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It is our hope that this spirit of collaboration continues as it is critical to the sustenance of the momentum to push the southern African regional gender and agenda into the post Beijing +10 era.

SARDC WIDSAA  
15 Downie Avenue, Belgravia  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
Tel: (263 4 ) 791141  
Fax (263 4 ) 791271  
Email: [widsaa@sardc.net](mailto:widsaa@sardc.net)  
Web site: [www.sardc.net](http://www.sardc.net)

Information access is a key strategic resource for socio-economic development

## ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CWD	Committee on Women and Development
DAW	Division for Advancement of Women
HIV	Human Immuno deficiency Virus
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NGOCC	Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Council for Gender and Development
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SARDCS	Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WIDSAA	Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness
WiLDAF	Women in Law and Development for Africa
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Trust

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

Momentum is steadily rising again in southern Africa as the end of the United Nations (UN) decade for women and the count down to the global review of achievements of the decade in 2005 nears.<sup>1</sup> During the UN 23<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly Special Session on Beijing +5, governments unanimously agreed to regularly assess further implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA).<sup>2</sup> This was done with the view of bringing together all parties involved in 2005 to assess progress and consider new initiatives, as appropriate, 10 years after the adoption of the BPFA and 20 years after the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies.

There is general consensus that processes to review progress and chart the way forward for the next decade need to be held the world over. The processes should lead to a stronger focus on the implementation and impacts, sharing of experiences and good practices, identification of gaps and challenges, increased political will and clear commitments from governments.

The activities to support the preparatory process towards the 2005 review of progress in advancing the empowerment of women and promoting gender equality and what happens thereafter are in progress. The Africa review of progress in achieving the BPFA is rapidly approaching (October 2004). In light of this, a sub-regional meeting to review progress by Southern African Development Community (SADC) in achieving the Beijing commitments was convened by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Lusaka, Zambia, from 26 – 29 April 2004 (the April Meeting). This initiative took place with the support of SADC.

The main goal of this meeting was to debate, agree on and document progress, challenges and constraints in achieving the Beijing commitments, as well as develop a future agenda. Governments in SADC are also preparing national reports that document their progress in realizing the Beijing commitments. Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are, parallel to this, expected to produce shadow reports, or alternatively make concrete inputs into the national reports. NGOs in southern Africa have been instrumental in the advancement of the gender agenda, with more governments relying on the information, input, and articulation of issues by NGOs in order to have a valid national picture on the progress and situation of women since Beijing.

Since NGOs were on the agenda to make an input in the April meeting from their perspective, SARDC-WIDSAA and the Non Governmental Organisations' Coordinating Council for Gender and Development (NGOCC), with funding from the Southern African Regional Offices for the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (HIVOS) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), convened a one-day working session on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2004, to consolidate the NGO position and make a strategic input into the main April Meeting from 26 – 29 April 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> SARDC - WIDSAA (*Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness*)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

## 2.0 KEY OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Whereas some SADC member states have made some progress towards gender equality and gender mainstreaming, disparities between women and men still exist in the areas of legal rights, power-sharing and decision-making, access to and control over productive resources, education and health, and women still constitute the majority of the poor. Although efforts to integrate gender considerations in SADC sectoral programs and projects have not sufficiently mainstreamed gender in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, the meeting noted that some milestone and achievements have been made in the region including: –

- Policy development and commitment by SADC
- Establishment of gender focal points in some countries and Ministries responsible for women's affairs in others
- The adoption and signing of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children
- Development and Adoption of National Gender Policies
- Positive legislative developments to protect the rights of women

Common constraints included the application of dual system of laws, negative portrayal of gender issues by the media, lack of capacity in government to effectively mainstream gender, lack of political will, negative customary beliefs and practices, poor implementation of laws and policies, and non-domestication of international instruments by governments in the region. Common national problems range from prevalence of domestic violence, gender-based violence, inequality between men and women in accessing credit facilities, decision-making positions, and sexual, physical and psychological abuse of girls.

HIV and AIDS, legal and cultural barriers, high rate of illiteracy among women, putting unpaid work on the political agenda and girl-child pregnancies pose major challenges for governments and NGOs within the region. Opportunities identified by the meeting are, among others, constitutional, legal and policy reforms, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Targets, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Addendum.

