

**LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD:
A REGIONAL SYNTHESIS REPORT OF BEIJING +20
REVIEWS FROM CHAD, ETHIOPIA, KENYA, MAURITANIA,
RWANDA AND UGANDA**

February 2015



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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women



**Plant more Trees;
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- ACORD** - Agency Co-operation and Research in Development
- BFPA** - Beijing Platform for Action
- CBOs** -Community Based Organisations
- CCC** - Comprehensive Care Centres
- CEDAW** - Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women
- CSOs** - Civil Society Organizations
- FGM** - Female Genital Mutilation
- GBV** - Gender Based Violence
- GDP** - Gross Domestic Product
- GBVIMS** - Gender Based Violence Information Management Systems
- GBVRC** - Gender Based Violence Recovery Centre
- GBVCO** - Gender Based Violence Coordination Office
- GBVNAP** - Gender Based Violence National Action Plan
- GBVIASC** - Gender Based Violence Implementing Agency Steering Committee
- GoU** - Government of Uganda
- GoR** - Government of Rwanda
- GoE** - Government of Ethiopia
- GoK** - Government of Kenya
- GoC** - Government of Chad
- GoM** - Government of Mauritania
- GMO** - Gender Monitoring Office
- HIV/AIDS** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- KDHS** - Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
- KER** - Kenya Economic Report
- KNPS** - Kenya National Police Service
- MCA** - Member of County Assembly
- MDG** - Millennium Development Goals
- MTP** - Medium Term Plan
- NaCAF** - National Committee for the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation
- NALEAP** - National Legal Aid and Awareness Program
- MoDP** - Ministry of Devolution and Planning
- M&E** - Monitoring and Evaluation
- NGEC** - National Gender and Equality Commission
- PEP** - Post Exposure Prophylaxis
- SGBV** - Sexual Gender Based Violence
- SOA** - Sexual Offences Act
- SOPs** - Standard Operating Procedures
- UN** - United Nations
- VAW** - Violence Against Women
- WEF** - Women Enterprise Fund

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) constitutes one of the most important global frameworks for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It was adopted in 1995 by the Fourth World Conference on Women and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996.

As a defining framework for change, the BPfA outlines strategic objectives and key actions for governments, the international community and civil society, as well as the private sector, to commit to women and girls' empowerment through 12 critical areas: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment and the girl child.

Since then, governments, civil society and the public have translated the BPfA promises into concrete changes in individual countries. These have ushered in enormous improvements in women's lives. More women and girls than at any previous point in time serve in political offices, are protected by laws against violence, and live under

constitutions guaranteeing gender equality. Regular five-year reviews of progress on fulfilling commitments have sustained momentum.

This year we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference. Even 20 years later, the BPfA remains a powerful source of guidance and inspiration and offers important focus in rallying people around gender equality and women's empowerment. The 20th anniversary of Beijing opens new opportunities to assess progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation, and to reconnect, regenerate commitment, charge up political will and mobilize the public.

ACORD's work builds knowledge on positive gender relations and effective ways of addressing gender inequalities with a view to improving women's status, development and influence. ACORD has a long and varied experience of programming and policy work related to gender equality and women's economic empowerment, and boosting their voice in decision-making processes. ACORD prioritizes women's access to and control over land and other productive resources; challenging impunity and combating sexual and gender based violence and enhancing women's participation in leadership and decision-making

ACORD decided to produce this publication to contribute to the Beijing +20 review process at national and regional levels by providing an analytical review of policy implementation. The review specifically targeted the strategic objectives on women and poverty; women and the economy; violence against women and women in power and decision-making.

The countries targeted for the review are Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Rwanda and Uganda. Each of the selected countries provided us with a strong foundation for this review and with a variety of examples of how governments and other stakeholders have contributed to women's empowerment and what gaps still exist.

The publication provides information and perspectives from grassroots populations and marginalised women and girls concerning the implementation of the BPfA and how this has impacted on their lives.

Among the key policy recommendations for implementation by governments based on the review and policy analysis are:

- Strengthening social transformation with a focus on men and boys as key agents of change;
- Investing in processes for qualitative and quantitative research particularly around understanding the feminisation of poverty;
- Tackling gender based violence and women trafficking;
- Capacity building for institutions and other actors at different levels;
- Financing and budget allocation for gender programmes;
- Enforcing multi sector coherence and co-ordination;
- Strengthening governance and accountability mechanisms by government and other institutions; and
- Strengthening relations between government, CSOs and other actors in order to create a less antagonist environment and allow for building synergies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This synthesis report presents the outcomes of the review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at its twentieth anniversary, based on views from the national stakeholders and the grassroots civil society groups in Chad, Mauritania, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda.

The report addresses four of the twelve thematic areas of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) notably, Women and poverty, Women and economy, Violence against women and Women in power and decision-making. The focus of the review on the four themes aimed to complement the ongoing national reviews with in-depth and focused information on the sub objectives in the four thematic areas. It therefore provides views of different community level groups such as women, men, youth and other marginalized groups (persons living with disabilities, haratine and descent from slaves, and the young people) as well as national level key informants including policy makers, government actors, CSO fraternity and women's movements, the private sector, UN agencies and academia.

The value addition of this synthesis report is the grassroots and national level stakeholder voices; sharing their assessment of achievements, gaps and recommendations on the implementation of the BPfA by government as well as other actors.

The methodology adopted for the review included a desk review of national level documentation such as program reports, policy and legal frameworks; national level interviews with purposively selected key informants and community level focused groups. Community discussions were conducted using ACORD's citizen driven workshop (CDW) model. The CDW model is a participatory methodology that triggers debates and conversation within communities on issues of concern. Outcomes of these consultative processes were qualitatively analyzed along common thematic areas.

Overall outcomes of the review point to varying levels of progress in government's efforts to address women empowerment, demonstrated in follow up actions on international and regional policy commitments. The existence of macro level policies and legal frameworks addressing women empowerment further confirms governments' effort for addressing gender equality.

Furthermore, the establishment of institutional mechanism like gender ministries, departments and gender desks in different sectors such as police and prisons, gender commissions, in some countries was a move to provide leadership for gender integration and mainstreaming across sectors.

In some countries special programmes and strategies have been implemented to address women's specific objectives and targets. For instance in Rwanda, the "one stop centre" commonly known as the Isange, has contributed to providing comprehensive support for women survivors of violence. Mauritania's national strategy on micro finance and Groupements Féminins d'épargne et de Crédit (a micro credit program initiated by the

secretariat for women's affairs in collaboration with UNDP), aims to facilitate women's access to financial resources and their integration in the economic sector.

These achievements notwithstanding, women particularly those living in marginalised areas and situations have not benefited from the progress recorded so far. In addition, specific programmes designed to address women's issue are most of the time not well integrated in the existing frameworks and most of all are dependent on external resources. Therefore they are often not owned by government, which threatens their sustainability. Based on views from the community and national level key informant, challenges faced by stakeholders in effective gender mainstreaming are still evident at all levels.

Furthermore, several gaps still perpetuate gender inequalities, slowing down efforts for realising women's empowerment in general. These include but are not limited to, persistent patriarchal norms and practices manifested at different levels; lack of comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data for informing design of gender sensitive policies and programmes; capacity gaps in gender mainstreaming at different levels of intervention (government, CSOs including women's groups and communities); gender sensitive budgeting and budget allocation; lack of multi sector coherence and co-ordination of gender activities and weak accountability mechanisms for government as well as other actors.

From the analysis of the outcomes, it is clear that unless these gaps are effectively addressed, they will continue to undermine efforts towards improving women's economic, political and social conditions. Therefore in order to consolidate the achievements realised thus far and make progress in the follow up phase for women's empowerment programming, there is need to address the following recommendations in the four priority themes reviewed;

Finally, there is the issue of effective role of CSOs in the implementation and review process of the BPfA. Discussions with CSO representatives revealed that in spite of CSOs major contributions in this process, CSOs still feel that their contributions are shadowed in the national government reports. The second issue is their representation in the Beijing review process. Most of them were not even aware of the national review process nor were they even invited to participate. Lastly, there is the issue of the shrinking policy space that does not allow CSOs to participate effectively in national processes, especially in advocacy and rights related issues.

