

Empowering Kenya Women

**Report of a Seminar on
Post-Election Women's Agenda:
Forward Looking Strategies to
1997 and Beyond
held at the
Milimani Hotel, Nairobi,
on February 20, 1993**

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**NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON THE
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(Affiliated to the National Council of Women of Kenya)

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
DR MARIA NZOMO: Introduction	1
Dr Maria Nzomo: Political and Legal Empowerment of Women in Post-Election Kenya	6
Dr Jennifer Riria-Ouko: Women and the Economy: Credit Issues	20
Dr Maria Mullei: Empowering Women in the Economy: Agricultural Strategies for 1997 and Beyond	30
Dr Florence Manguyu: Women, Health and Development	39
Dr Eddah Gachukia: Empowering Women through Education: Looking Forward Strategies	56
Appendix I: Wangari Maathai's Reflections on the Environment	69
Appendix II: Women's Action Agenda 21	71
Appendix III: Seminar opening Speech by Mrs Margaret Githinji, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry	84
Appendix IV: List of Seminar Participants	87
Appendix V: Seminar Programme	94

Introduction

The women of Kenya have come a long way since January, 1992, when they held many meetings, seminars and even a national convention to discuss and map out their own agenda in the democratisation process set in motion by the repeal of Section 2(A) of the Kenya Constitution.

In the months that followed the Women Convention, concerted efforts were made to implement the women's agenda as set out in the Convention's Plan of Action. Spearheading the action were women's lobby groups formed at that time, notably the National Committee on the Status of Women (NCSW), League of Women Voters, Mothers in Action, and the Anti-Rape Organization, working together with some existing women's organizations, notably the Kenya Chapter of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) and the National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK).

Looking back now, it is fair to say that although the women of Kenya have not yet attained all their original objectives, they have made a significant step forward on the democratisation path. During the year 1992, women challenged and sought to change their marginalised status in public decision making/ policy making and national development planning and implementation. The result of that struggle produced the following results:

- i) Over 250 women stood for civic and parliamentary seats.
- (ii) Six women were elected Members of Parliament out of an original team of over 60 women candidates.
- iii) About 45 women were elected to civic positions out of an original team of up to 200 women candidates.

This is an important political achievement but is not enough. It falls way short of the original objective of attaining 30-35 percent women representation in parliament. Furthermore, no woman

was appointed to a full cabinet position in the post 1992 election government.

Further, outside the political arena many of the gender concerns we identified and lobbied for still remain on the drawing board. Discrimination against women in existing laws and practices is still in place, as are the negative images and various forms of violence against women. Indeed, it seems in many respects, women of Kenya have not made significant progress and most issues of gender concern have yet to be addressed.

It is against this background of mixed results of dissatisfaction and hope that the women of Kenya yet again resolved to revisit their agenda and map out strategies that are more sharply focused and practical and set goals that are achievable within a definite time span.

It was agreed that the strategies to be worked out would be geared towards *empowering* Kenyan women in all aspects of their lives, so that in future, they can take greater control over their lives. The time span was set at a minimum five years, up to 1997 and perhaps beyond.

Consequently, on February 20, 1993, the National Committee on the Status of Women (NCSW) organised a national seminar with the theme *Post - Election Women's Agenda: Forward Looking Strategies* which was held at Millmani Hotel, Nairobi. The Seminar which was officially opened by the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Industry, Mrs Margaret Githinji, brought together women from different professions, ranging from the environment, health, law, economics, politics, education and agriculture. Each of the paper presenters stressed the need for empowering women in various national fields.

Dr Maria Nzomo, chairperson of NCSW and Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, presented a paper on *Political and Legal Empowerment of Women*. Dr Nzomo emphasised that women's continued marginalisation in key public decisionmaking capacities was a clear demonstration that the Kenyan political machinery and society are still dominated by men who are not willing to share power with women. She proposed that in the post-election era, women must seek to create, develop and strengthen their own power base in order to be in a position to negotiate with men in the sharing of state power.

Among the strategies suggested by Dr Nzomo in the political field was the strengthening of women's organizations and the establishment of a women's controlled political party as well as the institu-

tionalisation and acceleration of gender awareness and civic education programmes. On the legal front she made numerous recommendations of gender discriminative laws that should be repealed or amended. These include Section 82 of the Constitution, Family Law, Law of Succession Act 1981, the 1975 Employment Act and the re-instatement of the Affiliation Act which was repealed in 1969.

Dr Jennifer Riria Ouko, the Managing Director of Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT) in her paper titled: *Women and the Economy: Credit Issues* emphasised the importance of credit facilities in empowering women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises in Kenya, citing practical examples from her experience in the KWFT. Dr Ouko noted that for women entrepreneurs to be economically empowered, they need basic skills to launch a business, communication and leadership skills and the ability to plan and become more future oriented. In this connection she noted that assisting poor women entrepreneurs to develop entrepreneurial skills, generates "positive externalities for the greater community" and makes for their families. Microenterprise programmes therefore are one way of empowering people to see that they are indeed needed and are able to contribute. Dr Ouko suggested a number of strategies for empowering women entrepreneurs which include:

- (i) Technical development.
- (ii) Liberalization of economies.
- (iii) Provision of extension services and
- (iv) Integrated approach of NGOs serving women entrepreneurs.

Dr Maria Mullei, an agricultural consultant with USAID, presented a paper entitled *Empowering Women in the Economy: Agricultural Strategies for 1997 and Beyond..* After noting the many problems afflicting this sector, she recommended a number of short term and long term strategies that could help empower women in the agricultural sector. In the long term, Dr Mullei suggested the development of gender sensitive policies that would tend to integrate women's activities in the agricultural sector in the overall national development programmes. Women's organizations should carry out agricultural policy studies and present policy briefs to policy makers. In the short term, the Ministry of Agriculture could enhance women's productive capacity in the agricultural sector by providing various inputs as incentives, viable infrastructure and appropriate marketing facilities. Women should also be appointed to decision making levels in the agricultural sector.

Dr Florence Manguyu, the president-elect of International Medical Association, gave a paper titled *Women, Health and Development*.

After reviewing the sad status of women's health in Kenya, she recommends the following strategies which she believes would help to empower women in this sector:

- (i) Documentation and awareness creation on the existing health status of women.
- (ii) Attention to root causes of maternal mortality and morbidity in order to enhance safe motherhood.
- (iii) Provision of adequate health care services and ensuring women's full participation in defining their own health needs and developing appropriate policies.
- (iv) Political commitment and community participation and
- (v) Social status of women, which Dr Manguyu considers to be the most critical, as no development can be attained without full participation of women.