- The meeting recommended the following: The SADC Gender declaration should be adopted as a Protocol to give it legally binding force. The international community should declare a decade for women.
- Governments should, within their respective education policies de-register or bar from practising, any teaching professional that abuses or defiles a child.
- It is governments' obligation to develop policies and enact legislations that guarantee women and children's rights and prioritises the issues of gender and poverty
- Governments should use the constitutional, legal and policy reforms in the region to repeal all discriminatory laws and practices that hinder gender equality and prevent the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedom by women

- The 30% affirmative action for women in decision-making positions should be increased to 50% and should be attained by all Governments by the year 2005.
- Governments should domesticate international instruments to which they are party.

A more comprehensive communiqué, based on the proceedings and outcomes from the one-day working session was prepared and presented to the main meeting on 27 April 2004 as the NGOs input. The communiqué is annexed to this report.

### **3.0 PROCESS REPORT**

#### **3.1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting opened with the singing of the Zambian National Anthem.

##### **3.1.1 WELCOME REMARKS BY NGOCC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GRACE KANYANGA**

Ms Kanyanga's welcome remarks are reproduced hereunder verbatim:

"The Head of Program, Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness Program (WIDSAA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the representatives from the SADC region, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen: I wish to welcome you all to our beautiful and friendly country which is commonly referred to as 'Zambia the real Africa'. It is my sincere hope that you all had a comfortable flight to our country and that you are enjoying your stay so far.

As you are aware, Africa will join the rest of the world in reviewing progress made towards the implementation of the platform for Africa 10 years after Beijing.

As you are also aware, in the year 2000, the Beijing +5 Review meeting was held in New York preceded by the 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Conference in Addis Ababa in order to review progress made in Africa. We are now on the eve of 10 years after the Beijing Conference, indeed 10 years in September since the 5<sup>th</sup> African Regional Conference on women when we agreed on the African Platform of Action. Our Governments agreed to regularly assess further progress made in implementing the Platform of Action. Time is now ripe to do so.

The purpose of this meeting is therefore, as civil society organisations to prepare for strategic input into the Southern Africa decade review meeting on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 10) which takes place from April 26- 29, 2004 right here at Pamodzi Hotel. This working session is being hosted in collaboration with the NGO Coordinating Council and Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness Programme.

This meeting therefore, has been convened particularly for the purposes of:

1. Information flow, as this is lacking unlike during the preparatory process for the Beijing conference.
2. There is a controversy on the form in which the Beijing + 10 Review process should take.

Therefore, we are here to determine our Agenda in terms of influencing the outcome of the review meeting in 2005.

The objectives of the Sub-Regional Review meeting are as follows:

1. To assess the progress made in mainstreaming gender in sectoral development policies and programmes
2. To assess the sustainability of political will and political commitment to gender equality
3. To assess the specific impact of major external factors on the status of women
4. To assess the level of interaction between governments and women's civil society organisations, and
5. To build consensus on gender-related priority areas of concern in the sub-regions for the next 5 years.

One major issue that the African countries committed themselves to, was the issue of gender mainstreaming as a means of achieving gender equality and equity. In my view, we need to re-examine this concept as it has had a negative aspect on women's empowerment. What therefore needs to be put in place to ensure that the ultimate, which is women's empowerment, is achieved?

I am very confident that the SADC women gathered here today will be able to put in place concrete and workable mechanisms of influencing the sub-regional review meeting which starts tomorrow. As we have always done.

Again not to waste much of your time, I wish to extend a warm welcome to our friends who have travelled and the local women to make the most of the day. I wish all of us fruitful deliberations."

### **3.1.2 WHY WE ARE HERE – WIDSAA HEAD OF PROGRAM, MS PAMELA MHLANGA**

Ms Mhlanga welcomed the participants and expressed her gratitude for being accorded the opportunity to co-chair the meeting. She noted that although some members were not represented, other key participants addressing issues on gender and empowerment were present such as WLSA, WiDAF and Women in Land and Water Rights, and would make fruitful contributions to the meeting.

She said that it was critical for the participants to focus on issues related to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) so as to define an agenda for the future. She observed that the NGO representatives had been carefully selected on the premise that they are able to speak and are affected by issues of the BPFA. She went further as to acknowledge the assistance from HIVOS and other cooperating partners such as UNIFEM who provide help for NGO activities on a wide range of issues affecting women. Ms Mhlanga urged the NGOs to contribute effectively and raise issues impacting on coordination in order to strategize and lay a firm foundation for the future of women. To that end, she emphasized the need to document the experiences over the decade.

