



DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

Working Party on Gender Equality

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN
FOR BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

Report from the DAC Expert Group on Women in Development Seminar,
held in Paris on 25-26 January 1996.

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It is submitted to the Working Party on Gender Equality at its 18th meeting on 8-9 February 1999 as background information for the 5 year review of donor performance in relation to the Gender Equality Statement (1995) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995).

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN FOR BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION¹

Introduction

1. In September 1995, after three years of preparation, the Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing. With more than 30 000 participants, gender issues were discussed in the largest setting the UN had ever seen. As a result of continuous efforts of the women's movement, women's perspectives and issues were already high on the agenda of the UN conferences on environment, human rights, population and social development which preceded Beijing. The Beijing Conference effectively brought together the outcomes of all the previous conferences and moved them forward by adopting the *Beijing Declaration* and the *Platform for Action*.

2. The *Platform for Action* has important implications for international co-operation. It calls upon international agencies to pursue policies for empowering women. In order to assess its implications at various levels, the OECD/DAC Working Party on Gender Equality organised a seminar on 25-26 January, 1996.

3. This report reflects the ideas debated during that seminar. It is by no means a comprehensive report of all possible measures to be taken by development agencies. Rather, it is a tool to identify priorities and provide food for thought when discussing the results of, and follow-up to, the Beijing Conference. Moreover, the seminar included those issues which are less well known and less visible as important outcomes of Beijing.

1. Background

4. The United Nations *Fourth World Conference on Women* was held in Beijing in September 1995. The conference was attended by 6000 official delegates, 4000 NGOs accredited to the United Nations and 4000 media representatives. A parallel gathering of representatives of non-governmental organisations -- the NGO Forum -- drew a record number of 30 000 participants. The Beijing conference followed the World Conferences on Women held in Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985). The objective of the Beijing conference was to review the achievement of the goals of equality, development and peace, as outlined in the *Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000* in 1985, and to establish a strategy for removing the remaining obstacles to the achievement of these goals.

1. Report from the DAC Expert Group on Women in Development Seminar held in Paris on 25-26 January 1996. At the time of this seminar, the Working Party on Gender Equality was called the Expert Group on Women in Development. Reference is made throughout the document to the Working Party.

5. The conference brought together the positive outcomes on gender equality of all the UN global conferences during the 1990s -- on children, education, environment, human rights, population and social development -- in an international strategy for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women: The *Beijing Declaration* and the *Platform for Action*. This strategy was adopted by 189 Member States of the United Nations. A UN General Assembly resolution in December 1995 called on all Governments to disseminate information on the *Platform for Action*, to develop comprehensive strategies and action plans which indicate goals, time-bound targets and monitoring mechanisms, to involve NGOs actively in the development of such strategies and action plans, and to establish or strengthen national mechanisms and plans for gender equality.

6. The DAC Working Party on Gender Equality invested considerable resources in preparation for the Beijing conference. It established a *Facilitation Initiative* which aimed to support the efforts of partners and at grass-roots, national and regional levels, and ensure effective use of scarce resources through improved donor co-ordination and increased partnership. A Task Force within the Working Party jointly reviewed drafts of the *Platform for Action* from a development perspective. A framework of important development issues which needed to be included in the *Platform for Action* was developed which had considerable influence on national delegations as well as on other groups. The Working Party held meetings with representatives from the South during the preparations for Beijing to discuss processes and outcomes.

7. Based on past experience, it was evident that a concerted effort would have to be made to follow-up the Beijing Conference and facilitate the implementation of the *Platform for Action*. The international strategy from the Third World Conference on Women in 1985, the *Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000*, had not been utilised effectively in development co-operation as an instrument for change. There was consensus among Working Party Members that a commitment should be made to utilise the *Platform for Action* as a key instrument in bilateral development co-operation.

8. The decision was taken to hold a follow-up seminar on the implications of the *Platform for Action* for development co-operation and the potential role of the Working Party in advocating and facilitating its implementation. This seminar, held in Paris from 25-26 January 1996, also provided an opportunity for following up on the concrete recommendations made in the DAC Gender Equality Statement from the High Level Meeting in May 1995, which endorsed the overall principles of the *Platform for Action*. The seminar was opened by the Chair of the DAC, Mr. James Michel. Members of the Working Party provided inputs and led discussions on the implications of different *Critical Areas of Concern* in the *Platform for Action* for bilateral development co-operation.

9. This report provides a short introduction to the *Beijing Declaration* and *Platform for Action* followed by a summary of some of the main general conclusions of the discussions. It by no means provides a comprehensive summary of each of the Critical Areas of Concern. (The detailed results of these discussions are outlined in Annex 1.)

2. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

10. The *Beijing Declaration* is a declaration of commitment to the important principles and strategies in the *Platform for Action* by the Member States of the United Nations.