Dr Eddah Gachukia, Chairperson, FEMNET Management Committee and Senior Lecturer, University of Nairobi, delivered a paper entitled *Empowering Women Through Education* in which she argued that such empowering had to be deliberately tailored in such a way as to empower women and girls for quality participation in the creation of a democratic society. She further noted that women cannot participate in educational programmes until identified hindrances were eliminated. These include their low social status and the low value attached to their education, their heavy workload and multiple responsibilities which make time a major constraint. In identifying strategies for empowering women through education, Dr Gachukia noted the need for increased gender sensitization and literacy among women, coupled with provision of printed material some of which should be translated into local languages. She also called for the formulation of a watchdog body to look into the various problems affecting women and girls and the implementation of the convention of the rights of the child in Kenya 1991, and the National Plan of Action for the Achievement of Basic Education for all in Kenya, both of which aim at reducing the illiteracy rate by 50 per cent by the year 2000.

The summary that we have attempted to do here hardly does justice to the very rich and well researched papers contained in this volume. It is for this reason that these papers have been reproduced in full in subsequent pages of this booklet so that our readers can reap maximum benefit from them.

In addition to the papers summarised, we have additional documents provided as appendices which also formed part of the proceedings of the seminar. These include the official opening speech by P.S. Margaret Githinji in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and an extract from the global environment agenda for women-*Agenda 21*.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the contributors to this volume who worked extremely hard to prepare the papers under a very short deadline, the members of the NCSW who organised and administered the seminar and helped in the preparation of this report.

Finally, we would also like to thank the Royal Dutch Embassy which provided the funds that made the seminar and the printed version of the seminar proceedings possible.

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March 6, 1993

Political and Legal Empowerment of Women in Post-Election Kenya

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1. Introduction

"We want a world where basic needs becomes rights and where all forms of violence are eliminated. Each person will have the opportunity to develop her or his full potential and creativity, and women's value of nurturance and solidarity will characterise human relationships. In such world women's reproductive role will be redefined: Child care will be shared by men, women and society as a whole. We want a world where all institutions are open to participatory democratic processes, where women share in determining priorities and making decisions". (DAWN: 1987:80-81)

The vision for third world women so well captured by Development Alternatives with Women for New Era (DAWN) in the mid 1980s, is one that many African peoples, especially women, clearly identify with at the beginning of the 1990s. Following three decades of post-colonial autocracy and poverty, both internal and external pressures have finally led to the crumbling of the single party regimes and the emergence of multi-party politics. For some countries, the long road towards democratization of politics and society has just began. For others, civil strife and incumbent government resistance to democratization still make the situation uncertain. Nevertheless, the general mood among African citizenry is one of determination to replace dictatorial regimes with popularly and democratically elected governments. Popular struggles for democratization and development are everywhere the theme of conferences, seminars, workshops and even street demonstrations.

In Kenya, the repeal in December 1991, of section 2A of the Kenya Constitution paved the way for the return to multi-party politics, and opened the gates for popular participation in what is now viewed as the democratization process. Numerous interest and pressure groups have emerged, all demanding to have their interest and concerns included in the new democratic agenda.

Women more than any other interest group have come out very strongly demanding that their voices be heard; their gender based interests be included and mainstreamed in the new democratic agenda and that they participate on the equal footing with men in the democratisation process. Many meetings, seminars and even a national women's convention have been held to discuss and map out the women's agenda in the democratisation process.

The first National Women's Convention, held on February 22 1992, was in itself a historic landmark, being the first of its kind in Kenya. It brought together Kenyan women from all walks of life - the young and old, the educated and uneducated as well as the rural and the urban classes. Ethnic and other barriers were broken that day, as Kenyan women found a common link as women in their oppression. They sat together, and charted out a women's agenda to be implemented during the current multi-party democratization process. The women resolved that they would not miss the liberation boat a second time around; they would no longer accept a marginalised status, that they would scrutinise all policy documents and ensure that all the fundamental issues that affect women were mainstreamed in the development policy programmes being developed by the various political parties and that they would lobby and pressurise for the repeal of all the existing laws that discriminate against women. It is resolved that awareness programmes also would be set up to sensitize and conscientize women, especially those at the grassroots, to understand their rights as citizens and political choices available to them in a multi-party democratic set up. It was in particular agreed that women voters would be sensitized about the power of their vote and the need to vote for committed women rather than gender insensitive men.

Linked to the latter agenda, it was also felt that there was need to sensitize and encourage a lot of capable women to stand as candidates for political office in December 1992 civic and parliamentary elections. Confidence and capacity building of prospective women candidates was seen to be of paramount short term importance, due to realization that there would be no point sensitizing women voters for other women, if a large number of women did not present themselves as candidates. A major objective then became to increase women's power and influence by working towards the at-

tainment of at least 30-35percent women's representation in parliament and other political and public decision making positions.

The spirit of unity of purpose that emerged from the women's convention contributed to women's courage and confidence to exercise their basic human rights and freedom to participate. The first tangible demonstration of women's determination to exercise this newly found courage and determination came in the form of the hunger strike which was staged by mothers and friends of political prisoners, beginning at the end of February 1992. Their courage and persistence was demonstrated even in the face of police brutality. As the police forcibly and violently evicted them from their hunger striking venue - Freedom Corner - the women demonstrated their defiance by stripping naked in front of the law enforcement agents - a most effective traditional method of cursing.

Despite the continued harassment and intimidation that persisted even after relocating to the basement of All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi, the striking mothers stood firm and resolved to continue with the hunger strike until their demands were met. Even up to January 1993 when Koigi Wa Wawere and three other political prisoners were released, the mothers persisted. The women's hunger strike certainly contributed greatly in raising people's awareness on the issue of political prisoners as a dimension of human rights violation and its link with the pursuit of democracy. But more importantly, it demonstrated women's ability to persevere in the pursuit of a cause they believe in. We should all emulate the mothers of political prisoners in the struggle of gender equity and removal of all forms of discrimination against women. In subsequent months gender awareness and civic education seminars and workshops that were held countrywide under the auspices of various women's organisations were certainly not in vain. Of particular significance was the first ever National Capacity Building Workshop for women candidates organised by NCSW in July 1992. It was at that workshop that women participants endorsed Prof. Wangari Mathaai as the women's choice for presidential candidate but she later declined. Nevertheless, the effort made towards enhancing gender awareness and civic education among women since July 1992, have borne some significant, though still modest, achievements. These include:

- Over 250 women stood for civic and parliamentary seats in the December 1992 general elections. This is a clear indication of increased gender and civic awareness among women.
- Despite the numerous obstacles women faced, ranging from harassment, intimidation and discrimination within parties

and financial shortfalls, mass rigging and other electoral irregularities, women held their own and their efforts have resulted in six women members of parliament and between 40-50 elected women councillors. In this respect, women have proved that they do not just sit around waiting for handouts and crumbs from a male dominated political hierarchy. Indeed, if the electoral process had provided a level political playing field and if elections were truly free and fair, there is no reason why up to 100 women would not have won civic and parliamentary seats.