Below is a synthesis of the recommendations from the national reviews:

- Promote women's entrepreneurship through focused training in business management, financial literacy as well as business plan development
- Put in place measures envisaged to enforce existing laws aimed at promoting women's access to productive resources such as land and finance

Women and the Economy

- Governments should promote strategies aimed at balancing women's economic life and household responsibilities, including the establishment of crèches and safe places where young children can be taken care of in terms of security and nutrition while their mothers work
- Facilitate women's access to decent work and make business environments more conducive to support them in starting and doing business with special attention to women in rural areas
- Promote education and skills development for women and girls to increase their self-confidence and employability in the formal sectors.

Violence against Women

- Increase budgetary allocation to end VAW and invest in infrastructure such as DNA laboratories, one stop centres/recovery centres/emergency shelters or safe houses and other relevant services for the protection of victims of violence
- Strengthen awareness raising campaigns that educate both men and women on VAW issues and its socio-economic implications at individual, household, community and country levels
- Scale up approaches that allow for working in partnerships with men and boys to build a network of male change makers across at all levels of society to tackle issues of masculinity, patriarchy and VAW.
- Strengthen collaboration and co-ordination between government, CSOs, academia, faith based organizations and other partners and invest in qualitative research in relation to VAW in order to provide deep-analysis of VAW roots causes, consequences and strategies to prevent it.



Women in Power and Decision-Making

- Continued capacity building at the lower decentralised levels of government and amongst community organisations and traditional institutions to ensure that they objectively and consistently articulate women's needs. For instance the power demonstrated by women in parliament and other national level sectors should effectively translate into strong women's leadership at the grassroots. The trainings may include public speaking, leadership, advocacy, political campaigning both during and after elections, as well as mentorship support
- Put in place comprehensive measures to tackle the issue of women's participation in leadership including multi sector coherent actions related to education, poverty alleviation, economy, and social wellbeing
- Men and boys engagement in promoting gender equality and women empowerment as well as working on critical areas for tackling some of the major impediments affecting women's participation in leadership including cultural norms and beliefs as well as change of mind set.

In addition, our synthesis of the national recommendations is captured under six strategic areas, which demonstrate the gap in the implementation of the BPfA. These recommendations will form part of ACORD and other CSOs lobbying and advocacy of member states across sub Saharan Africa to come up with plans to address the following gaps. These broad recommendations and their implication for the successor development framework are further articulated in the last chapter of the report. These are:

- Strengthening social transformation with a focus on men and boys as key agents of change
- Investing in processes for qualitative and quantitative research particularly around understanding the feminization of poverty
- Tackling gender based violence and women trafficking
- Capacity building for institutions and other actors at different levels
- Financing and budget allocation for gender programmes
- Enforcing multi sector coherence and co-ordination
- Strengthening governance and accountability mechanisms by government and other institutions
- Strengthen relations between government, CSOs and other actors in order to create a less antagonist environment and allow for building synergies

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) adopted during the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996, is one of the most important global frameworks for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. It outlines strategic objectives and key actions for governments, the international community and civil society, as well as the private sector, to commit to women and girls empowerment in 12 critical areas: poverty, education and training, health, violence against women, armed conflict, the economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment and the girl child. The BPfA has provided an important framework that over the last two decades has strengthened the focus on gender equality and women rights issues at global, regional and national levels.

Through routine national level reviews, governments have had the opportunity to evaluate their performance against strategic objectives in the 12 thematic areas. The reviews, which were led by the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), commenced in 2000 and the outcomes of the national review processes have provided opportunities for scrutiny of the national policies, legal frameworks and programmes addressing gender inequality. Recommendations drawn from the reviews also informed subsequent phases of the plan of action. The year 2015 marks the fourth round of the BPfA review and the 20th anniversary of the platform. In this regard, the United Nations Economic and Social Council have called on member states to undertake major reviews. Outcomes of these reviews will contribute to joint regional level reviews.

Since 1995, national level investments for implementation of the BPfA have been marked with progressive steps in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality in different countries in Africa. This period has also seen challenges and gaps that still persist in advancing and realising women's and girls' rights. It is important to note that achievements realised by countries in implementation of the BPfA are varied and they provide several lessons for the follow up phase.

Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Rwanda and Uganda have registered progress toward the realisation of gender equality, the most notable being women's empowerment, gender equality and the right to no discrimination principles enshrined in the constitutions of these countries. However, significant challenges remain in all of the countries analysed, specifically in the implementation of and accountability over existing policies and laws. The synthesis report will offer a series of achievements, challenges and recommendations drawing from the perspective of communities, decision makers and other stakeholders within each of the countries.

1.2. Scope

The report presents a synthesized analysis of the qualitative review of the Beijing Platform of Action based on six national reports from Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Rwanda and Uganda. It underlines achievements and impacts realised in the countries since the signing of the declaration. It also highlights the underlying causes, consequences, challenges as well as recommendations as viewed from grassroots and national level. This analysis is used to build a series of recommendations for governments and other institutions on how to address ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

1.3. Methodology

The review involved an analysis of published and unpublished materials including national policies, legal frameworks and research reports related to women's empowerment in general; national level consultations conducted among various stakeholders through face to face interviews and community discussions with specific groups of women, men and young people. The national level consultations were conducted using a questionnaire targeting stakeholders across different sectors, including decision makers, parliamentarians, private sector, CSOs (especially women and youth organisations), research institutions, the academia and UN women.

The community level groups were selected from both urban and rural communities where ACORD operates. ACORD's Citizen-Driven Workshop methodology was adopted for the focus group sessions. The workshops generated wide ranging views from the different communities related to each country's performance in implementation of the BPfA. Through the discussions, women, girls, men and boys were able to present their views from their own experiences on what has worked and what they consider as good practices or success stories, challenges and recommendations for improvement.

CHAPTER TWO: OUTCOMES OF THE ANALYSIS ON FOUR THEMATIC AREAS IN SIX COUNTRIES

2.1 Overview of women empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa

The outcomes of the review indicate significant progress in the implementation of the BPfA in the six countries, although with varying impacts on women's empowerment and gender equality. The role of political will and commitment to gender equality within these countries and involvement of civil society and other stakeholders has been critical for the achievements realised by the countries. In the different countries advocates for gender equality and women's rights established strategic mechanisms, influenced resolutions and won crucial commitments to set a far reaching policy agenda that recognizes gender equality and women's empowerment as essential components of poverty eradication, human development and human rights.

The Governments of Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Rwanda and Uganda all recognise the urgent indispensable need for gender equality and women's empowerment. These governments are signatories to and have ratified several international and regional frameworks including the Beijing Declaration, CEDAW, MDGs, UN resolution 1325, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, all of which highlight the importance of addressing gender equality. The efforts in furthering governments' commitments are evident in the establishment of institutional frameworks for ensuring that gender equality and women empowerment feature in development processes.

Despite the achievements in gender equality and investment in the empowerment of women in the mentioned countries since 1995, women still constitute the majority of the poorest and they have the least access to and control over productive resources compared to men. This limits their involvement in productive activities, their access to education and employment opportunities, thereby pushing them deeper into poverty.

2.2 Beijing Declaration in the context of broader global development frameworks

The implementation of the BPfA is aligned with the MDGs where enormous progress has been made towards achieving these goals. Global poverty continues to decline. More children than ever before are attending primary school. Child deaths have dropped dramatically. Access to safe drinking water has been greatly expanded. Targeted investments in fighting malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis have saved millions.

- Domestication of BPfA and revision of national constitutions that guarantee the rights of women. This reaffirms adherence to the universal declaration of human rights and other related instruments. The constitutional provision for a minimum 30% quota for women in all decision making organs has produced outstanding results as seen in the 64% world record for women's representation in parliament in Rwanda. In Mauritania the quota required is 20% while Chad's quota of 30% has been declared by the president of the republic though this is not entirely applied.

- A number of progressive laws and policies have been enacted as opposed to previous discriminatory laws that perpetrated negative cultural norms and practices such as the lack of inheritance rights for women. Equally, the integration of gender in legislation and public policies is remarkable in many of these countries.