11. The *Beijing Platform for Action* outlines a strategy for the removal of obstacles to achieving equality, development and peace by the year 2000. It provides a *Mission Statement* which outlines the

most important principles for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and a *Global Framework* which discusses potentials and constraints to equality worldwide. The *Platform for Action* identifies and analyses twelve *Critical Areas of Concern* -- areas in which increased efforts are required to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

12. The *Critical Areas of Concern* identified in the *Platform for Action* are:

- The persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women.
- Inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, education and training.
- Inequalities and inadequacies in, and unequal access to, health care and related services.
- Violence against women.
- The effect of armed or other kinds of conflict on women, including those living under foreign occupation.
- Inequality in economic structures and policies, in all forms of productive activities, and in access to resources.
- Inequality between women and men in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels.
- Insufficient mechanisms, at all levels, to promote the advancement of women.
- Lack of respect for, and inadequate promotion and protection of, the human rights of women.
- Stereotyping of women, and inequality in women's access to, and participation in, all communication systems, especially in the media.
- Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the safeguarding of the environment.
- Persistent discrimination against and violation of the rights of the girl-child.

13. *Strategic Objectives* are established for each of the Critical Areas of Concern and specific *Actions to be Taken* are outlined. The *Actions to be Taken* target a wide range of actors such as governments and the public sector, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, international organisations, bilateral development co-operation organisations, and financial institutions. Actors mentioned briefly include the media, trade unions, co-operatives, employers, professional associations, political parties, academic and research institutions, statistical institutions, religious groups and non-profit organisations. The institutional and financial arrangements required for the implementation of the *Platform for Action* are also addressed. (Annex 2 contains information on how the *Platform for Action* can be accessed.)

3. The importance of the *Platform for Action* for development co-operation

14. The presentations and discussions at the seminar held in 1996 to discuss the implications of Beijing, emphasized the importance and implications of the *Platform for Action* for development co-operation. While the weaknesses of the *Platform for Action* were recognised, it was agreed that it introduced considerable new thinking both in relation to the assessment of the remaining obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment, and in the actions required to rectify the situation. As the internationally agreed upon strategy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, the

Platform for Action is an important instrument for policy development, policy dialogue and the planning and implementation of projects and programmes. Supporting the implementation of the *Platform for Action* at national levels should form the basis of support to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in development co-operation.

15. Factors which contribute to the importance of the *Platform for Action* for development co-operation which were highlighted at the seminar include:

- The adoption of the *Platform for Action* by 189 UN Member States.
- The placing of responsibility for promotion of gender equality with *national governments at highest level*.
- The identification of *supportive roles for* NGOs, civil society and international organisations.
- The increased focus on *partnerships* -- between women and men and between governments and NGOs and civil society.
- A strong focus on *human rights* perspectives throughout.
- The establishment of *mainstreaming* as the major strategy for promoting gender equality.
- The increased attention to *men* and the impact of their attitudes and behaviour.
- The increased focus on the rights and needs *of young women and men*.

16. The fact that the *Platform for Action* is less political than the previous strategies arising from UN conferences on women facilitated the development of concrete recommendations which were more clearly targeted. There is also a serious attempt to focus on structural causes of inequalities and to portray the promotion of gender equality as an important societal issue rather than a women's issue. This makes the *Platform for Action* a useful instrument for development co-operation.

17. The role of bilateral organisations in the *Platform for Action* is defined as *supportive*. This implies that DAC Members should facilitate the efforts of partner governments, NGOs, civil society and other organisations. To be able to identify and support partner priorities and initiatives, it is important for DAC Members to have a sound knowledge of all actors in their national contexts. This requires development of networks at national level. DAC Members need to develop means to support the implementation of the *Platform for Action* without taking over responsibility and control.

18. A number of recommendations for action in the *Platform for Action* are directed specifically at the work of bilateral development organisations in the areas of poverty, education and training, health, the economy and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. In addition "international organisations" are called upon to undertake or support action in such areas as: armed conflict, power and decision-making, human rights, media, environment and the girl-child. These are all areas in which bilaterals are already involved. Furthermore, the *Platform for Action* provides an important opportunity to reassess policies, strategies and achievements in all of these areas. A specific commitment from bilateral development co-operation is called for:

"... countries involved in development co-operation should conduct a critical analysis of their assistance programmes so as to improve the quality and effectiveness of aid through the integration of a gender approach." (para. 353).

19. The *Platform for Action* represents a particular challenge for bilateral development co-operation in the emphasis given to mainstreaming gender equality perspectives in relatively new areas: for example trade, globalisation, conflict management and resolution. In addition, the need to promote equitable land tenure systems, equal inheritance rights for girls and sharing of responsibilities for family welfare between women and men requires considerable new thinking from development co-operation organisations and the development of new methodologies and instruments.