The modest number of women elected into political office in the December 1992 elections is an important political achievement but is not enough. It falls way short of our original objective of attaining 30-35 percent women representation in parliament and appointment to powerful cabinet positions. Furthermore, outside the political arena many of the gender concerns women identified and lobbied for, still remain on the drawing boards. Discrimination against women in existing laws and practices is still in place, as are the negative images and various forms of violence against women which are on the increase despite protestations from some women activists. Indeed, it seems many respects, women of Kenya have not made significant progress and most issues of gender concern have yet to be addressed.

2. Post-election Disillusionment: What Way out for Kenya Women?

At this point in time, the women of Kenya are disillusioned and feel cheated by their government that promised them increased participation in political decision making, but has failed to appoint even one of their kind to a full cabinet post. Even the women in the public sector who are promised housing allowance just before the 1992 general elections are disillusioned with the government for going back on its promise, by placing too many conditions for a woman to qualify for an allowance that is unconditionally her right.

Furthermore, women are not even sure that the men in the opposition are more gender sensitive than those in KANU, given especially what they observed of the treatment meted out to women candidates during the nomination process during the months leading to the December 1992 elections.

It is however my view that we should not waste precious time bemoaning women's continued marginalisation. Instead, we must face up to the fact the Kenyan political machinery and society are still dominated by men, who are not willing to share power with women. Indeed the status of women in this first multi-party par-

liament merely confirms what I had stated way back in August 1991:

in a largely patriarchal world there are no cases where men have given up without a fight the privileged positions they have historically enjoyed as the authoritative decision makers in the private and public sphere of their countries. While private domestic sphere men may concede sharing some decision making roles with women, but in the public, especially the political arena, the male gender employs every possible strategy to keep women out. Thus the situation that prevails in Kenya, whereby, even when a woman surmounts all the typical socio-cultural and economic constraints to participation, she still has to prove to be better than the men candidates to gain entry into parliament. And if she does enter parliament, she likely to be allocated a position of relative powerlessness. And being overwhelmingly outnumbered by men, her loudest voice is treated like a whisper and hence ignored.

(Nzomo: *Women in Politics* 1992:13)

The bottom line therefore is that the present political leadership, in spite of its populist rhetoric, wants to keep women out of the political arena, as it is not prepared to share political power with women.

This is now the challenge that we have in the post-election period. We must devise practical and workable strategies that will empower women in all sectors. These strategies must be based on the fundamental premise that women are involved in a power struggle. The men wielding power and control over women do so with abandon because they do not "see" any real power from women challenging them. Hence, our strategies for women's empowerment must be structured around the question of firstly creating, developing and strengthening the women's power base, which in turn can put women in a stronger position to make demands in those areas where women's advancement depends on their ability to prevail upon male actors to do what they might otherwise not do for women. In other words, when women for example demand that the government repeal or amend certain laws that discriminate against them, the extent to which that demand will be met is to a large extent dependent on the government's perception of the political, social or economic cost failure to comply with that demand. The cost here refers to the action the women may take if their demand is not met. And the action women may take is assessed on the basis of their perceived real power as opposed to potential power.

The second premise on which practical and viable strategies should be based is that women themselves must serve as role models for democratic practice, if they expect men to take them seriously in their demands for gender based democratic reforms. Women for

example must be seen to be practising the principle of power sharing in their interpersonal and organizational relationships if they are demanding the sharing of power with men in politics and other public decision bodies. It is on the basis of these two premises, that I propose some political and legal strategies for the empowerment of women in Kenya.

3. Strategies for Political and Legal Empowerment of Women

3.1 Political Strategies

There are a number of strategies that could be effectively employed to empower women politically. These include :

- (i) Women's organisation and lobby groups
- (ii) Women must transform potential majoritarian power into real power. Women must demonstrate that they have power to achieve what they want. There is no point celebrating being 52 percent of the population, if women continue to succumb to the dictates of the 48 percent. There is no point either having millions of women's groups all over the country, which are weak and ineffective in advancing the status of women. This then means that women must look inwardly and critically assess and rectify their major source of weakness.

In this regard, I am of the view that there is a serious lack of cohesion and common vision in the women's movement. The temporary unity and sense of common purpose demonstrated at the 1992 Women's Convention has not solidified into common vision. There is still too much diversity and too little unity in the women's movement. There is still great need for collaboration between women's organisations and lobby groups. Furthermore, the potential lobbying power of women needs to be developed through greater coordination of the activities of women's lobby groups. Women for example must find a forum whereby they can adopt a common strategy to fight the heinous crime of rape. So far, there has only been a few scattered voices of protest from a few women's organisations and individuals. No common stand on these or any other gender issues has been adopted by all women, as recently occurred in Zambia over mass rapes. We have yet to see the Kenya women's movement emulate the kind of courage and sense of purpose demonstrated by the mothers of the political prisoners.

The other weak link in the women's movement is its failure to penetrate to the grassroots level, where the majority of women live. This has led to the urban based women's movement being accused of being elitist movement. Every effort must therefore be made, especially by apex women's organizations to extend the largely

urban based women's movement to all the rural areas of the country. This is where the real power lies.

(iii) Gender awareness/sensitization and civic education

It cannot be emphasised that many women both in rural and urban areas failed to exercise their democratic rights in their best interest and to participate effectively in the 1992 electoral politics due to illiteracy and lack of civic education and gender awareness. Furthermore, the influence and the power of social cultural attitudes and customary practices in perpetuating negative aspects of gender power relations and acting as a major barrier to women's political empowerment remain a major force to reckon with. Consequently, the Kenya government, women's organizations and other non-governmental organization must, as a matter of strategy, adopt deliberate measures aimed at institutionalising civic education and gender awareness programmes as well as eliminating negative attitudes and social practices. Gender sensitization and awareness raising programmes should be set up from the grassroots to the national level and be included in all school curricula. Key non-governmental organizations such as the media and should play an active role in public training and nationwide dissemination of the relevant gender information. Women as the major potential beneficiaries of this programme must provide leadership in initiating and implementing relevant civic and gender awareness programmes.

(iv) support services to women's multiple roles

Women limited participation in political leadership is in part due to heavy responsibilities and workload that accompany their multiple reproductive and productive roles. Their preoccupation with domestic and family obligations does not allow them the time nor the sustained effort needed to achieve positions of leadership in the highly competitive world of politics.