- Gender equality and empowerment of women has been a central pillar of these countries development vision and a cross cutting issue in strategic development instruments.

- The governments have gradually put in place various policies and institutional arrangements towards the realization of gender equality and women's economic, social and political empowerment. Kenya's vision 2030, the overarching blueprint for national development in the country, presents a strong foundation to push the women's empowerment agenda. Similar solid foundations exist in Vision 2020 for Rwanda, and Uganda's Visions 2025 and 2035, which building on national poverty eradication action programmes. The governments have also put in place various policies and institutional arrangements towards establishing effective mechanisms that facilitate women to access loans, trade opportunities, innovation on macroeconomics and investment. Women's equal access to productive resources such as land and livestock has now improved due to progressive government policies, which was not the case 20 years ago.

- Women rights have shown progressive change, including equal property rights, women's leadership and decision making rights, women's organizational rights to advance their economic, social and political interests (a frequent refrain from women at local level was "we have the opportunity to organize and participate"), protection of women and girls from any form of violence, equal rights of girls education, access to loans from government and non government sources, and engaging in micro business and trading activities.

- The government and civil society organizations have invested much effort in raising awareness on the role of gender equality in sustainable development and there has been improvement in people's attitudes towards gender equality and women empowerment.

- The governments have put in place various policies and institutional arrangements towards combating violence against women in the six countries and their vision recognises gender violence as a serious issue that needs to be tackled. These frameworks acknowledge issues such as rape, domestic violence, abduction for marriage, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, and early marriage as serious violations of women and girl's rights.

The BPfA placed empowerment of women at centre stage and recognised that women's empowerment and rights are a requirement for advancement of all humanity. Therefore, adoption and implementation of various elements of the BPfA has greatly contributed to some of the achievements of the MDGs. Many elements of the BPfA commitments have indirectly contributed to MDG targets on, most notably on extreme poverty, gender disparities in access to education, and improving maternal health. They also provided an opportunity for additional resources to implement gender equality commitments, although not to implement the specific policies and initiatives covered in the BPfA.

However, although the adoption of a gender goal within the MDGs was expected to strengthen the focus and implementation of gender equality intervention, at a more direct level, there are a number of disparities between the MDGs and the BfPA. The minimal number of targets in the MDGs and its lack of a far-reaching agenda of women's rights, including the mainstreaming of gender across all goals, is a major gap. The higher profile of the MDGs may have also diverted attention and resources from commitments to implementation of the BPfA. At the same time, the Millennium Development Goals do not represent the full vision of gender equity, equality and women's empowerment or poverty eradication and structural transformation envisioned in key human rights instruments or in significant intergovernmental agreements, including the BPfA, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Gender Charter and Gender is My Agenda (GMAC) and different African Union protocols and commitments on gender equality.

To address these gaps, some countries have attempted to integrate the MDGs and BPfA, as well as other international commitments, aligning the targets and goals with their national development visions in order to ensure effective implementation, ownership and accountability.

Implementation of the development of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at country level must therefore take into account not only the BPfA, but also the broader array of instruments and global commitments to gender equality and women's rights. Its goals, targets and indicators must be developed based on these existing commitments, as well as the broad array of women's voices and perspectives that have been captured in UN-led reviews by governments and CSOs. The SDG Framework must make specific reference to and integrate CEDAW, BPfA, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and their subsequent reviews, as well as other global agreements on rights, including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

2.3 Thematic specific analysis

2.3.1 Women and poverty

Women's economic empowerment is indispensable if countries are to achieve sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action stimulated many achievements in different countries in relation to reducing poverty among women. In the six countries under study, most of the macro-economic policies and strategies, including the countries' long term visions, five-year poverty reduction strategies as well as other policies, have been developed or revised to incorporate gender aspects and take into consideration women's poverty issues and needs.

The key achievements are summarised below:

- **Engendered macro-economic policies and strategies**

Recognition of gender equality and women's rights is evident in all the six countries' macroeconomic policies and strategies. In Rwanda, gender is considered as a crosscutting issue in all development frameworks including Vision 2020, the Government's Seven Years Programmes (2003-2010 and 2010-2017) and the two consecutive five-year Economic Development and Poverty reduction strategies (2008-2012 and 2013-2018).

In Kenya, Vision 2030 includes gender equity and improved livelihoods for vulnerable groups. It addresses gender equality and women's empowerment through strategies aimed at increasing the participation of women in all economic, social and political decision-making processes (through higher representation in Parliament); improving access of all disadvantaged groups (through business opportunities, health and education services, housing and justice); and minimising vulnerabilities through prohibition of retrogressive practices (such as female genital mutilation and child labour) and by scaling up training for people with disabilities and special needs. Macro-economic policies that cater for gender equality and women's empowerment are also present in Uganda's Vision 2040. In addition, gender responsive policies, programmes and actions were developed, including Uganda's Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) which provides for women's access to market opportunities for their agricultural produce as well as support for micro-credit institutions for finance and risk insurance.

Mauritania has also considered gender equality in its macro-economic policies and strategies, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework (CSLP). The CSLP is the central strategic document for economic and social development of the country. It emphasises that the promotion of women, children and gender equity will build on the objectives of empowering women in relation to social, economic and cultural constraints, to implement the national policy on childhood and continue the progress made in education, health and protection of children and in the integration of gender into national policies and development strategies. The national strategies for micro-finance and micro-enterprises have been developed and were adopted in November 2003, with the objective of strengthening and diversifying the domestic financial system to effectively fight against economic poverty, especially that of women and to encourage people to be self-reliant and stimulate income-generating activities by creating micro and small enterprises (MSEs).

• Reforms of legal and regulatory frameworks

In Chad, government developed the national micro-finance strategy in 2009 that stimulated the creation of a special fund for women and youth in 2012. In rural areas, the government through its gender programme, developed capacities of women in management techniques, production and micro-credit management to stimulate the development of income generating activities. The country programme on decent work (2013-2015), notes “by 2015, women, youth and vulnerable groups will benefit more employment opportunities through specific programmes and projects of self-employment, entrepreneurship and promotion of High Intensive Labour (HIMO) approaches”.

Unlike other countries under study where the review of implementation of the BPfA was done at country level, in Ethiopia, the review was conducted at only two areas namely the Pastoral Ethiopia Regional States and Borena Territories. This was justified by the fact that the assessment of the implementation of the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), known as “Plan for Accelerated Development to End Poverty” or PASDEP, realised that the regions were performing less than others on many development indicators. In response to that, local government initiated new programming processes to mainstream gender into their poverty reduction interventions. They have also set up mechanisms for measuring gender equality and analysing existing projects and activities with support from CSOs.

Legal and regulatory frameworks have been improved and this provides opportunities for women to address their practical and strategic needs. After a long period of lobbying and advocacy by civil society and activists, Kenya was able to pass the Constitution in 2010 that is considered as the most important step by Kenya to prioritise equality of women and men in the country's economic, social and political agenda. The ongoing reforms occasioned by the Constitution of Kenya (2010), Vision 2030 and the National Land Policy (2009) have emphasised the issue of land registration. The Land Registration Act 2012 is one of the statutes that have been formulated in line with the implementation of the National Land Policy that states that both men women have equal rights to own property as enshrined in the constitution.

Article 60 (f) states that: “Land in Kenya shall be held, used and managed in a manner that is equitable, efficient, productive and sustainable and in accordance with the principle that eliminates gender discrimination in law, customs and practices related to land and property in land”.

In Rwanda, key laws have been revised which include, the Law No 22/99 of 12/11/1999 to supplement Book I of the Civil Code and Part Five regarding Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities and Succession, Law No 13/2009 of 27/05/2009 regulating Labour in Rwanda, Organic Law No 08/2005 of 14/07/2005 focusing on utilisation and management of Land in Rwanda and the Land Law of 2013.

2. République du Tchad, Programme pays de Travail Décent, N'Djaména, mars 2013, 51p.

3. Ibid, p.14

4. ACORD, the parallel report to the government of the Republic of Kenya on the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) 20 years down the line (BEIJING+20), Page 34

The existence of these laws to some extent demonstrates Rwanda's willingness to harmonise the national legislation with the international and global human rights standards that are universally binding.