20. The *Platform for Action* emphasizes the need for sufficient *financial resources* but also highlights the need for a re-examination of the allocation of existing resources. This implies that DAC Members should reassess the adequacy of their policies and strategies in all areas to ensure access to adequate financial resources for mainstreaming gender equality.

21. Apart from the specific recommendations to bilateral development co-operation organisations, the *Platform for Action* clarifies the issue of roles and responsibilities for promoting equality between women and men which facilitates the development of more effective roles for development co-operation organisations. It also provides valuable analyses of the major obstacles to promotion of equality which need to be taken into account in development co-operation.

22. The need for *coherence between the foreign policies and development policies* of DAC Member countries was raised, particularly in discussions on armed conflict, violence against women and the human rights of women.

23. The issue of using *conditionality* around the implementation of the *Platform for Action* was discussed. There was considerable consensus that the use of constructive dialogue was to be preferred.

24. In keeping with the increasing focus on *partnership* within the DAC, the potential for partnerships around the implementation of the *Platform for Action* was raised. The *Platform for Action* provides an important opening for partnerships around the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment since it was jointly endorsed by all DAC Members and their partners. In addition, preparations for the Beijing Conference and the formulation of the *Platform for Action* illustrated the increased common international understanding of the obstacles to gender equality and women's empowerment, the existence of common strategies to overcome these and the value of improved partnerships. The importance of partnerships with NGOs and civil society was emphasized.

25. The preparations for Beijing provided DAC Members with a better understanding of the *priorities of partner countries* which should guide support to the promotion of gender equality in development co-operation. For example, since partner countries in Africa took the initiative for the focus on the girl-child in the *Platform for Action*, DAC Members should be prepared to provide support for partner initiatives in this area.

26. The discussion of the role of *institutional mechanisms for gender equality* in the *Platform for Action* is important for DAC Members since many have provided considerable support to national women's institutions and other relevant approaches over the past ten or more years. The need to develop strategic, catalytic and advisory roles for national machineries and to secure adequate mandates and resources should be taken into account in the provision of future support.

27. Discussions on the twelve *Critical Areas of Concern* at the seminar led to some major general conclusions, which are outlined below. There was general agreement that development co-operation

organisations should start by re-examining strategies, policies and sector analyses from a gender equality perspective using the *Platform for Action* as a guide in this process.

28. The key generic operational issues stressed in presentations and discussions were:

- development of methodologies and instruments for gender *mainstreaming* as the key strategy;
- development of capacity for *gender analysis* as the important first step in mainstreaming;
- increased focus on *men* -- their attitudes and behaviour as crucial aspects for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment -- and relationships between women and men;
- disaggregation by sex of all *statistics*;
- development of gender-sensitive *indicators* for monitoring and evaluation;
- promotion of methodologies for *consultation and participation*;
- attention to gender equality as an integral part of all *policy dialogue*;
- development of *sector/issue-specific gender training*;
- increased use of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women* as a complement to the *Platform for Action*;
- development of a more *holistic approach* to promotion of gender equality, emphasizing the linkages between different sector areas and issues rather than sectoral fragmentation;
- promotion of increased co-operation with *the private sector*;
- increased support to *innovative research*, particularly in new and/or difficult areas;
- increased support to the *advocacy efforts of NGOs and civil society* to make governments accountable for follow-up to the *Platform for Action*;
- promotion of *partnerships between North and South* in the implementation of the *Platform for Action*, with open exchange on problems and solutions;
- increased *attention to role models* on gender equality and women's empowerment offered by development co-operation organisations;
- documentation and sharing of *best practices* in all areas;
- improved *donor co-ordination*, particularly at national/field level.

(The main issues discussed under each *Critical Area of Concern* are outlined in Annex 1.)

29. The importance of an *integrated follow-up to all important UN conferences of the 1990s* was emphasized: the conferences on children, education, environment, human rights, population and social development as well as forthcoming conferences on food and human settlements. Attention to gender equality and women's empowerment should be an integral part of such follow-up.

30. A special discussion was held on the need for *increased partnerships with NGOs, civil society and women's organisations and networks*. It was agreed that such partnerships are essential for dynamic and effective support to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries. The need for flexible, long-term support to NGOs and women's organisations and networks was emphasized.

4. Ensuring that the *Platform for Action* is used in development co-operation

31. The *Platform for Action* will never become a major guiding instrument in bilateral development co-operation without concerted efforts of gender specialists. Members of the Working Party must advocate for, and facilitate the use of, the *Platform for Action* within their own organisations. There is also an important role for the Working Party itself to play in advocacy and dissemination of information.

The role of individual Members within their organisations

32. All staff -- managers, planners, advisers, programme officers, as well as consultants -- need to have a sound knowledge of the contents of the *Platform for Action* and the implications for their work. The *Platform for Action* should guide:

- high level consultations and negotiations;
- policy development;
- all analyses -- economic analyses, poverty analyses, sector analyses;
- policy dialogue at different levels;
- country strategy development, including through development of Country Gender Profiles;
- planning and implementation of projects and programmes;
- monitoring exercises and evaluations.