The government in conjunction with women's organisations should therefore promote support system for female workers by encouraging the increased establishment of day-care centres, maternal and child health services, conveniently placed and operated. Part time employment and flexible working hours to support women's roles should also be supported.

(v) Highlighting women's leadership abilities

In order to promote and highlight women's capability as political and public decision makers, women's researchers and women in the media should make a concerted effort to highlight the contributions made by Kenya women historically as leaders in various capacities. Personal profiles of women who have distinguished themselves in the public life should become a common feature of the print media. Such profiles are a very effective way of political empowerment of women leaders. A case in point is the women

candidates profiles which were sponsored by NCSW and published by the Nation Newspapers during the last few weeks leading to the General Elections. Those profiles played a significant role in improving the women candidates to the target voter.

(vi) Effective utilization of civic positions to training and recruit women for national politics

Globally, local politics still functions as an important training ground and recruitment base for national politics. In this respect, local government is perhaps more crucial for women than for men, because women more than men are likely to be political novices. Our women councillors who have been elected or nominated to civic positions should therefore be encouraged to take pride in the positions they hold and to utilize the opportunities in 1997. Furthermore, women's councillors should also strive to hold key decision making positions such as mayorship and chairpersons of the various civic committees. Women's lobby groups should also lobby for the appointment of some of these women councillors to key decision making capacities in local authorities.

(vii) The case for women's controlled political party.

The experience from countries such as the Scandinavian ones, that have experimented with women's parties show that such parties normally emerge as a form protest against the exclusion of women from representation in male dominated political bodies. Such parties therefore emerged to challenge the patriarchal system and the established male dominated party structures (E. H. Mannila et al- eds., *Unfinished Democracy*: 43-48). They are also a manifestation of the difficulty faced by women who are committed to social change in countries where male party politics has become a kind of tribalism with very little to do with the needs of the disadvantaged groups especially women.

Women in Kenya have already rejected and quite rightly so, the powerless women's wing in male dominated political parties. However, so far they have not come up with a viable alternative, through which they can advance women's political status.

At this stage of the women's struggle for political empowerment in Kenya, I am of the view that as a matter of strategy women must endeavour to create not only women controlled and autonomous non-partisan organisations, but also partisan political institutions, which can form the basis of recruiting and supporting future women candidates who can then successfully vie and win political office. The experience of the just concluded 1992 general elections clearly shows that many of the women candidates who did not make it to polling day were, among other things, victims of a male dominated political party machinery, that treated women as sec-

ond class candidates, who could easily be sacrificed in favour of male candidates.

Women must therefore seriously consider forming their own political party. Such a party would not only be structured to address women's issues alone, but also other broad based pertinent issues, such as poverty, the environment, class exploitation and various forms of inequalities and human rights violations. But such a political party would have the distinction of having women at the helm of its leadership. However, the said party should be open to both men and women. In fact, mobilization and recruitment should target both genders. Indeed, since many of the issues that women would seek to promise in such a party cut across, class, race, ethnic, and gender divides the women's controlled party could be came a very popular party.

But forming a viable political party is never an easy task. The institutionalization of such party and mobilization of human and material resources and recruitment of members, is likely to be a mammoth task which requires proper planning over a period of years. If the experience of some of the new opposition parties formed at the beginning of the multi-party era is anything to go by, the planning should start now, in readiness for the next general election in 1997. The women candidates who failed to win the elections or others who could not stand because they were unable to find a suitable party host, could perhaps wish to take the initiative in forming the said political party.

(viii) Networking and building alliances with gender sensitive men. It is not only vital for women's empowerment that they network and build solid alliances with each other; it is also important at this stage of the struggle to include gender sensitive men who are genuinely committed to the advancement of the status of women. In so doing, women would only be affirming that their struggle is not *anti-men* but *anti-partriarchy* and against all forms of oppression. In the final analysis, women are just demanding democracy for the whole society.

Gender sensitive-men then should be included in women's activities, and participate fully but they should not be allowed to control or hijack the women's movement.

3.2. Legal Strategies

Legal obstacles to women's advancement are closely intertwined with the political, economic and social status of women. Indeed it is the existing laws that give legitimacy to the existing economic, political and social practices that are often used to discriminate against women. (Nzomo: 1978:126) Legal strategies for empower-

ing women must then address issues that cut across all aspect of women's lives. But basically there are several types of legal strategies that should be pursued to empower women:

- (i) lobbying for reform or repeal of those laws that discriminate against women
- (ii) demanding and monitoring the enforcement of the existing good laws that could serve women well if implemented
- (iii) institutionalizing legal awareness programmes to empower women with knowledge of the existing laws and their rights under the law.

Legal reforms

There are a number of laws that women MPs, lobby groups and organizations as well all gender sensitive men should lobby for their reform, repeal or amendment:

- (i) *Section 82 of the Constitution*, which as it stands now does not explicitly outlaw discrimination on the basis of sex. This section should be amended to bar discrimination on account of sex.
- (ii) *Family law* needs thorough review and reforms as appropriate, especially to harmonise the co-existing and often contradictory customary, Christian, Hindu, and Islamic Laws. Women have often been victims of manipulation of such laws, especially on matters of marriage and divorce, inheritance, child maintenance, as well as ownership of marital property.

In regard to marriage law, there is need for its unification and harmonization to ensure that the same rights and duties exist for all individuals in the country. More importantly, before the Marriage Bill is brought again for debate before parliament, women's organizations must be given the opportunity to scrutinize it to ensure that it takes care of their interests and it does not contain provisions that discriminate against women. Maintenance law should also be reviewed to provide for stiffer penalties for those who default in their maintenance responsibilities.

- (iii) *Law of Succession Act 1981*. While in general this law makes provision for both male and female children to inherit family property, this law does not protect pastoral women who are still governed by the *Land (Groups) Representatives Act*, whereby women cannot inherit family land. The law should be amended to provide that all family land, even when registered in the name of a husband, should be deemed registered in the name of all spouses.

- (iv) *1975 Employment Act*. This Act is outdated and needs thorough reform. As is stands at present, this Act clearly discriminates against women on matters of terms and conditions of employment in the public sector. Here I wish to emphasise that women's employment rights and privileges should not be pegged against

their spouses. Women working in the public sector for example should be entitled to full housing benefits, regardless of whether or not their spouses are also receiving similar benefits. Furthermore, the law should provide that, as part of "affirmative action" women employed in the civil service should not be affected by the cutbacks in employment which may occur in the civil service in pursuant of IMF, World Bank and donor country conditionalities. The number of women in public employment is very small as it is.

(v) Given the enormous amounts of work women do that is not recognised as work, a legal provision should be introduced in the Kenya constitution to legitimise and give recognition to household work and agricultural work undertaken by women on behalf of their families and society. Such work should constitute equal contribution to family income, as formal employment, so that in the event of divorce, property acquired during marriage would be divided equally between the spouses.