She informed the participants that the main objective of the meeting was to take stock of what NGOs and governments have done after Beijing.

The Agenda for the meeting called for a critical self-evaluation so as to identify what the challenges for NGOs and governments have been; what the opportunities are and whether the opportunities have been effectively utilised. Women must determine their future because they know and have ideas of what they want their future to be. One of the key objectives she highlighted was the need to make input into the governmental meeting which would constitute governments from within the region, inter governmental agencies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and UN agencies that provide a rich environment for the NGO input.

In closing, she remarked that there are three challenges for the NGOs:

- whether women have been able to put their ideas together as key leaders,
- what the strategies and, the approaches to addressing issues of gender equality are, and
- gender mainstreaming and the use of a rights based approach.

She questioned whether the strategies have yielded results for NGOs. She encouraged the participants to find out why some strategies have not worked and to seek alternative strategies. She said that while civil society maintains a strong will, a number of NGOs have not been able to implement programs due to financial constraints. The challenge was therefore whether NGOs have the kind of resource base needed to get things moving; the resource is shrinking; hence it was pertinent to reflect on this challenge.

### **3.2 PRESENTATION BY UNECA REPRESENTATIVE, HANNAH TIAGHA**

Ms Tiagha informed the participants that activities towards Beijing +10 were happening within a global framework of which the review process of the implementation of the BPFA in Africa constitutes a part. From its mandate of monitoring and evaluation, and in conformity with the Beijing Platform, the UNECA is coordinating activities within the Africa region. It operates as an intergovernmental facility for coordination and provides the secretariat to the ECA Statutory Committee on Women and Development.

Of relevance to the meeting, she pointed out that the Committee on Women and Development (CWD) decided that it would encourage the NGO input into the review process although no particular decision was made in terms of the approach. By September 2003, the Committee was of the view that it was important to recommend a specific process. It decided on a process similar to that which had been adopted and would be used by governments at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. Hence Ms Tiagha went on to point out that the need for the NGO meeting to focus on the intergovernmental process was critical. This meant that each government would prepare an evaluation report to be submitted to UNECA-Addis Ababa and to the Division for Advancement of Women (DAW) in New York. To this end, DAW issued a questionnaire to guide the evaluation process all over the world. The questionnaire was sent to countries through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. UNECA also got the questionnaire and sent it to countries through the Addis Ababa office. It requested that each country input should be submitted to ECA by January 2004 and to DWA by April 2004. However, Ms Tiagha observed that the process is moving very slowly.

Ms. Tiagha informed the meeting that at the sub regional level, a sub regional intergovernmental meeting be held during the month end of April 2004 was to share



experiences and ideas from a sub regional perspective. The invited guests for the meeting include experts from the Ministries of agriculture, finance and economic planning, health and commerce. The key objective was to share experiences, constraints and challenges, among others. The process will culminate in a regional ministerial meeting in Addis Ababa in October 2004.

Ms Tiagha noted that the parallel process for NGOs was to follow similar steps. The background to this was that UNECA communicated with various NGOs and suggested that they get together with other NGOs so as to make an assessment of the progress made since Beijing. Some NGOs had been responsive while others had not. Nevertheless, this provided clarity that an assessment could take place. Ms Tiagha further noted that communication was slow, compelling UNECA to search for alternative approaches to the NGO assessment process. A Regional consultative meeting will be held in July for representatives of national NGOs. UNECA had already informed the NGOs concerning the alternative meeting. It further urged NGOs to select representatives at national level for the regional meeting. The process of submitting nominations was on course but slow.

The NGO consultative meeting aims to define a strategy for organizing the assessment process for NGOs at the continental level. It should provide an opportunity to harmonise the NGO input into the governmental process at the regional level. UNECA connects with the global process in that the outcome of the sub regional meetings would feed into the continental one and the continental conference, which in turn would feed into the global assessment process scheduled for New York in 2005. It is anticipated that the NGO outcomes would enrich the intergovernmental outcomes. Ms Tiagha concluded by saying that she hoped that when the final report is sent to New York it will be reflective of both NGO and intergovernmental interests.