In Uganda, the National Land Act of 2010 and Land Policy (2013) emphasises women's and children's rights to land and provides for security for marginal groups where no land transactions can be made without their consent. The government of Uganda has also increased the presence and participation of women in the land tribunals and committees at the lower levels as a strategy to provide women with space to voice their concerns around gender inequalities featuring in access to and utilisation of land. These efforts have resulted in an increase in women's land ownership from 20 per cent in 2009 to 39 per cent in 2011. All these legal reforms have provided women with opportunities to access and use land as a key factor in production, but also as collateral in loan applications.

• Establishment of guarantee and cushion funds

Besides gender mainstreaming in national frameworks, some countries have put in place special programmes or measures aimed at accelerating poverty alleviation among women. This includes the Social Protection Fund, established in a bid to provide a meaningful and better quality of life for the poor and the vulnerable households with older citizens of 65 years and above and orphans and vulnerable children.

Several different cash transfer programmes have been established to help reduce poverty, by enabling poor households to consume more, invest in productive assets, and achieve their education and health goals. Kenya has also put in place different catalytic funds such as the Women's Enterprise Fund, the Youth Enterprise Fund and the Uwezo (Enabling) Fund, aimed at increasing financial access for women for starting or growing businesses.

In Chad, a special fund was put in place to increase access to finance for women and youth.

In Rwanda, women's access to finance has been reinforced through special programmes such as Women and Youth Access to Finance Programme under the Business Development Fund, aimed at supporting women to access credit and strengthen their skills through financial literacy training programmes. One respondent from the academia in Rwanda observed that:

“Most women are now members of co-operative associations. They have been able to open bank accounts in the financial institutions and some have accessed small loans to invest in their business initiatives.”

Women's financial institutions have also been set up, such as the Women's Branch of Rwanda Community Bank savings, micro-credit cooperative-COOPEDU and IMF Duterimbere. Furthermore, the government of Rwanda has established Savings and Credit Cooperatives (Umurenge SACCOs) at the lowest administrative governance level (sector level) to enable proximity of financial services to the rural community especially women.

5. National evaluation report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (2000) pg. 85

6. MGLSD Uganda Beijing Report; June 2014 pg.14

• Establishment of pro-poor programmes and co-operatives

Pro-poor programmes have also been initiated in different countries. One example in Rwanda is through the “one cow per poor family” policy. Support institutions, such as co-operatives, have been strengthened to respond to the needs of women and accelerate poverty alleviation in Mauritania and Rwanda. In most countries, support for poor women to tackle their poverty situation is through their community-based micro-credit organisations. As confirmed by a woman in Mauritania who is benefiting from the micro credit institution who observed that:

“I did not have a chance to go to school, but the different meetings I have attended and the loan I received from our co-operative have given me skills to run an income-generating activity. I have managed to pay school fees and support my children. Before, I had no position in the family but now I am now recognised as an important member of the family.”

Key gaps on women and poverty

Despite the progress made, women continue to constitute the largest demographic group affected by poverty as the result of denial of their rights.

Key gaps include:

• Limited access and control of land

Although women constitute the vast majority of the agricultural labour force especially in Africa in general and in the six countries under study in particular, they remain marginalised and do not have access and control to land, despite the fact it is the main source of production and income. For example in Mauritania, as stated in the BPfA Shadow report 2014:

“Although women are the principal agricultural producers, they do not own land and yet no religious provision would prevent them to have access to land ownership and likewise, the 1932 decree does not prohibit women from having access to land.”

Similar sentiments were expressed by a national level key stakeholder from an international organisation who highlighted the pressure that social norms can place on women’s lack of access to land. She noted that:

“Nothing in the Islamic law prohibits women from accessing land. However the reality is that traditional norms are stronger than the religious or the formal legal provisions.”

In Kenya, women hold only between one per cent and five per cent of titles to land and in Uganda, 40 per cent of women own land. Gender-based discrimination on access and control of land is still persistent as noted by a woman in Maasai community in Kenya who stated that:



Small scale farmer engaged in value chain in Rwanda

“In my community, I am regarded as a child. I cannot own even a piece of land. Even a new-born baby boy has a right to land but not me, because I am a woman!”

This kind of discrimination of women in access to productive resources continues to put women in perpetual poverty and dependence.

• Limited access to finance

Despite some good government initiatives, few women are able to secure loans especially in micro-finance institutions where interest rates are still very high. This is especially due to limited collateral and skills to develop bankable projects or properly manage secured loans. Women’s community group members in Chad also noted that although existing credit facilities provided them with opportunities for accessing finances for their economic initiatives, it is discriminatory and targets more urban than rural women. They also noted that the interest rate is very high.

The interest rates set by the government for micro-finance institutions is very high and is choking us.” - Female community group member in Chad.

• Limited skills among women

The on-going lack of skills for women limits their employability in the formal sector, in public and private institutions and their potential to create wealth through entrepreneurship development. The majority of women continue to be registered in the informal sector or in the agriculture sector, which requires limited professional skills.



A woman holding her Diploma Certificate

In Uganda, for example, statistics from the national investment sector indicate that women constitute only 37 per cent and 27 per cent of the well-paid job opportunities in the public and private sectors respectively. In Ethiopia, women and girls in Borena do not go outside of their community unless they are enrolled in education or employment in other areas, which remains a rare occurrence. This limitation on girls’ movement means that the community places little importance on girls’ education, which also continues to push young girls into early marriage.

7. *Women’s land and property rights in Kenya (Training Handbook) Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya 2014 can be found at www.fidakenya.org*

8. *National Planning Authority, 7 August 2013. A study to evaluate the extent to which gender issues were addressed during the implementation of the NDP; p 85*

• Slow implementation of policies and strategies as well as low enforcement of laws

In most of the countries, one of key challenges registered is the slow implementation of the policies and strategies in place as well as low enforcement of laws, which is largely due to a persisting patriarchal set of cultural norms and resistance to change in most communities.

Discrimination and unequal treatment of women rooted in cultural norms and traditions persist particularly in the employment sector. A female member of parliament in Mauritania asserted that young women are not sufficiently involved in the formal working sector. She further noted that this tends to be perpetuated through generations.

“With the same pass marks or equal degree, employers will opt for recruiting a man instead of a woman because they feel that women employees are potential burdens for the organisation, as their work will be interrupted by other social and reproductive responsibilities like household care roles and child birth.”

2.3.2 Women and economy

Whereas government efforts have been devoted to improving women’s poverty situation, less improvement is evidenced in aspects aimed at transitioning women from the informal to the formal sector. For instance, gaps are evident in efforts for providing women with appropriate working conditions, access to employment, market and trade and training, access to information and technology as well as effort for eliminating occupational segregation. It is important to note however that some countries have endeavoured to design interventions to address some of these key areas for strengthening women economic situation.



Citizen driven workshop with youth leaders in Uganda

In Uganda, some government institutions such as the National Parliament, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as well as some local government offices have introduced day-care for breast feeding and nursing mothers. These aim to balance women economic life with family responsibilities.

While these efforts are commendable, they are still limited and do not address the informal sectors where the majority of women work. Limited women’s accessibility to economic opportunities continues to put women in the poorest quintile in all the six countries under review.

In Rwanda, the government introduced child-care centres in selected districts aimed at lightening women’s work load. Although only a few have been established, they demonstrate the government’s understanding of their needs and willingness to address the issue.



Woman entrepreneur in brick making project

The following are some of the key challenges hampering women's access to economic opportunities in the six countries:

• Unpaid and domestic work

Unpaid care and domestic work is a key factor that hinders women from access to economic opportunities. In most of cases, communities consider domestic roles as women's primary responsibility and income generation and employment as an "add on" to their traditional domestic tasks. Consequently, women's domestic responsibilities continue to hamper their access to paid employment opportunities. In Uganda, women are responsible for most of the care economy. Only 12 per cent of women are in wage employment as compared to the 25 per cent of economically active men. About 50 per cent of employed women work in the lowest paying sectors namely agriculture, household and mining and quarrying as compared to 33 per cent of men working in those sectors. In Kenya, unpaid work by women still constitutes 70 per cent of the labour force in family and commercial farms. Domestic work is also another factor that curtails women's mobility and access to the labour market. This is issue was also emphasised by a researcher in Rwanda who stated that:

Women participants in the focus groups indicated a willingness to utilise as well as maintain the centres as they lift a heavy burden off their shoulders, freeing their time to engage in business and agricultural activities with less strain.