(vi) *Affiliation Act* . This act which was repealed in 1969, must now be reinstated. All fathers must be forced to take full responsibility for their offspring regardless of whether such offspring are born within or outside wedlock. The excuse that women would abuse this law is not convincing as the Kenyan courts are quite capable of dealing with such abuse if it occurs. Women MPs and lobbyists in the civil society need to sensitise and get support of all women from the grassroots to the national level to pressurize parliament for the reinstatement of this Act.

(vii) Women politicians together with women activists must lobby for a constitutional amendment to reintroduce the provision for Independent Candidates to contest political offices without being required to be nominated by a political party. The restoration of such provision this Act would create more room for political manoeuvre in future civic and parliamentary elections. For example, this would assist women who would otherwise wish to vie for political office, but cannot find a suitable political party. If for example the Kenya Constitution had allowed for independent candidates during this last General Elections, competent women such as Prof. Wangari Maathai would have presented a strong challenge to even the male presidential aspirants.

(viii) Women should lobby for an amendment of the constitutional nomination provision to ensure that from the 12 nominees to parliament, at least half should be women. Women should also lobby for a constitutional provision for a minimum number of women MPs in parliament and councillors in civic authority. This political quota system is already in place in African countries such as Tanzania, Algeria and Uganda. In those countries, it is prac-

tised as part of affirmative action that recognises that women are starting from a point of great disadvantage vis-a-vis men, as they struggle to take their rightful place in public life. If the principle of quota system is adopted in this country, the female percentage should be at least 30 percent of total parliamentary and civic members. Nominations of the non-elected women, should ideally be made by the major national women 's organizations.

(ix) There should be a thorough review of all laws relating to all forms of *violence* against women and girls. Minimum sentence for rape should be set at life sentence with hard labour. All rapists should be medically examined and if found to be HIV/AIDS carriers, be charged with murder of their victims. The law should also provide for the possibility of rape within marriage.

As one way of encouraging women to report cases of violence against them and to receive appropriate remedy, the Kenya government should consider experimenting with the formula which has been successful in Brazil: namely, setting up at least one police station in every urban area, whose personnel are only women.

(x) Women must insist that a legal provision be made to discipline any leader who makes public derogatory statements against the female gender or behaves in any other manner to show disrespect and gender insensitivity. Such a leader should be removed from leadership and forced to make a public apology.

(xi) Women must continue to lobby for the separate and different treatment of gender issues from those of youth and children, so as to accord full recognition and attention to the needs to each social category.

(xii) Women should now insist on mainstreaming not tokenism. In this regard, if the government is serious about advancing the status of women, it needs to demonstrate its commitment by spending a significant proportion of its budget on programmes that directly benefit women.

(xiii) Women should insist that a women's desk be set up in all government ministries and other public bodies to monitor the implementation of the statements of intent contained in the government policy documents. Such a desk should also serve as a forum to ensure the women's agenda is mainstreamed. It should also monitor and ensure that laws that can advance the status of women are fully enforced and that no discrimination occurs, especially in terms and conditions of employment. The same desk should also peruse existing national development policies e.g.

Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) by World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and recommend review and amendment to make them consistent with a gender sensitive democratic agenda.

(xiv) The existing legal awareness programmes such as those currently undertaken by the Legal Education and Aid Programme (LEAP) and Kituo cha Sheria should be strengthened. In particular a strong gender component should be incorporated into these programmes.

Women's legal organizations such as FIDA should also take up more seriously the role of providing legal awareness to women, especially at the grassroots level.

Conclusion

The political and ideological structure of society throws up barriers against which women have to fight. Some of these barriers have been lowered: the ideology of politics as the business of man, as something beyond the comprehension of women, is being eroded. Other obstacles are more unyielding. The very way in which political life functions, presupposes that a politician is willing and able to sacrifice all for politics, lead a hectic life with evening meetings and travel - in short, it assumes that the politician has someone else to manage the domestic front.

(E.H. Mannila et al: *Unfinished Democracy* 1985)

The political and ideological structures of society are certainly a major obstacle that women must confront and deal with in their search for political empowerment. However, as emphasised in this paper, women must seek to employ strategies that will give them real power and control over their lives and make them an effective political force that male politicians cannot afford to ignore.

In summary then, the strategies recommended in this paper suggest that women must first seek to empower themselves through their own non-partisan and partisan organizations, raise gender and civic awareness among women and society at large, network with each other and build alliance with gender sensitive men, as well as lobby for legal and policy reforms that would advance the status of women.

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Women and the Economy: Credit Issues

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1.0 Introduction

For decades, women have been viewed primarily as passive "beneficiaries" of social services. Household has been a major centre of work for most of them. Women's work in the home can include many different kinds of economic activities, for example:

- Subsistence agriculture
- Production of goods for trade
- Keeping accounts for their husbands businesses
- Unpaid housework

Emumerators and women themselves often do not understand that they should be counted as economically active and traditional measures do not cover unpaid work.

2.0 The Major Issues in Women's Development

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women were adopted by the World Conference to Review and Appraise Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace held in Nairobi, Kenya, 15-26 July 1985, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/108 on 13th December, 1985. They call for:

Sexual Equality

- o the elimination of all forms of descrimination against women
- o equal rights under the law
- o equal rights to marriage and divorce
- o the establishment, in every country, of a high level governmental body to monitor and implement prgoress towards equality

Women's Autonomy and Power

- o the right of all women - irrespective of marital status - to buy, sell, own and administer property and other resources independently
- o the protection of women's rights to land, credit, training, investment and income as an integral part of all agrarian reform and agricultural development.
- o the equal involvement of women, at every stage and level of development.
- o the promotion of women to positions of power at every level within all political and legislative bodies in order to achieve parity with men
- o measures to promote equal distribution of productive resources and reduce mass poverty among women, particularly in times of economic recession.