### **3.3 EXPECTATIONS AND AGREEMENT ON MODALITIES, BARBARA LOPI, WIDSAA**

Ms Lopi led the participants into self-introductions and to state their expectations for the meeting. The participants brought out the following:

- To share areas in which progress has been made and on how best to build on it, focus and strategize as NGOs
- To share best practices and approaches and to provide lessons for others to learn from
- To learn how we can work around limitations
- To discuss strategies that NGOs have been using in mainstreaming gender and to input a way forward
- Identify constraints for women not only in the labour movement but generally in civil society
- Identify gaps and examine why we have failed
- To strategize on the way forward in gender mainstreaming in the environmental sector and identify any strategies that will promote the sector
- Not to hear the obvious from paper presentations but to move on and be action oriented
- Come up with strategies to learn from and feed into the SADC process
- To learn how we can face challenges
- To learn how other countries focusing on adult literacy have progressed since Beijing

- To look at strategies and particularly resources to implement projects and programs
- To share experiences and identify a common strategy
- To come up with a way of pulling young women and girls into gender issues
- To establish the strategies on how we may create synergies in issues from Beijing and other emerging issues
- To get technical assistance to enable us help people dealing with issues affecting them and to work on critical areas of concern
- To be part of a reviewing process of what has happened and impact made over the ten years and come up with strategies for the next ten years
- To get information on how other coordinating NGOs are coordinating effectively and efficiently in meeting deadlines on reports and acquire funding so that in the remaining months, we are enabled to work efficiently and effectively
- To take forward lessons from the HIV/AIDS /Gender challenge as a global agenda
- That we use the forum to consolidate our strategies into forward looking strategies
- What should be added on what has already been done
- To observe a good practice that will evolve from the NGOs coming together from the SADC region

### **3.4 ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES, CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BPFA AND THE SADC DECLARATION ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

Brief presentations were made by representatives from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, WLSA, WILDAF, Women in Land and Water Rights, Gender Links, UNIFEM and SADC-GU. Presentations are in Annex I.

Mauritius, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Seychelles were not represented at the meeting.

Major achievements can be summarized as follows:

- Formulation and adoption of national gender policies: this has been done in countries Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- Establishment of institutional framework for gender – Ministry responsible for women affairs in Angola – Gender focal points in Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, National Council on Women in Botswana, Commission on Gender Equality in South Africa.
- Review of laws affecting women and enactment of specific legislation to address issues of concern in countries such as Botswana, Malawi Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

Common constraints included lack of information, the low participation of women in decision-making, legal and cultural barriers, lack of political will, inadequate funding for NGO programmes, non-domestication of international instruments and the application of dual system of laws. The main challenges to gender equality in the region are high illiteracy levels and mortality rates, HIV/AIDS, poverty and violence against women.

### 3.5 PLENARY DISCUSSION

#### *3.5.1 What strategies were used to address domestic violence in Malawi? What is the financial status for women who are standing for elections?*

A project was put in place to specifically deal with the issue of domestic violence. It aimed at being as participatory and consultative as possible. An issue paper was prepared in which the civil society demanded that domestic violence should be treated as an issue of concern that required immediate attention. Lessons were drawn from the region and international commitments were used as referral points. Consultative meetings were held with chiefs and other key people to harness their consensus on the process. Thereafter, the issue paper was circulated to key stakeholders with whom meetings were held. Key issues on domestic violence were treated as priorities and on completion of the process people were generally agreed that domestic violence was a serious national problem. The wide consultative process and firmness by NGO that domestic violence contributed to the success of the project.

Most women candidates lack financial resources. However, the Norwegian government has provided financial resources and a consulting company was engaged to disburse the funds to the women candidates. Guidelines are in place on how the funds should be disbursed and it has been emphasized that no handouts should be given by the beneficiaries to woo the electorate.

#### *3.5.2 How does the cultural diversity in Botswana affect the attitude towards marital rape?*

The government has established a commission of inquiry to define marital rape. People do not yet understand that husbands can 'rape' their wives. Sensitisation is required.

#### *3.5.3 With regard to the loan system in Botswana, what is the strategy for keeping men from misusing the funds and disadvantaging women?*

There is need to put effective strategies in place to empower women to take better control of the situation as men are taking over the businesses.

#### *3.5.4 Has Swaziland has ratified the CEDAW*

The status is not yet clear or defined. No official communication has been made on the issue.

#### *3.5.5 What strategies are in place to ensure gender budgeting?*

NGOs are yet to effectively monitor and ensure that this is put in place.

#### *3.5.6 Domestication of international instruments*

The meeting noted that although NGOs are apparently doing well, they are failing to hold governments accountable towards their international commitments.