Women participants in the focus groups indicated a willingness to utilise as well as maintain the centres as they lift a heavy burden off their shoulders, freeing their time to engage in business and agricultural activities with less strain.

“Women are still over burdened while the men enjoy the privilege of being dependants and no longer the providers in homes.”

• Discriminatory laws and/or practices

Despite some efforts to integrate gender in legal and regulatory frameworks on employment, little progress has been observed in practices for increasing women's access to formal employment in all the countries. In all the countries, formal employment is predominantly reserved to men.

For instance, in Kenya, injustices and inequalities face female employees who are still, in many cases, denied leave all together or allowed only a short time which is not adequate to allow full recovery from delivery and time to care for new-born babies still persists. There are many complaints of women who have been on maternity leave being dismissed from work and/or demoted contrary to the provisions of the Employment Act that states that on the expiry of her maternity leave, a female employee shall:

“...Have the right to return to the job which she held immediately prior to her maternity leave or to a reasonably suitable job on terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have applied had she not been on maternity leave.”

What makes the situation persist is the inability of the government to monitor closely to see that the provisions do not result in backlash against women. Ironically because of the high unemployment situation, women often do not lodge complaints for fear of losing their jobs.

Similarly a study on gender patterns of violence perpetuation and victimisation, conducted in 15 of 30 districts in Rwanda targeting 297 health workers, with majority (205) being females, revealed that:

“Negative stereotypes of women, discrimination based on pregnancy, maternity and family responsibilities and the 'glass ceiling' affected female health workers' experiences and career paths and contributed to a context of violence.”

- **Limited law enforcement**

Although gender sensitive laws have been passed in different countries as highlighted above, there is still limited law enforcement that continues to hinder women and girls from enjoying their rights and entitlements to land and other properties.

Governments' efforts are also hampered by culture, patriarchal beliefs and customary practices in the six countries. Additionally, there is limited access to information for women in rural areas on the existence of the provisions. This was emphasised by a male respondent working in a national NGO in Rwanda who highlighted that:

“Rwanda has very good laws that are clear on women's ownership of land. However, there are also the customary beliefs and practices that still prevail. In urban areas, the national laws are more effective but in the rural areas, they are not well known. It is therefore important to ensure that government invests in dissemination of the laws but also encourages the people to legalise their marriages as that helps women in the area of access to their rights to inheritance of land from their home as well as where they are married.”

9. MGLSD *The National Employment policy for Uganda: Increasing decent employment opportunities and labour productivity for social economic transformation April 2011 pg.17*

10. ACORD, *the parallel report to the government of the Republic of Kenya on the implementation of Beijing Platform For Action (BPfA) 20 years down the line, 2014*

Key recommendations for women and poverty/ women and economy:

- Regularly collect disaggregated data for evidence-based strategic planning and programming, advocacy and decision-making intended to generate pathways out of poverty for both poor women and men
- Promote women's financial access by developing financial products that cater for women's limited resources and their persistent challenge of accessing finance from micro-finance institutions at a higher interest rate
- Promote education and skills development for women and girls to increase their self confidence and employability in the formal sectors
- Promote women's entrepreneurship through focused training in business management, financial literacy as well as business plan development
- Put in place measures envisaged to enforce existing laws aimed at promoting women's access to productive resources such as land and finance and institute punitive measures to the perpetrators of the status quo.

2.3.3 Violence against women (VAW)

Violence against women is a grave violation of human rights and a multi-faceted issue that affects women's mental, physical and reproductive health. Key achievements realised in this theme include:

Revised legal and policy framework

Legal and policy frameworks have been improved to prevent and respond to VAW in many countries. In Rwanda, different laws have been instituted such as Law No. 59/2008 sanctioning Gender-Based Violence (GBV); Law No. 27/2001 on the Rights and Protection of Children against Violence; Law No. 13/2009 regulating Labour in Rwanda as well as the Revision of the penal code in 2012 which criminalises all traditional practices that violate women.

In Kenya, some of the key laws passed include the Counter Trafficking in Persons Act (2010) prohibiting trafficking in persons and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011). The Framework for GBV prevention and response with its Plan of Action was subsequently developed. Within the law enforcement sector, the government has put in place Police Gender Desks and government ministries and departments are required to develop sector specific Codes of Conduct, GBV workplace and sexual harassment policies.

Kenya has also put in place multi-sectoral Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that set out the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence.

In Uganda, the Domestic Violence Act of 2006 was passed to protect women against violence by giving powers to lower levels of government (local councils) to try cases of domestic violence that are rampant in the country. The law prohibiting genital mutilation was also enacted in April 2010.

11. Constance J Newman, Daniel H de Vries, Jeanne d'Arc Kanakuze and Gerard Ngendahimana: *Workplace violence and gender discrimination in Rwanda's health workforce: Increasing safety and gender equality*; March 2010

12. *Beijing +20 Rwanda Country Report 2014* pg. 28

Ethiopia has undertaken significant gender sensitive legislative reforms aiming to protect women against violence and discrimination. Among these laws are the 1995 FDRE constitution, the 2003 Revised Family Law and the 2005 Revised Criminal Code. The Family Law (Revised Family Code, 2000) has made a big difference in regards to marriage by abolishing the discriminatory provisions in the Code. However, the law does not give any provision for civil remedies against domestic violence such as right to obtain protection, monetary/compensation relief, custody order, residence order, shelter or medical benefits. However, in some countries like Mauritania, legal and institutional frameworks to respond to VAW remain silent. The existing legal framework does not adequately address VAW including female genital mutilation. Key informants noted that although governments' efforts to respond and prevent VAW at national level, like the establishment of a department for family litigation and the committee for fighting FGM, national programmes to address VAW are not functional. An employee in an international development organization in Mauritania noted that:

“The Department for Family Litigation is not utilised as it has handled only 4.9 per cent complaints, because women do not report cases for fear of stigma from family members.”

The Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Family (MASEF), with support from UNFPA and other UN Agencies, has been able to develop a national strategic plan for the prevention of VAW as well as Standards Operating Procedures in 2010. A recent study conducted by ACORD on FGM in Chad revealed that despite the existence of a specific legal provision condemning FGM, the practice is still rife. The national statistics of 2010 indicate that 44.2 per cent of Chadian women between 15 and 49 experienced FGM.

• Comprehensive support services

In response to VAW, some countries were able to put in place mechanisms to offer comprehensive support under one roof to avoid re-victimisation, soiling of evidence and delayed justice.

The support includes medical provisions, psychosocial counselling and legal support to victims of VAW. These countries include Rwanda (Isange one stop centres) and Kenya (GBV recovery centres). In addition, the “Safe Cities” initiative focusing on women and girls’ safety in public places was also introduced in Rwanda as a pilot in Kigali. The government of Rwanda, through the decentralised structure, implemented the UN Women and UN Habitat Safe Cities project that aims to prevent and reduce sexual harassment and violence against women and girls in public spaces. The project, which was implemented in selected sites in Kigali, resulted in a rise in awareness of the need for protecting women’s human rights and building an environment that provides safe spaces and safety for all. The programme has contributed to creating collective action among different sectors in the community on addressing the multi-dimensional factors fuelling violence and insecurity for women and girls in the city. Also, the safe cities contributed to strengthening of women’s economic opportunities through the establishment of safe market spaces where they are able to transact their activities devoid of violence as well as ensuring peace and safety for all.

• Engaging men and boys initiatives

Combating violence against women requires combined effort of government, development partners and men themselves. In Rwanda, a Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC) was set up to co-ordinate the growing engagement of men/boys in promoting gender equality and ending VAW while changing the patriarchal mind set in the community. The government of Rwanda has strengthened networking and collaboration with this centre in the efforts to end VAW.