Recognition of Women's Unpaid Work

- o recognition of the extent and value of women's unpaid work, inside and outside the home
- o inclusion of women's paid and unpaid work in national accounts and economic strategies.
- o the sharing of domestic responsibilities
- o the development of services, to reduce women's child care and domestic workload, including introduction of incentives to encourage employers to provide child-care facilities for working parents
- o the establishment of flexible working hours to encourage the sharing of child-care and domestic work between parents

Advances in Women's Paid Work

- o equal employment opportunities
- o equal pay for work of equal value
- o recognition of the extent and value of women's work in the informal sector
- o measures to encourage women to work in male dominated occupations and vice versa, in order to desegregate the work place
- o preferential treatment in hiring of women so long as they are a disproportionate share of the unemployed.
- o adequate social security and unemployment benefits

Health Services and Family Planning

- o equal access to health services
- o adequate health facilities for mothers and children
- o every woman's right to decide on the number and spacing of her children, and access to family planning for every woman
- o discouragement of child bearing at too early an age

Better Educational Opportunities

- o equal access to education and training

EMPOWERING KENYAN WOMEN

- o efforts to have more girls study subjects usually selected by boys, and vice versa, in order to desegregate curricula
- o efforts to ensure that girls don't drop out of school
- o the provision of adult education for women

Promotion of Peace

- o involvement of women in promoting peace and disarmament

Minimum Targets for the year 2000

- o enforcement of laws guaranteeing implementation of women's equality
- o an increase in the life expectancy of women to at least 65 years in all countries
- o the reduction of maternal mortality
- o the elimination of women's literacy
- o the expansion of employment opportunities

Summarized, the issues are:

- women, families and household
- women in public life and leadership
- women's education and training
- women's health and child-bearing
- housing, human settlements and the environment
- women's work and the economy

This paper is not expected to address all the above issues. I wish to address the issue of women in the economy and concentrate on issues related to micro, small and medium scale enterprises. This is an area in our economy where many women will be found trying to keep afloat.

3.0 General Situation of the Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprise Sector

Impact of changes in general economic development and technological changes on the growth of the small and medium scale enterprise sector.

Over the last decade or so, there has been considerable impact of global developments on the growth of the industrial sector particularly the micro, small and medium industries sector in developing countries. Globalisation of manufacturing, trade and finance and development of new technologies economizing on factor use and accenting on knowledge, skills and information, have turned the comparative advantage even in traditional industries in favor of the development countries. Many of them have moved over from mass production to flexible manufacturing methods through the

use of information technology (micro computers and telecommunications channels). This has enabled flexible responses to changes in market demand, which has been characterised by differentiated products rather than standardized products. In this process, the role of SMEs has somewhat enhanced in the developed countries.

The developing countries on the other hand have suffered a deterioration in their economic growth. There has been a cumulative chain of balance of payment crisis, production crisis and fiscal crisis. Structural Adjustment Programmes assisted by the World Bank/IMF have endeavoured to remedy this situation. Micro policies of liberalization and tighter monetary and fiscal policies on the whole adversely affect in the short term the profitability of existing industries.

Therefore, the micro, small and medium scale sector has filled the gap created by the decline of large enterprises. In Kenya, in the face of all this, women have tended to organise themselves into self help groups, associations, etc. to obtain the advantages of cooperation in marketing financing, supply of raw materials, etc. Such cooperation has in turn, stimulated the growth of non governmental organisations to assist development of small industries.

4.0 The Challenges in this Sector in Relation to Women and the Suggested Strategies

a) Insufficiency of flow of financial resources due to tight fiscal and monetary policies, and also lack of actual financial resources for the entire micro, small and medium scale enterprises where women are the most sufferers.

Strategy

There is need for women to counter the above problem through mobilization of savings of entrepreneurs and forming saving loan groups. This would enable women entrepreneurs through their groups and associations to obtain financing from development banks, who by the way obtain their funds from bilateral/multilateral donors. (e.g. KCB, BBK). As the financial situation in this country improves under structural adjustment, it is essential that more funds be available for such innovative and viable small enterprises.

In regard to insufficiency of financial resources for women in this sector, we can only learn from experience in other countries - savings - loans associations have been set up and other cooperative arrangements in purchasing and marketing. Joint guarantee

by such institutions enables additional financing to be obtained from banks. An example of this approach in Kenya is for the Kenya Women's Cooperative and other women cooperatives. If capacity was enhanced, it could help institutions to facilitate access to credit by women entrepreneurs.

b) There are considerable difficulties for women in Kenya and indeed all over Africa in responding to new technological developments.

Strategies

There is need for appropriate training and development of appropriate technology. There are countries, like India and Malaysia, where appropriate technology suited for local use has been considerably successful. There is need for governments and donors to support lateral learning between women entrepreneurs from these countries and Kenya. Women's groups and associations should use their organised power to access international funds that would facilitate this lateral learning.

c) Within the SME sector, micro-enterprises and rural industries, women have hardly received any attention in Kenya

Strategies

Delivery of both financial and technical assistance has to be decentralised and carried to the enterprise. Clustering in one location enables intertrading. In regard to financing the self help type of organisation, (e.g. utilizing the Bangladesh type of Grameen approach) has proved more successful than banks located in bigger towns and capital cities. KWFT has been able through clustering and this approach to reach more than 390 women in 12 months.

Kenya Rural Enterprise Programme, using the the same approach reaches almost ten times this number in a year. Extension services are also more efficient in this situation.

The change agent, e.g. the KWFT ground staff must be a kind of barefooted stimulators. Specific attention must be paid in linking up such enterprises to the community around it and in providing the required infrastructure and services.

The success of rural development where majority of women live and operate their enterprises depends on the size of the market. The Chinese experience of locating enterprises in small towns or a massive town (town cillage enterprises) and providing them with infrastructure facilities proved successful in generating of jobs and increasing incomes. These enterprises often exported to

bigger urban areas.

d) Problem of liberalization of economies that has affected women most

Strategies

The role of the Kenya government would be significant in creating the proper environment for the private sector to grow and prosper. This would include appropriate micro policies to encourage marketization and competition, provision of infrastructure, transport, health and education facilities. Training programmes only through formal education instructions but also through associations of enterprises and NGOs should be undertaken. Business culture in this country has to be inculcated from school age onwards in order to create entrepreneurs.

The role of the state is pivotal in strategic planning, laying down goals and taking measures to enable, the private sector to fulfil the goals. Self help institutions formed by women entrepreneurs themselves and other non governmental organisations should be encouraged and assisted to undertake information and extension services including, often on the job training programmes. In Malaysia, the Entrepreneur Development Corporation Ltd, a foundation to provide venture capital financing combined with training programme to upgrade managerial capability was set up. This is an example that could be of use to Kenya. The corporation has been set up with a grant from the Government but is otherwise expected to be self supporting. The assistance to enterprises was provided on a continuing basis for a period of 3-10 years on a basis, to make them self sustaining at the end of the period. Such a corporation would have to establish programmes specifically oriented towards the development of women entrepreneurs and the establishment of industries by them to make it a priority consideration since women constitute a significant proportion of the productive population in Kenya. Many African countries have set up trusts for financing such enterprises and women organisations have themselves taken the initiative and promoted self help. It is important that women should not be ignored or discriminated against in the provision of training programmes, extension services, financing etc. In Kenya, women enterprises are the sure way of promoting rural industrialization.

e) The problem of centralised government institutions or parastatals sponsored and supported by the government playing the major role in providing promotional and extension services to small and medium enterprises must be addressed. The experience has been that these institutions lacked resources and qualified personnel and were too bureaucratic in operation. There was thus

little effectiveness in aid reaching the small enterprises. Only a very small number of enterprises benefited from governmental programmes.