### *3.5.7 Key challenges*

The meeting observed that despite the immense efforts and progress made by NGOs and the legal reforms in most countries in the region, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, high poverty levels and maternal mortality rates pose a major challenge for NGOs and governments.

### *3.5.8 How do burial societies in Lesotho contribute to combating poverty?*

Burial societies are self-help community groups, comprising groups of women in the village whose main objective is to provide assistance to the women in their area. The Societies provide among other things, financial support for the burial of relatives, produce from gardens to those in need and other assistance as the women may require.

### *3.5.9 How is the law reform society contributing towards violence against women?*

In Lesotho, women are contributing to law reform by reviewing and advocating for reform of the discriminatory laws.

## **4.0 GROUP WORK**

The group work was based on the national and regional presentations made by the participants. The guidelines were -

1. Outline major challenges, developments, opportunities and strengths in terms of progress.
2. What are the emerging issues?
3. What is the regional agenda for the future?

### **4.1 GROUP 1**

The group discussed -

- Violence against women
- Women's legal and human rights
- Rights of the girl-child
- Cross cutting issues
- HIV/AIDS

#### **4.1.1 Girl Child**

- Not all countries in the SADC region treat the girl-child issue as a priority issue
- Lack of NGOs specifically focusing on rights of the girl-child
- Negative cultural beliefs
- Most school curricula are gender blind and perpetrate gender stereotypes
- Impact of HIV and AIDS
- Poor implementation of legislation

### *Emerging issues*

- Gender-based violence
- HIV and AIDS
- Infection rates increase
- Orphans
- Lack of a regional agenda
- Caring role of girls and women

### *Developments*

- Launch of the African Parliament
- Ratification of the CEDAW by Swaziland (although this is yet to be officially announced)

## **4.1.2 Women's Legal and Human Rights**

### *Challenges*

- Domestication of international legal instruments
- Taking stock of awareness
- Dual legal systems

### *Developments*

- Launch of the African Parliament
- Ratification of the CEDAW by Swaziland
- SADC Declaration on Gender and Development Enactment of legislation
- Formal frameworks in existence, but lacking implementation

### *Opportunities*

- Empowerment of girl-child and men's groups
- Sensitise community on the SADC Addendum on Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children
- Ratification and adoption of the African Protocol

### *Strengths*

- SADC as a community
- Expertise in the NGO sector

## **4.1.3 Violence Against Women**

### *Challenges*

- Lack of understanding and appreciation by government
- Lack of legislation
- Lack of awareness on existing legislation
- Poor implementation and utilization of SADC Addendum by government and civil society

- Deteriorating poverty levels among women
- Lack of resource allocation to address violence
- Poor relationships between governments and NGOs

#### **4.1.4 HIV/AIDS**

- The issue has not been addressed holistically
- Interventions are not adequate
- No systematic management
- Availability of Anti-Retroviral Drugs (ARVs), Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT), Prevention of Mother to Child (PMTCT) which are not linked to mother to child transmission
- Increased morbidity and mortality
- Orphans
- Stigma
- Poverty

##### *Developments*

- Provision of ARVs increase work by NGOs
- Role identification for participation in UNECA/SADC Decade Review meeting on the implementation of the BPFA (26 – 29 April 2004)

## **4.2 GROUP 2**

The group discussed -

- Women and Poverty
- Health and Reproduction Rights
- Women and Economy
- Cross Cutting Issues
- HIV and AIDS

### **4.2.1 Women and Poverty**

#### *Challenges*

- Women concentrating on practical needs (household responsibilities) as opposed to strategic issues
- Women overburdened as caregivers as well as producers of household food
- Women and children trafficking
- Structural adjustment reforms, which are shifting social responsibilities from governments for to individual households

### **4.2.2 Health and Reproductive Rights**

#### *Challenges*

- Poor enforcement of laws
- Lack of awareness of laws and policies
- Unequal sexual power relations
- Limited access to good quality health services due to high costs

- Limited access to safe abortion

#### **4.2.3 Women and Economy**

##### *Challenges*

- Micro credit systems maintains the low status of women – they remain at the low levels of the economic ladder
- Women are the majority of the population but a minority in the economic sector
- Economic reforms further sideline women's accessibility to loans
- Limited control over resources

