention.

## **GENDER FOCUS**

### **Beijing+10: NGOs demand progress**

BY PAULINE BANDA

WOMEN must have a greater say on economic policies as part of a strategy to enhance their economic welfare, a consortium of Southern African Development Community (SADC) pro-development NGOs have proposed.

The NGOs, who were part of last week's Beijing+10 decade review meeting of experts in Lusaka, demanded that SADC government make women part of the economic decision-making process to enhance development.

Across SADC currently, economic policy is male-dominated, making it difficult for women to benefit from the economy as much as men do.

In a 17-page communiqué released after a caucus of NGOs, which took place at Lusaka's Taj Pamodzi Hotel on April 25, participants observed that most of the socio-economic problems women face stem from lack of economic empowerment.

## **POVERTY/ ECONOMY**

The SADC NGOs are worried about the continued feminisation of poverty in the sub-region and are urging governments to pay particular attention to poverty alleviation programmes.

"We acknowledge the commitments made by SADC governments to eradicate poverty. Despite the concerted efforts of the leadership of the region, there has been a huge increase of poverty among the region's populations. Women and girls form a startling 70 per cent of those living in extreme poverty," the communiqué reads.

Women usually have to endure the hardships of cross-border trade and other menial businesses in the private sector to earn a living. In the process of struggling to make ends meet, many are exposed to different hazards, particularly HIV/AIDS.

"As AIDS increases the numbers of the infirm in our populations, women and girls have been overburdened with the twin responsibilities of home-based care giving and economic production at the household and community level. All this is an environment of globalisation and economic neo-liberalism," the communiqué says.

Women are heading many households with the meagre resources and according to participants, "the scenario of female-headed households provides overwhelming evidence of the feminisation of poverty in our region."

The NGOs also observe that debt servicing and economic Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have "disproportionately harmed women, in many cases forcing them to adopt additional mechanisms for economic survival which have in most cases, included transactional sex."

"Given the region's phenomenal burden of HIV and AIDS, it is critical to provide lasting, rooted solutions that eliminate the economic impoverishment and oppression of women," the communiqué reads.

According to NGO research, SAPs have not benefited women and girls. "Infact, economic structural adjustment programmes have seriously affected the direction of expenditure to social services of health and education, sectors which women and girls are supposed to derive great benefit from."

Despite being in the majority across SADC, women are highly marginalised in economic decision-making. They do not have access to or control over resources and "have remained locked into micro-credit, small-scale loans and income generating projects which have broadly failed to uplift women permanently from poverty."

In view of these concerns, the NGOs are urging SADC governments to do the following, as a matter of priority:

- Ensure that women form no less than 50 per cent of all bodies that make decisions on economic policy
- Democratise the economic decision-making process -all parliamentary committees responsible for finance, industry and commerce and trade must have no less than 50 per cent of women as its members and ensure that 50 per cent of all economic resources are targeted towards directly benefiting women and that 50 per cent of all macro-economic, substantive trade and industry business opportunities are made available to women
- Develop monitoring mechanisms to measure the impactof economic policies Ensure that there be a concerted effort to invest in infrastructure to bring resources closer to home and reduce the burden of women's care work
- Ensure that by December 2006, all countries in the SADC region should conduct a time-use study and develop indicators to account for the work performed by women as unpaid care work in national accounts.
- Ensure that by 2006, all SADC countries adopt pro-poor gender responsive budgeting as the approach for allocating resources at the national and local government levels
- Adopt macro-economic and monetary policy frameworks that are pro-poor and likely to create a trickle down effect
- Enforce laws that guarantee that women form no less than 50 per cent of the beneficiaries of land redistribution schemes and have access to, control over and ownership of land in their own right

But NGOs do not intend to sit idle as these proposals are made. They have given themselves tasks. They will develop parallel structures to monitor the implementation of macro-economic policies on women and girls and provide expertise on gender responsive budgeting to all stakeholders for effective implementation,

among other responsibilities.

### **DECISION MAKING**

The NGOs are also worried about inequality between men and women in power sharing and decision-making at all levels and hope to see several interventions by SADC governments to strike a balance.

They propose meeting the African Union's target of 50 per cent female representation in managerial and decision-making positions in all parastatals, public institutions, regional bodies, media institutions, the judiciary, the public service and trade unions.

The communique says government must also endeavour to "enact special measures to increase women's participation in structures and policy-making processes at all levels from the village to national and regional levels and redefine political priorities to ensure that good leadership, national democracy and governance reflects women's specific concerns, values, experiences and needs."

### **VIOLENCE**

On violence against women, the communiqué proposes that SADC governments must:

- Ensure that they make and protect budgetary provisions for implementing measures to protect women and girls from violence
- Implement judicial reforms by putting in place gender sensitive structures to provide legal services and counselling for women and girls seeking protection from violence
- Enact legislation that makes marital rape a criminal offence - all countries enact legislation that criminalises domestic violence and sexual offences committed in both the public and private spheres
- Provide post-sexual violence medical therapies for women and girls, especially those therapies that prevent and reduce the transmission of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Report substantively at the annual meeting of ministers on the extent of violence against women, measures taken to eradicate violence against women and targets for the following year on reducing further violence against women

### **HEALTH**

On unequal access to health care and related services, SADC NGOs would like to see governments provide expectant mothers with anti retrovirals (ARVs) to reduce parent-to-child transmission of HIV and ensure that once HIV-positive women have given birth, they are placed on comprehensive ARV treatment programmes for their own health. SADC governments must also remove user fees for all women seeking health care and reduce maternal mortality and underweight births, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

### **EDUCATION**

On education and training, governments must promote the re-entry policy (returning to school after delivery), revise and rewrite all curricula in a gender responsive manner. Women's rights and those of the girl child are also a source of concern, which SADC NGOs would like to see governments address. The NGOs are seeking stiffer penalties for perpetrators of incest, victim-friendly measures to encourage children to report sexual abuse and legislation to protect girl children from abduction and child labour.