33. The importance of field-level was emphasized in discussions. Headquarters staff in DAC Member countries have received considerable information on the process and outcome of the Beijing conference. Dissemination to embassy and project/field levels has been less systematic and should be given priority in the future. Successful efforts to support implementation of the *Platform for Action* by partner countries depends on constructive inputs from personnel and consultants at embassy and project levels.

34. A key question raised at the seminar was what can be done to ensure that the *Platform for Action* makes an impact on bilateral development co-operation. Raising levels of awareness, commitment and capacity for using the *Platform for Action* effectively requires considerable advocacy and dissemination efforts as well as the development of methodology, competence, and incentives.

35. Members shared information on activities underway or planned within their organisations. Most initiatives to date focused on dissemination of the *Platform for Action*. Initiatives to use the *Platform for Action* to influence policy development, policy dialogue and the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects and programmes are in their initial stages.

36. *Dissemination of information on the Platform for Action:*

- Distribution of the *Platform for Action* to personnel and consultants.
- Seminars on the *Platform for Action*.
- Translation of the *Platform for Action* into national languages.
- Preparation of summary versions of the *Platform for Action*.

- Commentaries and guidelines on the use of the *Platform for Action*.
- Preparation of a report on follow-up to Parliament, with broad distribution.
- Modules on the *Platform for Action* in training programmes.
- Newsletter on the *Platform for Action* and its follow-up.

37. *Use of the Platform for Action in policy development, and policy dialogue:*

- Reference to the *Platform for Action* in briefing notes for Ministers and management.
- Briefing of missions for high level negotiations on importance of the *Platform for Action*.
- Development of “talking points” for policy dialogue including quotations from the *Platform for Action*.
- Taking the *Platform for Action* as the starting point for development of an agency-wide policy.

38. *Efforts to influence country strategies and specific projects and programmes:*

- Development of a “think piece” on mainstreaming to facilitate better understanding of the concept.
- Development of concrete strategies on specific *Critical Areas of Concern* in co-operation with relevant departments.
- Use of the *Platform for Action* as an instrument in development of country strategies.
- Revision of Country Gender Profiles, post-Beijing.
- Consultancy assignments to analyse the linkages between Beijing and other conferences and the possibilities for integrated follow-up.
- Improvement of the disaggregation of statistics.
- Production of handbooks on mainstreaming in different sectors.

The role of the DAC Working Party on Gender Equality

39. The discussions at the seminar emphasized two main areas for input:

- Regular exchange of information among Members -- formal and informal -- on initiatives to support the implementation of the *Platform for Action*, both within Member organisations as well as in partner countries.
- A common effort to improve awareness, commitment and capacity for supporting the implementation of the *Platform for Action* at embassy and field levels. Regional seminars for embassy and project level personnel were held in Madras for South Asia, and in Cape Town for Southern Africa, in 1996.
- Monitoring of progress on agreed actions as outlined in paragraphs 27-38.

ANNEX 1
SUMMARY OF SEMINAR DISCUSSIONS ON THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

A. Women and Poverty

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include specific actions for bilateral development co-operation)*

- A1. * Review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.
- A2. * Revise laws and administrative practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources.
- A3. Provide women with access to savings and credit mechanisms and institutions.
- A4. Develop gender-based methodologies and conduct research to address the feminisation of poverty.

1. The overwhelming majority of the one billion people living in extreme poverty are women, and the number of women living in poverty has increased disproportionately to men over the past decade. The increasing number of resource-poor female-headed households is an important factor in this increase. The feminisation of poverty has come about because women lack access to productive resources such as land, capital, credit, and extension services, and are excluded from decision-making processes at all levels. The need to focus on structural causes of poverty and what prevents women from developing adequate survival strategies were emphasized in the discussions. Addressing women as agents of change rather than victims is essential. Issues of food production, food security and nutrition were raised.

2. There was consensus that there is too strong a focus on economics in the treatment of poverty in the *Platform for Action*. Poverty should not only be measured by income levels. It is important to have a broader definition of poverty which includes social deprivation and exclusion as well as lack of access to basic services. The definition should also include political aspects and human rights perspectives. Consultation with both women and men on local perceptions and definitions of poverty are essential for realistic poverty reduction strategies. The issue of land tenure is central for gender-sensitive poverty reduction.

3. Implications for bilateral development co-operation raised by participants included:

- The importance of mainstreaming a gender-sensitive poverty perspective in all support to *structural adjustment programmes* and in *country strategy development*.
- The importance of *credit and savings programmes* for women in poverty.
- The need for further development of *participatory methodologies* to ensure both improved consultation with women and opportunities for women to influence, participate in, and benefit from, poverty reduction interventions.