#### **4.2.4 Regional Agenda**

##### *Challenges*

- Developing monitoring mechanisms to measure impact
- Domestication of ratified international conventions
- Involvement of men in programmes
- Reaching the affected with information on issues affecting them
- Macro economic frameworks need to be gender sensitive
- HIV/AIDS to be recognized as a poverty issue

##### *Opportunities*

#### **Women and Poverty**

- Existence of frameworks but not pro-neo liberal frameworks
- Availability of facts, evidence and analysis
- Realization by government, NGOs and other stakeholders that gendered poverty is a priority issue

#### **Health and Reproductive Rights**

- MDGs that clearly define the link between health and reproductive rights
- HIV/AIDS provides an opportunity for pushing women's rights

### **4.3 GROUP 3**

The group discussed –

- Access to education and training
- Women and media
- Cross cutting issues – HIV/AIDS

#### **4.3.1 Access to Education and Training**

##### *Developments/Strengths*

- Girls are allowed to continue education after pregnancy
- Affirmative action at tertiary level - especially actions to move more girls into sciences and engineering
- Scholarships specifically for girls

- Fee payment schemes that increase the number of girls in schools
- Initiatives like PAGE (Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education - Zambia)
- Lower cut off points for girls to enter tertiary training (double-edge sword because girls may be regarded as inferior to boys)

#### *Challenges*

- Girls who qualify for certain fields and those who enter education through special programmes are looked down upon
- There are more boys still in school due to -
  - Early marriages
  - Poverty
  - Introduction of user fees (families prefer boys to complete their education and marry the girls off)
- Cost sharing
- Inadequate sanitation facilities for girls in some schools
- Displacement of people through land reform or conflicts, forcing people to settle in areas where there are no schools or far from schools
- Violence against girls in schools

#### *Emerging Issues*

- Child-headed households - children not able to go to school
- Gender should be mainstreamed into the school curricula at all levels
- Introduce more women's studies, gender studies and feminist studies programs at the universities

#### *Agenda for the future*

- Lack of national policies on adult education (literacy for women)
- Mainstreaming gender in all university departments
- Move gender declarations from non-binding to binding laws or treaties
- There is need for more test cases to assess the effectiveness of laws that appear to be gender-responsive and promote equality
- Amend the SADC Declaration from 30% to 50% (women in decision-making across all sectors)
- Hands up for girl child campaign (should become regional lobbying/advocacy initiative)

#### *Challenges*

- Education for all to include adult literacy and to be funded

### **4.3.2 Media**

#### *Challenges*

- Need to break false distinction in the media of hard news (politics and economics covered by men) and soft news, health, education, etc covered by women). Women and men should be given equal opportunity to cover all areas on the media's agenda



- Women lack the right to freedom of expression in and through the media
- Editorial content – work to change the media as a conduit of backlash rather than exposing gender injustices
- Find strategies to mitigate the media backlash that is likely to emerge in its coverage and portrayal of the Beijing + women process
- Gender and media activism needs to be strengthened and increased across the region – (consumers of media to put more pressure on editors, owners of the media to give women a voice and portray them in a positive manner in their diverse roles).
- Incorporate gender into the training curricular of media training institutes
- ICT needs to be used more by activists to network and mobilize around issues of gender justice as a region
- Eradication of the ‘technology phobia’ among women
- More research on ICTs and need to package findings in a user friendly format

#### *Emerging Issues*

- The community media is not effectively playing its role of social responsibility to the public due to low skills. It does not provide positive and quality information to local communities. More time is spent on playing music
- Activists need to integrate gender into developing media and ICT policies at national and regional levels
- Campaign built around women’s rights to communicate and have freedom of expression in and through the media

#### *Regional Agenda for the future*

- Gender and media activism
- Join campaigns for more gender and social responsible media

### **4.3.3 Women and the Environment**

#### *Challenges*

- Lack of political will
- Privatization of water, energy, etc
- Women’s’ access to land - women cannot benefit from natural resources because they do not own land
- Moves to entrench traditional authority/leadership in legal systems and statutes – creates an obstacle to women access to land because most traditional leadership is vested in men
- Lack of national environmental policies
- Fragmentation of policies –water, land, energy, etc – all separate policies/Acts within countries

#### *Emerging Issues*

- Environment protocol that is more holistic (need to harmonize the legal framework)
- Gender is not incorporated into environmental policy issues
- Cross-border movement of people and industries have negative environmental impact

### *Future agenda*

- Research, collect and process information/data on gender and the environment

## **4.4 GROUP 4**

The group discussed –

- Effects of armed conflict on women
- Institutional mechanisms
- Decision – making
- Cross Cutting issues – HIV/ AIDS