### **WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

Women's human rights and the general advancement of women are also a source of worry. Many SADC countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) but implementation has been painfully slow, resulting in blatant violations of women's human rights.

On the whole, SADC NGOs would want to see an environment where everybody thrives on an equal basis, with equal opportunities. Their cry is to see the Beijing Platform for Action, which spells out critical areas of concern to women, children and other vulnerable groups, put into action.

The NGOs represented included the umbrella body in Zambia, the NGOCC and the Harare Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC-WIDSAA) who were instrumental in initiating the meeting of NGOs on Beijing+10 achievements, successes, failures and challenges.

The NGO meeting was followed by another of gender experts, which lay ground for a meeting of ministers in charge of gender.

Note that Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation Radio & T.V.; Radio Choice FM, Radio QFM & Radio Phoenix Covered this as news items.

**2 • HOME NEWS**

THE POST, Monday April 26, 2004

# Failure to amend Bill of Rights will affect women - Kanyanga

By McDonald Chipenzi

**NON-GOVERNMENTAL** Organisations Co-ordinating Committee executive director Grace Kanyanga yesterday said government's rejection of holding a referendum to review the Bill of Rights casts a dark shadow on the rights of women.

And Kanyanga said Zambia would not attain the 30 per cent women representation in decision making by 2005 because of the slow pace of addressing gender matters.

In an interview at Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka, Kanyanga said the Zambian government had a good opportunity to enshrine women's rights during the constitution review of the republican constitution process.

She said women would lose a good opportunity to have their rights reviewed if government continues to insist that holding a referendum would be expensive.

"Government's argument that holding a referendum will be very expensive, gives no hope for the women to have their rights enshrined in the republican constitution and Zambia women are losing out," Kanyanga said.

She said the on-going constitution review would have accorded the government the opportunity to review the Bill of Rights so that women's rights were included also.

Kanyanga urged government to turn its pronouncement for gender matters into concrete commitments and actions.

And Kanyanga said the slow pace at which Zambia was taking in implementing the 30 percent gender representation in parliament and decision-making positions by the year 2005 was very worrying.

And Kanyanga said the meeting for the NGO Focal Point working session held at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel yesterday was in preparation for the regional ministers' Sub-regional Decade Review meeting on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing +10) to be held in Lusaka today to review the successes and failures in the implementation of the 1994 Beijing declaration on gender in the past 10 years.

Kanyanga however, said so much had been achieved in the country on gender.

She was gratified that gender matters were now on the top of the national agenda coupled with the drawing of the National Gender Policy in 2001 by the government.

And Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) regional deputy head of gender programmes Barbara Lopi observed that the implementation of the 1994 Beijing Gender Declaration had scored some

successes, constraints and challenges.

Lopi said the implementation of gender programmes could not be achieved because there were resource limitations and lack of strong institutional mechanisms.

She said the holding of a

SADC gender and women's empowerment NGO Focal Points working session yesterday, was aimed at making strategic inputs to the major needy and priority areas NGOs were lagging behind in, especially the 30 per cent women

representation in decision making.

"We want to come up with a common agenda so that we speak with a united voice at the ministers' meeting slated for tomorrow (today)," Lopi said.

He said only three countries in Southern African region had reached the 30 per cent women



Kanyanga - the move has cast a dark cloud on women's rights

daily mail 26/04/2004

Zambia Daily mail  
26/04/2004

FROM : NGOCC

## NGOCC casts doubt over constitution

By MUZIYA  
MUTUNGWA

THE Non-Governmental Co-ordinating Committee (NGOCC) has expressed doubt that Zambia will enshrine women's rights in the Constitution. NGOCC executive director, Grace Kanyanga, explained in an interview yesterday that enshrining of women's rights in the Constitution

calls for a referendum.

"Right now the constitution is being reviewed but the referendum is no where near the limelight," she said.

However, Ms Kanyanga said it was gratifying that gender was now on the national agenda and a national gender policy was drawn up in 2000.

Ms Kanyanga said this in an interview at a SADC women's

empowerment NGO focal point working session.

The one day session was a strategic input into the Southern African Decade Review meeting on the implementation of the Beijing platform for Action (Beijing+10) which will begin in Lusaka today.

She said the SADC requirement of 30 per cent representation in decision making by

2005 still called for more implementation.

Ms Kanyanga said there was still much progress to be done and called for more political will if it was to be attained.

And Southern African Research and Documentation Centre-Women in Development deputy programme officer, Barbara Lopi, said the working session was meant to equip the NGOs with analytical data before the main meeting today.

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