- The necessity of *disaggregation of all data by sex*.

B. Education and Training of Women

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for bilateral development co-operation)*

- B1. Ensure equal access to education.
- B2. * Eradicate illiteracy among women.
- B3. Improve women's access to vocational training, science and technology, and continuing education.
- B4. Develop non discriminatory education and training.
- B5. * Allocate sufficient resources for, and monitor the implementation of, educational reforms.
- B6. Promote life-long education and training for girls and women.

4. This *Platform for Action* issue received the greatest consensus. Apart from being an important right in itself, equal access to education for women, men, boys and girls is recognised as essential for effective and sustainable development. Investment in the education of girls is increasingly recognised as one of the most cost-effective means for achieving sustainable development and economic growth. The importance of seeing education as a life-long process was emphasized as well as the implications for adult education policies and programmes.

5. However, despite considerable progress in enrolment of girls at primary and secondary levels, discrimination of girls in education persists. This is due to a wide range of discriminatory factors within societies such as early marriages, school-girl pregnancies as well as disparities and biases within the education system itself -- in policies, teacher training, curriculum development and methods and materials. Girls continue to be denied equitable access to education at higher levels and particularly in science and technology.

6. *Implications for bilateral development co-operation* raised in discussion of donor experience to date included:

- The need for documentation and exchange of *best practices*.
- The need for improved *donor co-ordination* at national level.
- The need for increased support to gender-sensitive *teacher training*.
- Importance of support to *gender-sensitive curriculum development*.
- Importance of a focus on education as a *life-long process* requiring a revitalisation of support to adult education.
- The need for development of new approaches to provide equitable access to *science and technology* for women and girls.
- The importance of raising the problem of school-girl dropouts in high level *policy dialogue*.

C. Women and Health

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for bilateral development co-operation)*

- C1. Increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.
- C2. Strengthen preventative programmes that promote women's health.
- C3. * Undertake gender-sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health issues.
- C4. * Promote research and disseminate information on women's health.
- C5. * Increase resources and monitor follow-up for women's health.

7. The *Platform for Action* defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Equitable access by women to health care and services is essential for their ability to participate in all areas of public and private life. Sexual and reproductive rights and health are essential for the enhancement of life and personal relations between women and men. Equal relations between women and men in reproduction and sexuality require mutual respect, consent and shared responsibility. Sexual and reproductive rights depend on the recognition of basic human rights of all individuals and couples to decide freely and responsibly if, and how many, children they want, and when. This includes the right to obtain information and make decisions free of discrimination, coercion and violence.

8. The controversial nature of the debate in Beijing on this issue was discussed, in particular the issue of the rights of adolescents versus the rights and responsibilities of parents. The new openings for partnership in Africa in this area were recognised in the discussions. The need to focus on men and their roles and responsibilities, attitudes and behaviour was highlighted.

9. *Implications for bilateral development co-operation* included the need for:

- *A holistic view on women's health* recognising the links to education and empowerment.
- Strong focus on gender perspectives *in policy dialogue* on priorities in the health sector.
- Improvement of the collection of *sex-disaggregated data* on all areas of health and well-being.
- Increased discussion in the context of *structural adjustment* of the ineffectiveness of shifting burdens and costs from the public sector to the private sphere.
- Increased focus on the specific health needs of the *disabled and elderly*, of both sexes.
- New perspectives on women as *health care and service providers*, and new forms of support, particularly to increase the numbers of women in health planning and management positions.
- A stronger focus on gender perspectives of *HIV/AIDS*.
- Increased support to *innovative research* and development of advocacy methods.

D. Violence against Women

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for international organisations)*

- D1. * Take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
- D2. * Study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.
- D3. * Eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking.

10. The *Platform for Action* defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It includes trafficking of women and forced prostitution.

11. Violence affects development efforts negatively. Crucial factors for reducing it include changing men's attitudes and behaviour, and encouraging governments to implement preventive measures. This can be difficult since the public sphere sometimes categorises violence against women as a private matter. Many taboos persist. Violence is a worldwide phenomenon and increasing North-South partnerships is a key step for its elimination.

12. *The implications for development co-operation* include the need for:

- Taking up the issue of violence against women as a development problem in high level consultations and negotiations.
- A strong focus on the *causes of violence*, rather than an exclusive focus on the effects of violence.
- *An increased focus on men* -- information and advocacy efforts focused on men, particularly young men and boys, and identification of male allies against violence.
- Support to *gender sensitisation programmes* for the police, medical authorities, legal authorities, social workers and others coming into contact with the victim of violence.
- Increased support for *NGO activities* to reduce violence against women particularly programmes involving legal literacy and "bare-foot" lawyers.
- Support to the *Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women* and advocacy efforts to ensure her mandate is extended after 1997.
- Renewal of support to local efforts to eradicate *female genital mutilation* in partner countries.