Structural adjustment programmes and the need to reduce fiscal deficits have convinced many governments that they should no longer provide direct assistance to small enterprises. On the part of the small enterprises themselves, the requirements have been more and more for the correct contacts between the entrepreneurs or enterprises and the assistance agency. It is true that self help organisations of enterprises themselves could do much of the work required.

Suggested Approach

Experience from developed countries as well as successful developing countries indicate the need to identify specifically the requirements of different categories of small enterprises by women and to have an institutional structure of, by and for women enterprises. Full involvement of women enterprises themselves and close relationships with the change agent are emphasized.

f) Diversity of NGOs serving women from community self-help groups to a woman's cooperative to umbrella organisations is a real problem, etc.

Suggested Solution

The fact that there is a role for each of these organisations must be seen, recognised and appreciated. Micro enterprise located in rural areas and small towns usually needed self help groups who could cooperate in organising their production activities as well as in raising finance through savings and joint guarantee schemes. Assistance is also needed by them in containing information on markets, technology and the mechanism for its transfer, training facilities etc.

Small industry associations in larger towns and capital city could provide training and extension services as well as guidance to the local self help groups. What is being emphasised here is that NGOs serving women entrepreneurs should be grassroots institutions.

Of course NGOs cannot handle every aspect of small enterprises for women. Government institutes of reasearch, institutions of higher learning and scientific research organisations could be useful if they work with NGOs.

The danger of over-dependence on foreign supported NGOs and of too much centralization by an apex association should be avoided, since they would defeat the purpose of providing effective and

timely assistance to small enterprises.

g) Problem of a proliferation of NGOs usually working at cross purposes or duplicating efforts must be addressed.

Suggested Solution

There is need for more effective coordination by the association of small enterprises with support of the government or by the government itself. Some kind of monitoring of the activities of NGOs may be desirable.

Effective co-ordination at the National level is crucial to avoid overlapping and to enable the optimum use of scarce available resources. In many countries this kind of co-ordination is carried out at the level of president's office. In many developing countries, co-ordination at the Regional and International level has been sponsored by World Bank and UNDP in order provide assistance to small enterprises.

5.0 Conclusion: Lesson Learnt from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Kenya

While they may not be mechanisms for large scale business creation, micro enterprise programmes are potentially important human capacity building and community development interventions. Micro enterprise programmes provide important social and economic benefits that need to be recognised but also measured. The benefits include:

Human Development Skills

The intangible benefit most often discussed by practitioners is that micro enterprise programmes teach people that they can take control of their lives. Women often approach that Women's credit programme by KWFT, according to the organisation's with major issues of dependency, these women are in need of basic skills before they can successfully launch a business: coping and problem-solving skills, self-esteem, communication and leadership skills, and the ability to plan and become more future oriented. KWFT Programme like most other micro enterprise programmes, therefore devotes a great deal of time to personal esteem issues.

Economic Literacy

In addition to developing self-esteem, micro-enterprise programmes have the potential to increase the economic literacy of clients. Many individuals in disadvantaged communities, isolated from the mainstream and dependent on others, have little or no understanding of the workings of the economy. In fact, some people have never managed money, opened a checking account or walked into a bank. An understanding of principles such as investment,

interest (more particularly, the time value of money), cash flow, and trade offs, empower individuals to participate fully in the economy. Such concepts are rarely learnt during the process of growing up.

Micro-enterprise programmes offer one type of intervention through which the awareness and connectedness of low income individuals to the economy can be increased.

Positive Role Models

Assisting the poor women entrepreneurs to develop their entrepreneurial skills can generate positive externalities for the greater community. Women entrepreneurs can serve as powerful role models for their families. The story of a long term welfare recipient who successfully starts a business and leaves the welfare system can galvanize the energies of others who see little hope for advancement. A similarly catalytic effect is possible from the profile of a local resident who successfully starts a business that hires people from the community. The children of clients also benefit. Clients who participate in micro-enterprise programmes become more supportive of their children's personal growth, perhaps as a result of their own increased self esteem. Also children of self employed parents are more likely to become entrepreneurs than are children without such role models in the household. Children do as they see. Having a mother who earns income and is striving to become self sufficient, creates an expectation that the child also needs not accept living on welfare as his or her most viable income generating option. Following this line of reasoning, the full effect of micro-enterprise programmes on individuals and communities might be discernible only as the children of clients mature.

Positive images are needed as a remainder that the majority of the women in this country work, and that given the opportunity, they will struggle to create better lives for themselves. Success stories about micro entrepreneurs illustrate that the very poor in this country "have skills and energy, representing a great untapped resource". (Grameen Dialogue Jan 1993). As one of the key strengths micro-enterprise programmes do what so many existing approaches do not. They focus on the capacities, not the deficiencies of the poor.

Builds Community

The underclass in our society is isolated from the mainstream with little hope of economic advancement. Women in this society are treated as an underclass. Micro-enterprises programmes give clients support groups and relay the significant message that their skills are needed by society. More important, many programmes establish linkages with the mainstream economy through

monitoring programmes and working with local banks. Working to reintegrate isolated people back into a larger community is a long, incremental process. Small steps, however, are needed to build community. Micro-enterprise programmes for women provide one way for a community to reach out and assist its least fortunate members to become productive and active members. The message to the country's women who not only are disenfranchised, but also are increasingly perceived as unwANTED in our society, should be one of acceptance and belonging. Micro enterprise programmes are one way of empowering people to see that they are indeed needed and are able to contribute.

Alternative Job Creation Intervention

Micro-enterprise programmes for women as mentioned, tend to result in varying levels of job and income creation, depending on the different communities targeted by the programmes. Job creation may not be feasible in the short term. On the other hand, micro enterprise programme that target existing women entrepreneurs may create jobs and increase income levels. It is important to recognise that micro enterprise programmes for women address a continuum of needs along the economic spectrum.

Major lessons/issues that must be addressed by all micro enterprise programmes

Micro-enterprise programmes must be tailored to address a specific target group in terms of its culture, its political and economic environment, and the market failure associated with it.

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Empowering Women in the Economy: Agricultural Strategies for 1997 and Beyond

DR MARIA MULLEI

A. Defining the Problem

1. *Declining Production*

In the post-election period, agricultural sector will have to play a major role in Kenya's economic revival. Currently, the agriculture sector is in a crisis: policies are not right, credit is unavailable, financial institutions are broke (AFC cannot redeem past debts of up to KSHS 0.6 billion owed by prominent personalities because they were "forgiven". The commercial banks will not lend to the common man and in particular to the women. The agricultural institutions which once served to support the sector are non functional.