### **4.4.1 Effects of Armed Conflict of women**

- Government programmes for reintegration benefit men only
- Lack of skills in decision-making positions, and presence of gender sensitive barriers
- Lack of guidelines on how to treat women refugees

### *Developments*

- The UN now monitors, through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and contracted implementing agencies

### **4.4.2 Institutional Mechanisms and Programs**

- Establishment of gender departments/ministries
- Establishment of focal points in governments and NGOs

### *Challenges*

- Lack of resources (human and financial)
- Leaders of most government ministries are not concerned about gender equality
- The link between the main Ministry and the Focal points is weak.

### *Agenda for the Future*

- Sensitising female refugees on their rights
- More monitoring of the lives of female refugees
- Develop a regional watchdog
- Develop a code of Conduct

### **4.4.3 Decision Making**

### *Challenges*

- Media is not gender sensitive
- Lack of resources
- Socialization
- Resistance from men

### *Opportunities*

- SADC Gender Declaration
- Put pressure on governments
- Women NGOs should support each other

## **4.5 GROUP 5**

### **4.5.1 Gender Mainstreaming Concept and Approaches**

#### *Opportunities*

- It is a tool of analysis
- Exploit the current structures and use them effectively
- Strategies that empower women

#### *Strength*

- Strengthen existing policies and programmes

#### *Emerging Issues*

- Understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming

#### *Agenda for the future*

- Revisit the concept and approach

#### *Challenges*

- Depending on Government/Donor goodwill
- Approaching it as a charity.
- Build accountability strategies

#### *Approach*

- Dismantle the patriarchal structures
- Budgets must be gender sensitive
- Use gender indicators

#### **4.6 PLENARY DISCUSSION**

- To ensure that women benefit from macroeconomics, NGOs should approach the World Bank, specifically the gender person **and present their concerns of the gendered effects of the macroeconomic programmes**. The meeting noted that the gender persons in strategic positions are not playing their role in ensuring that women's interests are taken into account. The meeting further observed that it is necessary to strategise on the mode of ensuring that women input into World Bank and other multi-lateral agreements.
- The meeting lamented that the 30% affirmative action by SADC is not being effectively implemented in practice. The situation is worsened by the lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. NGOs were urged to engage governments into fulfilling their obligations and to follow up on the commitments, at best on an annual basis. The meeting noted that it is difficult to make governments accountable to the populace.
- The meeting was of the view that although governments in the region had ratified most international instruments dealing with issues of gender and women's rights, the conventions were not put into effect due to non-domestication in jurisdictions where international commitments do not apply directly unless an incorporating instrument is effected. Women cannot therefore, compel their governments to honour their obligations.
- The meeting proposed that NGOs should set norms and standards for governments and come up with a time-frame within which international instruments should be domesticated. The meeting also observed that the standards of education have collapsed in most countries within the region and the most affected is the girl-child.
- The meeting noted that the language used in some gender policies is 'apologetic', and gives the impression that governments are doing women a favour by adopting those policies.
- The meeting further noted that gender and culture had not been adequately dealt with during the meeting.
- The meeting agreed that there is need for concerted regional effort to ensure commitment to and attainment of the 30% affirmative action for women.

#### **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The SADC Gender declaration should be adopted as a Protocol to give it legislative and binding force.
- The international community should declare a decade for women.
- Governments should, within their respective education policies de-register or bar from practising any teaching professional that abuses or defiles a child.
- NGOs should tap into educational funds available at the UNDP offices.
- It is the government's obligation to develop policies and enact legislation that guarantees women and children their rights and prioritises the issues of gender and poverty.

#### **6.0 PREPARATION OF COMMUNIQUÉ ON SADC POSITIONS ON THE CRITICAL AREAS**

A core group was formed to work on the communiqué, which would be the basis for the NGO input into the government meeting. The communiqué is attached.

## **7.0 CLOSING REMARKS by Pamela Mhlanga**

Ms Mhlanga said that the objectives of the meeting were achieved and reminded the participants to participate effectively in the subsequent meetings. She extended her gratitude to all the representatives for making time and ensuring that the deliberations were fruitful and conducted in an open and frank manner. She closed by expressing her gratitude to NGOCC for co-chairing and hosting the meeting and urging the representatives to continue with collaboration and networking.