E. Women and Armed Conflict

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for international organisations)*

- E1. * Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed or other conflicts or under foreign occupation.
- E2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments.
- E3. * Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations.
- E4. * Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.
- E5. Provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women.
- E6. Provide assistance to women of the colonies and non-self governing territories.

13. Peace is a prerequisite for the attainment of development and equality between women and men. Armed and other forms of conflict are an ongoing reality for many women, men and children in almost all regions of the world, fostered by excessive military expenditure and the arms trade. Women and children are major victims of conflict both in terms of injury and death as well as displacement. Violence against women in conflict situations is an increasing problem, not only through the use of rape as an instrument of war but also because of the failure to provide security for women in refugee situations. The gender-differentiated impact of conflict situations is relatively unknown today. The need for increased research is urgent.

14. Women should not, however, only be seen as victims of conflict. Women as peace facilitators, make important contributions to prevention of conflicts and play important roles in preserving social and economic order in conflict situations, in particular those concerning refugees. Women's potentials in this area have not been utilised as much as they should. Women are rarely involved as decision-makers in conflict prevention, resolution or management.

15. ***Implications for bilateral development co-operation*** arising from the discussions included:

- Increased co-operation with *NGOs and groups in civil society* working to foster a culture of peace and increase women's role in this area.
- Efforts to be made through *policy dialogue* to encourage increased participation of women in decision-making in conflict resolution and reconciliation.
- Attention to the *role models* DAC Member countries and donor agencies offer in terms of balance between male and female staff in their conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts.
- Increased support to *innovative research* on gender perspectives in conflict situations.
- *Review of all humanitarian support* in refugee situations to ensure that gender perspectives are mainstreamed.
- Utilisation of the *guidelines prepared by UNHCR* on gender in emergency support.

F. Women and the Economy

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for bilateral funding agencies)*

- F1. Promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.
- F2. * Facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.
- F3. Provide business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women.
- F4. Strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks.
- F5. Eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination.
- F6. Promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men.

16. The Chapter on Women and the Economy focuses on promoting economic rights for women, women's economic independence and women's increased participation in economic decision-making at all levels. Access to employment and control over economic resources is emphasized. The need to develop an enabling environment for women is stressed through, for example, removing socio-cultural and institutional barriers (including those related to the market and the legal system), improving working conditions and benefits, opening up non-traditional occupations, and promoting the sharing of responsibilities for home and family. The relationship between productive and reproductive labour, between paid and unpaid labour and its impact on women's and men's potential to influence, participate in, and benefit from, economic development, needs to be further researched.

17. The discussion in the *Platform for Action* is, however, too focused on employment for women which, while important, is only one factor to be considered. Other important issues raised include the gender-differentiated impact of structural adjustment programmes and the globalisation process. The linkages between micro-meso and macro levels need to be better understood.

18. *Implications for bilateral development co-operation* include the need to:

- Establish closer linkages between economic and socio-cultural/equality analyses and policies within agencies.
- Review of economic analyses and policies from a gender perspective, for example in country strategy development, poverty analyses, budget reviews and structural adjustment programmes.
- Continue donor co-operation and co-ordination in this area through, for example, the SAGA (structural adjustment and gender analysis) initiative.
- Support NGOs and women's networks working to promote mainstreaming of gender perspectives in economic analyses and policies and/or improve women's access to credit.
- Increased gender training programmes for economists.
- Support innovative research in key areas such as economic transition, globalisation and trade, and development of advocacy methodologies.

G. Women in Power and Decision-Making

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for international organisations)*

- G1. * Take measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures, and decision-making.
- G2. * Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

19. Women's equal participation in decision-making is an issue of social justice and a precondition for achieving democracy. Transparency and accountability of governments is dependent on an increase of women in decision-making at all levels. Women remain seriously under-represented at most levels of government, particularly in ministerial positions and on executive bodies. Under-representation of women in decision-making positions in relation to the law, arts, the media, education, religion and sports prevents equitable influence by women and men on key policies and institutions at national levels.

20. Efforts are needed to remove the structural obstacles to women's equitable participation. Many of these are related to male attitudes and behaviour. Since women have been excluded from decision-making, they will need support to develop the capacity required to participate effectively. Increasing the involvement of women in decision-making should imply that there will be changes to structures and processes of decision-making once the perspectives, values, knowledge and experience of women are brought to bear on development.

21. *Implications for bilateral development co-operation* include:

- Development of *positive role models* by donor agencies -- balance between women and men in management positions.
- Emphasis on increasing women's participation in decision-making through *policy dialogue*.
- Promoting the inclusion of women in important *consultation/negotiations* such as representatives of national machineries, NGOs or women's networks.
- Improving *consultation with women's organisations and networks* on how women's participation in decision-making can be bettered.
- *Review of all support to democratisation* from a gender perspective.
- Increased support to *women parliamentarians* to improve their sensitivity to gender equality issues and their capacity to raise the issues effectively. Support to male allies in parliament should also be included.
- Investigation of possibilities of *partnerships between North and South* -- exchange between women in leadership and management positions in areas of societal development.

H. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for bilateral donors)*

- H1. Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies.
- H2. Integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects.
- H3.* Generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation.

22. Most Member States of the UN have institutions with formal mandates to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. However, they are often marginalised in national government structures and lack clear mandates and adequate resources. The *Platform for Action* calls for new strategic roles for such national mechanisms and provision of the mandates and financial and personnel resources required. National mechanisms should function as catalysts and advisors. They should develop methodologies and instruments for mainstreaming, elaborating gender sensitisation and training programmes, and promote adequate monitoring within relevant operational ministries and institutions. Good relationships need to be developed with NGOs and civil society including, in particular, women's organisations and networks.

23. Emphasis is placed on sex-disaggregated statistics as an important tool for monitoring implementation of the *Platform for Action*. Development of gender analysis as a tool is another area requiring significant input.

24. Bilateral development co-operation organisations have been major supporters of national mechanisms over the past ten or more years. The implications of the new role of national mechanisms must be taken into account in future support.

25. *Implications for bilateral development co-operation* include to:

- Encourage national mechanisms to take on new strategic roles, through *support to capacity development, elaboration of gender action plans, etc.*
- Promote the improvement of the status of national mechanisms by inviting *representatives to important bilateral consultations/negotiations.*
- *Exchange of information* on methodology development and instruments particularly on mainstreaming, gender analysis and monitoring and evaluation.
- Encourage and support development of *improved co-operation with NGOs.*
- Continued and increased *support to statistical institutions* on national and regional levels for the routine production of sex-disaggregated statistics for all sectors.
- Encourage *North- South exchange and partnerships* between national mechanisms.
- Increase and improve *donor co-ordination* (including with multinational organisations) on support to national mechanisms.

I. Human Rights of Women

Strategic Objectives (*objectives with a * include actions for international organisations*)

- I1. Promote and protect the human rights of women, through full implementation of all human rights instruments, especially the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW, 1979).
- I2. Ensure equality and non-discrimination under the law and in practice.
- I3.* Achieve legal literacy.

26. Human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Their full and equal enjoyment by women and girls is a priority for Governments and the UN and is essential for achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. The gap between the human rights of women under the law and in reality is still great in many parts of the world. The *Platform for Action* calls on Governments not only to refrain from violating the human rights of women but to work actively to promote and protect these rights. Central to these efforts are legal literacy programmes, support of "barefoot lawyers" and gender-sensitisation of the police, lawyers, judges and all parts of the legal administration. Advocacy and information efforts on the human rights of women must be directed to men as well as women.

27. The discussion of human rights in the *Platform for Action* focuses on civil and political rights and neglects the whole aspect of socio-economic rights.

28. **Implications for bilateral development co-operation** include:

- Recognition of *policy dialogue* as one of the most important instruments for promoting the human rights of women through development co-operation.
- Dissemination of information within donor organisations on the *existing conventions: Convention on the Elimination of All Discrimination Against Women* (1979), and *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990), and how these may be used in policy dialogue.
- *Gender sensitisation programmes* for human rights experts in donor organisations.
- Increased support to *women's organisations and networks and other NGOs* working to promote women's human rights, such as legal associations, "barefoot lawyers", etc.
- Continued support to *regional initiatives* on human rights of women.
- Increased support to the *Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women*.
- Support to increased *North-South and South-South partnerships* on promotion of women's human rights.

J. Women and the Media

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for international organisations)*

- J1. Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication.
- J2. * Achieve a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

29. The *Platform for Action* discusses both the positive and negative effects the media can have on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. The media is a powerful instrument for forming attitudes and influencing behaviour towards women and girls. Far too often the impact of the media is negative through the projection of false and degrading images of women. Rarely do the media reflect women's contributions to societal development. Violent and degrading pornographic media products in particular affect women negatively. The media should be encouraged to use its potential to contribute to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through, among other things, the creation of self-regulatory mechanisms.

30. Women are actively involved in the media but rarely at decision-making levels. Women need to be empowered to have a greater influence on, participation in, and benefit from, the media. Inputs are needed to develop women's knowledge, skills and equitable access to modern information technology.