• CSO and other stakeholders' engagement

In order to effectively address the persistently rising cases of domestic violence in Uganda, the government, in collaboration with NGOs and police, created the Child and Family Protection Department within the National Police. In Rwanda, collaboration between the government and CSOs facilitates the creation and strengthening of community-based initiatives like the anti-GBV and child protection clubs as channels for awareness raising as well as communication channels for cases of violence. This collaboration resulted in a 75 per cent decrease of reported cases of VAW in four years (5,358 in 2008 to 1,071 in 2012).

• Improved access to information

Information is the key to combat or provide a rapid response to GBV including VAW. Unlike in the past where VAW issues could not be discussed or communicated publicly, efforts by different stakeholders, including CSOs, have been able to make VAW a public issue. In Chad, women are now able to access GBV-related information through different channels, including community radios, schools, NGOs and other development partners through trainings and debates on the issue. As expressed by a female leader of a local women's association in Mongo district, Chad:

“In the past, women had fear even for the police. Today, a woman can resist her husband and refuse to pass the night with him if he made mistakes or was found unfaithful. She is no longer afraid. If problems arise in her marriage, she can go the Brigade to complain.”

• Uganda has also increased access to information on VAW through media awareness campaigns initiated by CSOs to raise awareness of the law and the procedures for legal redress, training for law enforcement officers as well as strengthening co-ordination among different stakeholders. Key challenges Although progress has been made in the area of VAW response and prevention, key challenges still persist. These include:

• Limited reporting of VAW cases attributed mostly to traditional and patriarchal attitudes that influence decision-making, women's lack of understanding of judicial procedures as well as fear of social pressure and stigma by the community. The limited reporting of VAW may also impact its response as it allows a continued lack of attention to the issue and a mitigated response by institutions that may hide behind the excuse that VAW cases may still be deliberately considered as family issues.

“The magnitude is not well known because we depend on the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS), which is done periodically and focuses on assessing attitudes towards the vice and not magnitude and therefore does not favour adequate programming. This also leads to many cases that go unreported and unrecorded and with the corruption many decide to settle their cases out of court ” - Respondent from a regional NGO

A respondent from a community group in Kenya also stated that:

“The magnitude of violence in this country is not known. There is no accurate and up-to-date data. For example, the police record only what goes to them [reported incidents] but this is not the full picture. Also, efforts to deal with GBV are scattered and not well co-ordinated. GBV policy is developed but it is not adequate. There is no central place where all the efforts converge. Programmes are mostly disjointed.”

- Limited qualitative research to dig deeper to understand the roots causes of VAW in its many dimensions and provide appropriate responses
- Harmful practices such as female genital mutilations, early marriages and widow inheritance are persistent in most of the cases under review despite the fact laws against the practices are in place
- Abuse of the rights of women, especially in rural areas where the misunderstanding of women’s rights increase men’s abuse and conflicts at household and community levels
- Increase of VAW cases due to persistent patriarchal domination, cultural and traditional practices and beliefs and poverty among women
- Lack of holistic approach to end VAW: this requires tackling VAW in its multi-dimensions and combined effort between government, CSOs, researchers and development partners.
- Inadequate financial resources to tackle VAW in a holistic manner including putting in place comprehensive prevention strategies, integrating management of VAW in standard multi sector services and ensuring their alignment to ethical principles and standards, including data management.

Recommendations

To address the above-mentioned challenges, the following are some of the key recommendations:

- Strengthen law enforcement in order to protect victims and hold offenders to account and stimulate reporting of VAW cases, especially in rural areas
- Increase budgetary allocation to end VAW and invest in institutions and infrastructure that provide relevant services for the protection of victims/survivors of violence
- Continue awareness-raising campaigns to educate both men and women on VAW issue and its socio-economic implications at individual, household, community and country levels as well as knowledge on human and women’s rights and procedures for seeking justice
- Strengthen collaboration and co-ordination between government, CSOs, academia and other partners and invest in qualitative research in relation to VAW in order to provide deep-analysis of VAW roots causes, consequences and strategies to prevent it.

3.3.4 Women in power and decision-making

Women’s participation in leadership and decision-making is critical for the realisation of their rights and a country’s democratic governance. The review in the six countries revealed remarkable strides in increasing women’s participation in decision-making organs.



Community meeting in rural kenya

Increased women's representation in decision-making organs

The affirmative action provided in countries' constitutions resulted in an increase of women in decision-making positions. Rwanda has the world record with 64 per cent of women's representation in parliament; Uganda has 35 per cent women representation; Kenya has 19.7 per cent in the National Assembly and 26.9 per cent in the Senate and Mauritania has 21.6 per cent women representation. Furthermore, women's representation is increasing in other important organs such as judiciary where they representation has reached 50 per cent in Rwanda, 45 per cent in Kenya, 33.9 per cent in Uganda and only one woman in Mauritania. Although the disparities exist in the representation of women at central and local government levels, their presence is also encouraging in some countries. Good examples are noticed in Rwanda and Mauritania where women represent 43 per cent and 35 per cent of the district/municipal councils respectively. However, in Uganda there are only two female district chairpersons compared to 110 for the years 2011/2014 .

The representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions provides space for them to make their voices heard and to put forward and promote women's empowerment and gender equality including putting in place gender sensitive laws. However, in Ethiopia women's representation in traditional leadership and decision-making is still non-existent.

A community women's group in Bugesera, Rwanda stated that:

“Women are now active in politics especially in parliament. We have strong voices talking for us and this is why we can see that women's situation in country is now improving.”

In most of the countries assessed, it was found that women's participation in leadership and decision-making is embedded in the country's constitutions that provide certain quotas/targets for women. This is the case for Rwanda and Uganda whose constitutions provide for 30 per cent of women in all leadership positions. Likewise, Kenya's constitution raises women's participation in power and decision-making by providing that not more than two-thirds of the membership of any elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender.

Mauritania also provides for a 20 per cent quota since 2006 for women's participation in parliament and municipal levels. In Chad, the president promised the quota of 30 per cent in all decision-making organs, but this has not yet been translated into reality.

“The government has strongly worked on ensuring that women take up leadership positions through the quota system. Women leadership in the different entities is very good. In terms of numbers, Rwanda is one of the successful countries which have managed to place women in all leadership levels through the affirmative action (30 per cent) proportion of total leaders.” - Coordinator Rwanda Women’s Parliamentary Forum.

Challenges

The key challenges recorded in most of the countries under review are:

- Cultural norms and beliefs that directly or indirectly impede women from active participation in politics and leadership positions in general. With women’s multiple social and family duties that take most of their time, women hardly spend the time needed in political involvement. In addition, the patriarchal system that considers women as subordinates remains as a key challenge for women’s effective participation in decision-making positions. In Ethiopia, women still require permission from their husbands in order to take part in public committees.

“When we tried to advocate for the quota systems, we were told that the efforts should be focused on the religious and traditional leaders as they are the key factors hampering women’s involvement in leadership positions.” - Women’s rights activist in Mauritania.

- Limited representation of women in technical and professional positions (non-traditional domains) due to the limited number of women graduates in technical sectors such as science, technology and research.



Woman leader in community in Uganda

The example of Rwanda showed that female graduates at tertiary level in science, technology and research courses represent 31 per cent against 69 per cent for boys and the percentage of firms with female top managers is estimated at 20 per cent.

- Limited leadership and advocacy skills: There is a need to shift from emphasis on raising numbers of women in leadership positions to strengthening quality of leaders to enable them to proactively advocate for implementation of gender sensitive international instruments, laws, policies and programmes.

Similarly a key informant in Mauritania also noted that:

“The involvement of women through the quota system, although a good advancement for women’s political empowerment, is limited to the elite and does not provide a critical mass at the grass-roots where majority of women are excluded in leadership and decision making spaces.”

- Women's leadership and decision making is not tackled in a comprehensive manner. Besides addressing the political dimensions, efforts do not address the cultural, social include social and economic barriers.

Recommendations:

In order to respond to the above-mentioned challenges, key recommendations are highlighted below:

- Men's involvement is critical for tackling some of the major impediments affecting women's participation in leadership including cultural norms and beliefs as well as changing mindsets
- Continued capacity building at the lower decentralised levels of government to ensure that they objectively and consistently articulate women's needs in the different levels as well as ensuring that the power demonstrated by women in parliament and other national level sectors is also trickled down to the grassroots. The trainings may include public speaking, leadership, advocacy, political campaigning both during and after elections, as well as mentorship support.
- Put in place comprehensive measures to tackle aspects of women's participation in leadership including multi-sector coherent actions related to education, poverty alleviation, economy, social wellbeing.
- Ensure continuity in women's presence in leadership spaces by strengthening the capacity of young women in leadership.

CHAPTER THREE: CSOs INVOLVEMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The presence and involvement of CSOs in the implementation of the BPfA was evidenced in all the six countries where the review was conducted. In all the countries, CSOs have over the last two decades contributed to processes for realising the targets and objectives of the BPfA through implementation of programmes targeting women's specific social, economic, and political needs and increasing awareness of women's rights in communities. Additionally, CSOs have also been at the fore-front in advocating for sustained support for gender sensitive policies and legal frameworks.

These CSOs vary in scope and size and range from the community based women's support groups engaged in economic and social interventions to major alliances and coalitions committed to women's rights and gender equality.

This chapter presents views of CSOs respondents on their contributions to implementation and review of the BPfA over the two decades. It also highlights CSOs view on collaboration with government and international, as well as the implications on reduction of space for CSO engagement in rights issues in general.

3.1 CSO's awareness of the Beijing Platform for Action

In the six countries, CSOs knowledge of the BPfA varied with some of them, particularly the larger women's regional organizations affirming their role in implementation and review of the framework at least once over the two decades. Some CSOs working on women's rights issues but not necessarily women institutions, like Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), acknowledged that they heard about the framework but were not very clear about its contents. Most of the respondents from the district and local level-based CSOs revealed that they were not aware of the framework, although they believe their initiatives targeting women contributed to the achievements realised thus far on the objectives of the BPfA.

3.2 CSO and governments collaboration in implementation of the BPfA

As signatories to the BPfA, governments in Africa have a major responsibility to ensure effective roll out of concrete actions for realising the targets of the BPfA framework. Several respondents from government gender machinery acknowledged the role of CSOs in implementing the BPfA over the past two decades. In particular, they highlighted the fact that CSOs support government programmes by reaching out to hard to reach communities in marginalized areas. Some of the major contributions by CSO include:

- Raising awareness of women's rights and helping communities to understand gender equality through community sensitisation activities.
- Enhancing women's economic empowerment through direct programme interventions Mobilising communities to participate in advocacy and lobbying for women's rights and addressing cases of violence and injustice.
- Conducting research to provide evidence around women's issues to inform programming, advocacy and lobbying.
- Capacity building for women to advocate for their own rights and to hold governments and institutions accountable.

A key informant from the gender monitoring office (GMO) in Rwanda noted that there are several CSOs working at different levels and the government's role is to co-ordinate these organisations and ensure they contribute to the achievements of the country's set targets for achieving the objectives of the BPfA.

On the other hand, CSOs' key informants in all the six countries indicated different ways in which governments are working with CSOs. Some collaborative mechanisms that governments have put in place include:

- Provision of policy and legal frameworks that address women's rights and gender equality, thereby building an enabling environment in which CSOs are able to implement their programmes. In Rwanda, CSOs noted that statements of commitment by the highest political office in-country in support of women's rights have s provided an impetus to CSOs working on women's rights and gender equality.
- Inviting CSOs to be members of gender working groups and clusters on specific women's issues, including monitoring of the implementation of the framework.

In spite of these collaborative efforts, views from particularly the smaller community-based CSOs directly working with the grassroots women, indicated the existence of gaps in effective representation of the realities of women by the national CSOs which are often invited to present their views. In Rwanda, respondents from the poor women's networks noted that women's organisations at the national level do not effectively represent their views in national fora as they have limited understanding of the realities of the poor women at the grassroots.

The same gap exists between national and regional CSOs. The Uganda national level networks of women organisations also highlighted the lack of representation of national realities in regional fora regarding the review of the BPfA:

The same gap exists between national and regional CSOs. The Uganda national level networks of women organisations also highlighted the lack of representation of national realities in regional fora regarding the review of the BPfA:

“When it comes to the Beijing +20 review process, The Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative (EASSI), The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) and Young Women's Christian Association of Uganda (YWCA) feel that involvement of CSOs in Africa has been very limited compared to those in Asian countries.” - Respondent from an international NGO.

Furthermore, the existence and effective functioning of CSOs relies on guarantees of the freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Recently, there has been a worrying trend of several governments introducing highly restrictive NGO laws and regulations and harassing civil society and human right activists and many have considered or enacted legal measures and/or policies that restrict civic space even though the right of association is guaranteed under the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Issues related to policy space are typically difficult for individual organisations to confront and can better be addressed through engagement with national civil society forums/umbrella associations and joint advocacy.

CSOs in most of the countries of review seem to be grappling with this issue. CSO respondents noted that over the past five years, efforts by government to work with CSOs have drastically reduced. In Uganda, one of the CSO respondents confirmed this view:

“At the beginning of the implementation of the platform, CSOs and government in Uganda were actively involved and were working as partners and the women's movement was putting a lot of pressure on government to act on women issues, which led to the expansion of the Ministry of Women Affairs to the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. However, currently the space for civil society involvement is becoming narrower because government is not willingly partnering with CSOs and particularly women's organizations.”

Recently in Kenya, the government introduced the Public Benefits Organizations (PBO) Act that seeks to limit foreign funding to 15 per cent of the organisation's annual budget. If a CSO/NGO has more than 15 per cent of its budget foreign funded, then the said organisation is declared a foreign agent. In short, the organisation is deemed hostile to the state and pushing for foreign interests. It is a fact that donors from outside the country fund almost all CSOs/NGOs. Therefore this means that such an Act is set to curtail the activities of CSOs/NGOs including the implementation of frameworks such as BPfA. This is happening at a time when Kenyan CSOs are already engaged with various ministries, government departments and legislators on the implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

Other CSO key informants revealed that government collaboration with CSOs is within strict confines where they are expected to contribute and account for their work in specific ministries and therefore their contribution is not clearly reflected in government reports. In addition, this framework of cooperation does not provide them with space to critique national responses in a comprehensive manner. In Ethiopia, ACORD was unable to directly co-ordinate the review process as it is not registered under the agencies allowed to conduct research and advocacy activities in-country. Therefore to undertake the review, ACORD had to work through a partner mandated within the national regulations to undertake this assignment.

In Rwanda, respondents from government ministries confirmed that CSOs engagement is mainly through networks and coordinating bodies given the high number of CSOs working on women's issues in the country. According to a respondent from government, CSOs participate in joint action development forums at the district levels that are responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring of development initiatives.

It is important to note however that in some of the countries, CSOs were reluctant to give their views on inclusivity of other actors by government in the review process, which points to some fear or paranoia from possible reprisal by governments.

3.3 CSOs collaboration with international development agencies in the implementation of the BPfA framework

In all the six countries, it was noted from both government and CSO respondents that implementation of the BPfA was over the two decades highly dependant on support from the UN bodies and other bilateral agencies. In particular, multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies continue to play a key role in financing advocacy and direct programming by CSOs and government.

In Uganda and Rwanda, respondents acknowledged the role of international agencies like UN Women and UNDP which have played a leading role in providing guidance and capacity to governments to deliver on their commitments on the Beijing strategic objectives and targets in general and particularly in this review for the targets on strengthening women politically, socially and economically. UN Women take lead in advocating for centrality of the gender equality and women's rights issues within the national development agenda.

Civil society dependence of external fund for implementing their programmes limits their opportunity to innovatively design comprehensive interventions to address women needs. Restriction in donor funding in terms of scopes and duration of programmes affects continuity of programmes funded externally.