31. *Implications for bilateral development co-operation* include to:

- *Review all policies and programmes* of support the media from a gender perspective and make necessary adjustments to goals and strategies.
- Develop specific *gender-sensitisation programmes for the media specialists* in donor organisations.
- Use *policy dialogue* to take up serious incidences of degrading and negative media portrayal of women or coverage of gender equality issues.
- Support *innovative initiatives* at national level, for example women's media networks, women's radio programmes, gender training for journalists, etc.
- *Support training programmes for female journalists* at different levels -- national, regional and international.
- Encourage *South-South and North-South partnerships* of female journalists.
- Support *gender and the media networks* at all levels, national, regional and international.
- Support *innovative research* on gender equality/women's empowerment and the media.

K. Women and the Environment

*Strategic Objectives (objectives with a * include actions for international organisations)*

- K1. * Involve women actively in decision-making at all levels.
- K2. * Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development.
- K3.* Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

32. Environment is an important cross-cutting issue in development co-operation. Through their management and use of natural resources, women provide for their families and communities. As producers, consumers, educators and caretakers of their families, women also play an important role in sustainable development. The deterioration of natural resources results in negative impacts on health, well-being and quality of life of the whole population. Women in their roles of caretakers of families are particularly affected; this is especially so in areas where they are responsible for provision of food, water, fuelwood and other forest products for their families.

33. Women are, however, inadequately recognised as important natural resource managers. They are rarely involved as formal managers or decision-makers in natural resource management and protection programmes. Their knowledge and skills are neglected. The Chapter on the environment in the *Platform for Action* is unfortunately weak and provides little guidance for future action.

34. ***Implications for bilateral development co-operation*** include to:

- *Review of all environment policies and programmes* from a gender equality perspective.
- *Development of gender training programmes* or modules for existing environment training programmes *for environmentalists*.
- *Development of guidelines for mainstreaming gender equality* perspectives in water, fisheries, forestry, agriculture, land management, livestock policies and programmes.
- *Develop positive role models* in relation to participation of women and men in high level consultations/negotiations and among consultants.
- Investigate means of *promoting greater participation of women in decision-making roles* using new and flexible means, such as special training programmes for women and mentorship.
- Improve documentation and *exchange of best practices* and improve donor co-ordination.
- *Support innovative research* on the linkages between the two cross-cutting goals of sustainable environmental development and gender equality.
- *Identify the priorities and initiatives of NGOs*, women's organisations and networks, and develop mechanisms for supporting them.

L. The Girl-Child

Strategic Objectives (*objectives with a * include actions for international organisations*)

- L1.* Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl-child.
- L2.* Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
- L3.* Promote and protect the rights of the girl-child and increase awareness of her needs and potential.
- L4.* Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.
- L5.* Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.
- L6. Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
- L7.* Eradicate violence against the girl-child.
- L8.* Promote the girl-child's awareness of, and participation in, social, economic and political life.
- L9. Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child.

35. As a result of advocacy from African governments, the girl-child was given special attention in an integrated manner in all chapters of the *Platform for Action* as well as in a separate chapter. In many countries, girls face discrimination from the earliest stages of life, through childhood and into adulthood. Harmful attitudes and practices, such as female genital mutilation, son preference, early marriage and early pregnancies, sexual exploitation and violence, negative food allocation practices, mean that fewer girls than boys survive into adulthood or are able to seize opportunities in the same way as men. Girls face continuing discrimination in access to health care services and education. They are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of unprotected and premature sexual relations, including sexually transmitted diseases as well as HIV/AIDs.

36. It is important to emphasize the potential of girls and the need to raise their self-esteem. The *Platform for Action* raises some controversial issues: inheritance rights for *girls*, rights of youth (both girls and boys) to information and services related to reproduction and sexuality; the rights of youth versus the rights and responsibilities of parents; the impact of religion and tradition.

37. **Implications for bilateral development co-operation** include:

- Need to *review all policies and programmes* from the perspective of the girl-child.
- Importance of requiring *sex-disaggregation of statistics* in all programmes especially child health, vaccination and nutrition programmes.
- Development and exchange of *best practices* in promoting an adequate focus on the girl-child in all policies and programmes.
- Strong focus in health programmes on the *rights and needs of youth* -- boys and girls -- for information and services related to reproduction and sexuality.
- Support *innovative research on key challenges for development co-operation*, such as supporting the eradication of negative attitudes and practices including inequality in

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inheritance rights, early marriages, female genital mutilation and son preference and all their implications.

ANNEX 2
PRACTICAL INFORMATION ON THE *PLATFORM FOR ACTION*

The complete versions of the *Platform for Action* and the *Beijing Declaration* as well as a summary version entitled *Platform for Action. Obstacles, Strategies, Actions, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China*, are available from:

United Nations Department of Public Information
Room S-1005
United Nations Headquarters
New York, NY 10017, USA
Fax: (1-212) 963 45 56 and at:
<http://www.un.org>

Individual DAC Members have produced guidelines and commentaries.
The first of its kind and a useful example has been prepared by AusAid:

*Platform for Action. A Reference Guide for Development Co-operation
The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995.*
(1996) AusAID, Canberra, Australia.

<http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/gender.html>