4.2 Recommendations

- Governments must open up the policy space to CSOs to allow them to continue their vital role of representing the interests and voices of the citizens.
- CSOs should evolve from antagonist approaches towards government to more collaborative and evidence-based advocacy and lobbying approaches. CSOs must be in the room and at the table with governments and other stakeholders and should avoid the big noises on the corridors.

In the wake of reduced funding for CSOs, there is need to strengthen collaboration between governments, CSOs and the private sector in domestic resources mobilisation and in facilitating domestic financing of development ambitions including the outcomes of Beijing +20 review.

Chapter FOUR: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD BEYOND 2015.

4.1 Conclusions

This section sums up the outcomes of this analysis drawn from the review of policy, legal and programme implementation from perspectives of grassroots communities (women, girls, men and boys) and national level key informants concerning the implementation of the BPfA, especially how this process has impacted on their lives.

Outcomes reveal that several achievements have been realised in implementation of women's empowerment in the four of the twelve thematic areas reviewed. However challenges still prevail. Key achievements highlighted include:

- Domestication of BPfA and revision of national constitutions that guarantee the rights of women. This reaffirms adherence to the universal declaration of human rights and other related instruments. The constitutional provision for a minimum 30 per cent quota for women in all decision making organs has produced outstanding results as seen in the 64 per cent world record for women's representation in parliament in Rwanda. In Mauritania the quota required is 20 per cent while Chad's quota of 30 per cent has been declared by the President of the Republic but not yet entirely applied.
- A number of progressive laws and policies have been enacted as opposed to previous discriminatory laws that perpetuated negative cultural norms and practices such as the lack of inheritance rights for women.

- Gender equality and empowerment of women has been a central pillar of these countries development visions and a cross cutting issue in strategic development instruments.

- Governments have gradually put in place various policies and institutional arrangements towards the realisation of gender equality and women's economic, social and political empowerment. Kenya's Vision 2030, the overarching blueprint for national development in the country, presents a strong foundation to push the women's empowerment agenda. Similarly, solid foundations exist in Vision 2020 for Rwanda and Uganda's Vision 2040, all of which are building on national poverty eradication action programmes. The governments have also put in place various policies and institutional arrangements towards establishing effective mechanisms that facilitate women to access loans, trade opportunities, innovation on macroeconomics and investment. Women's equal access to productive resources such as land and livestock, has now improved due to progressive government policies, which was not the case 20 years ago.

- Women rights have shown progressive change, including equal property rights, women's leadership and decision-making rights, women's organisational rights to advance their economic, social and political interests as illustrated by a frequent comment from women at the grassroots ("we have the opportunity to organize and participate"), protection of women and girls from any form of violence, equal rights of girls education, access to loans from government and private financial institutions and engaging in micro-business and trading activities.

- Governments and civil society organisations have invested a lot of effort in raising awareness on the role of gender equality in sustainable development and there has been improvement in people's attitudes towards gender equality and women empowerment.

- The governments have put in place various policies and institutional arrangements towards combating violence against women in the six countries and their vision recognises gender violence as a serious issue that needs to be tackled. These frameworks acknowledge issues such as rape; domestic violence; abduction for marriage; sexual harassment; female genital mutilation and early marriage as serious violations of women and girl's rights.

Regardless of the progress realised, challenges still persist in the implementation of the BPfA:

- Many women are still not accessing economic opportunities that are intended to uplift them from poverty which results in the continued feminisation of poverty

- Monitoring the implementation of both international and national laws and policies is still a challenge. Several of these frameworks have not been fully translated into tangible benefits for the majority of women particularly those in the rural areas and the urban poor

- Patriarchal beliefs and attitudes still persist among all the countries, although with different levels of understanding of the importance of eradicating such practices. For instance, gender stereotypes continue to keep girls and women from some professions, especially in technical fields. Their rights to inheritance and access to economic resources such as land and property are still denied in spite of the well-intentioned policies and legal provisions.

4.2: Recommendations

In order to realise progress in the implementation of the BPfA by national governments and other actors, ACORD strongly recommends the following actions for addressing the gaps drawn from the views of the community groups and national level key informants:

Strengthening social transformation

Given the negative effects of cultural and traditional stereotypes grounded in patriarchy, there is need to better understand how they hamper effective translation of laws and policies into concrete actions. Qualitative research should be undertaken to provide a deeper understanding of these negative traditions and practices in order to inform the design and implementation of context specific policies and programmes to address gender inequalities.

More important is the need to design strategies focusing on changing power relations between men and women, working closely with the different components of the society and more particularly with men and boys who besides being cultural gate keepers are also potential agents of change.

Consolidating research evidence to inform women empowerment processes

There is need for co-ordinated strategies for research on different dimensions of women's empowerment particularly in acquiring a deeper qualitative understanding of feminisation of poverty, the cost of violence against women, trafficking of girls and women and economic contribution of women's household care roles. While governments have undertaken routine national surveys including some of these aspects like VAW, they focus more on the quantitative dimensions that do not provide answers for the more non-measurable aspects of women's empowerment. Given that women are not a homogeneous group, research should emphasize a focus on disaggregated data in all sectors that allow for analysis of women's issues by regions and other women's characteristics like age, marital status, economic and social status, among others.

Strengthening capacity

The analysis of the review points to a need for training of women in political leadership at all levels, providing information on existing legal provisions that protect women's rights, building skills of public and private sectors in gender mainstreaming of policies and programming and designing specific business skills tailored to rural based women to facilitate their access to financial services.

In addition, capacity building of staff in different institutions including the judiciary, police and other security organs is key in tracking cases of VAW and trafficking of women and girls.

Governments and institutions must focus on building capacities of planning and budgeting officers in different sectors to provide them with skills in utilizing gender lenses in processes.

Women and Poverty

- Regularly collect disaggregated data for evidence based strategic planning and programming, advocacy and decision-making intended to generate pathways out of poverty for both poor women and men.

- Promote women's financial access by developing financial products that cater for women is limited resources, and promote education and skills development for women and girls

Capacity building for women leaders in lower levels of government is crucial in bridging the existing skills gap between national and grass root levels.

Governments should invest in technology for increasing women's access to information and understanding of legal mechanism, service provision in agriculture and in small and medium enterprises.

Financing and budgeting for gender programming

Over reliance on external resources by governments in form of government budget support or through non-state actors programmes affects ownership and sustainability of women empowerment programmes. The review clearly reveals that government's budgets support to the gender machinery fall far below the desired levels. Therefore, governments should move beyond rhetoric and focus on domestic resource mobilisation to adequately resources women initiatives for long-term sustainability.

Strengthening multi-sector coherence and co-ordination

Given the multi-dimensional nature of women's empowerment, there is need for governments to facilitate and co-ordinate women empowerment programmes and initiatives at all levels. While countries have endeavoured to deliver on the strategic objectives, efforts to co-ordinate the processes along the different thematic priorities by different actors are still insufficient for reaching desired targets for women's empowerment in general. Governments should therefore strengthen processes for ensuring that other sectors effectively plan, budget and implement concrete and measurable gender actions within their programmes.

Governance and accountability mechanisms

To realise sustained actions in women's empowerment, there is need for governments to strengthen monitoring, evaluation and accountability frameworks that are citizen-centered, to allow for tracking implementation of context specific gender indicators. Citizens, particularly women and girls, are critical in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes that affect their lives and therefore all stakeholders should make effort to ensure they are part of these processes.

Mechanisms for holding government and other actors, including CSOs and the private sector, accountable for the decisions they make as well as effective utilization of budgets for women's and girls' initiatives are urgently needed.

Implications for the post-2015 Framework/SDG framework

The current MDGs were designed and implemented parallel to several other frameworks such as the BPfA, CEDAW, ICPD, ICCPR, just to mention a few. Going forward, the successor framework must allow for the integration of plans including the gaps identified from the Beijing +20 review.

The Sustainable Development Goals have provided for a very strong transformative stand-alone gender goal. It is imperative that efforts at national level must be devoted to developing context specific gender indicators.

Lastly, the SDGs should mandate a genuinely participatory and accountable implementation and monitoring process that allows for women's organisations, activists and community groups to have a more active role in shaping how policy and investment is undertaken from local to national level.



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