Inputs have become very expensive and are not available. On February 10th, the Minister of Agriculture assured farmers that the fertilizer will be available in time for the next rains. This assurance put aside, the fertilizer pricing was not discussed. Neither mention of scarcities of other non fertilizer inputs was made. Farmers have been complaining of the unavailability and the escalating prices of animal feeds (dairy, poultry and pig), drugs, vaccines, herbicides and the A.I. (Mwale 1993). Fuel prices are escalating so fast that we can barely keep the pace. The prices of trucks, tractors, pumps, ploughs and other farm equipment including spare parts have also short up sharply. Airplanes have consistently complained that the prices of jet fuel in Kenya are very high in addition to constituting a very high proportion of their operating costs.

The prices of produce cannot keep up with the inflation. Yet in real

terms the price of maize could be lower than it was last year. As a result of drought previous prices of maize shot up quickly but with the coming of short rains the supplies of essential commodities and other agricultural produce have greatly increased. The inflation and the depreciation of the Kenyan shilling coupled with the supply of money during the recent election has resulted in the highest levels of inflation ever recorded in the history of Kenya. The net effect on the domestic markets is that producers are receiving less returns for their produce when at the same time inputs and other non agricultural commodity prices are rising. In a nutshell, the agriculture sector is declining in terms of trade compared to other sectors and this is hurting the producers of whom the majority are women (Mwale 1993).

b. What Has Contributed to the Decline in the Agriculture Sector?

i) Policy

There is lack of a coherent agricultural policy in Kenya at this point in time. A policy can be made in one day to liberalize a certain item, "then restricts another, partially controls another, and reverses previous decisions"... conflicting issues/messages and unequitable directives have been given without follow up (Mwale p.2). Government interference in the marketing bodies and authorities is the mode of the day. The list is long. In short it is unbelievable how farmers have managed to carry on with the business of farming given the current policy environment.

Agriculture export producers are constrained by the high taxes on jet-fuel, restrictions on airline and forex repatriations. And although banks and exporters are allowed to retain forex in their account, they are usually later asked to specify the intended use. The mechanism for the Forex has not eliminated the usual bureaucracy. Due to high taxes on jet fuel, Kenya is losing her overseas markets for the horticultural produce to her neighbours. Airplanes are flying over our border to Tanzania. It should be noted that we have a big number of women who are involved in business of producing and exporting out flowers. What we do not seem to understand is that once these markets are lost, it is extremely difficult to get them back. In a report "Horticulture sector faces threat" by Dr. Kangethe Gitu and Mr. Ephants Waruigi, planners in the Ministry of Planning and National Development which appeared in *The Standard* newspaper of February 15th, 1993 pages II-III it is pointed out that the major constraint facing the continued growth of the sector is the unavailability of cargo space due to high jet fuel prices. The report notes that the removal of tariffs and value added tax (VAT) levied on 50% of the air freight charges in 1991 is not likely to have an immediate impact since the airlines would like to be assured that the removal of the tariffs and

the VAT were permanent to warrant in investment decisions.

Lack of quality seeds is another major constraint in the agriculture sector. Lack of competition in the seed business and the restrictions on the importation of seeds has resulted in lower productivity. Farmers are complaining about poor quality of seeds (tomatoes, french peas etc). There is a threat for Kenya to lose her standing market for French beans due to poor quality of produce caused by poor quality of seeds. This threat has a far reaching implication since horticulture sub sector ranks third to coffee and tea in agricultural exports and employs about 1.8 million people more than the two cash crops.

Another example of a policy constraint is in the area of maize production. Maize farmers are paying heavily for the inputs (fertilizer, transportation, herbicides, etc). The official price of maize Kshs 600 cannot recover inputs cost. At the same time the farmer is restricted from competing for better prices from traders. Movement controls have made it costly for the traders to pay the farmers better prices. On the other hand, the NCPB does not pay in time, and with an inflation rate of nearly 40% while interest rates are at 23% (note NCPB does not pay interest on delayed payment). The result is that the producers and consumers are paying heavily for goods (Mwale 1993).

The above examples are illustrative of the several policies which are affecting the agricultural productivity (trade policy, the forex policy, the interest rate policy, NCPB price policy, liberalised input markets, and taxes policies). These are the policies which the new leadership in Ministries of Finance, Agriculture and Energy should put as a top priority. Women researchers can assist in providing data analysis showing statistically how these policies are impacting on women producers, traders and the economy as a whole.

ii) Infrastructure

On February 8th, the Minister of Agriculture was quoted in the press complaining of the losses resulting from bad roads to the tea area in Kisii-Nyamira. The estimated cost of the losses is Kshs 100 million (US \$ 2 million) for the tea alone in 1992 for Kisii-Nyamira area. If other crops were included and the cost of time lost and the cost of repair of vehicles, one realises the enormous cost of poor roads to the Kenyan agriculture. If the Kisii-Nyamira case could be expanded to the whole country we would be talking of billions that are lost due to poor roads network. Some people have estimated the damage caused by poor roads to be about 1/3 of the total revenue from agriculture. Major roads in the country, including large and vital ones are in an appalling state. The Nairobi Mombasa Road which is the most important in the country for our

economy is falling apart with large sections very badly potholed and almost impassable. The Nairobi-Kisumu, Eldoret and Naivasha have deteriorated terribly over the last few months and some roads in the industrial area of Nairobi are not consistent with the name.

Other necessary infrastructure to support the agriculture sector are: irrigation schemes which are a gone case (Bura and Ahero have collapsed), milk and horticultural coolers do not function well, cattle dips, boreholes and wells are not in existence. In summary, infrastructure investment built in the past three decades and which is considered necessary for agricultural development is in poor condition and will hamper productivity even if the policies are made right. Investment in the infrastructural subsector should be a top priority agenda for the 1990s and beyond. Studies to show linkages between productivity-infrastructure - markets should be carried out. Evaluations showing the impact of rural access roads to women producers and traders were done during the 1980s- these evaluations and studies should be updated, analyzed and their implications to the welfare of women documented.

iii) Institutional Weakness

Institutions which existed to serve the sector have become more politicized and inefficient (AFC, KCC, KGGCU, KPCU) just to name a few. Only as recently as in February 15th, 1993 there was a story in the Daily Nation stating that "KPCU may stop milling of coffee due to cashflow problems". One wonders as to how many of these parastatals which used to be efficiently run will have the same story told in the not too long distant future. The ADC farms which were a model for the Kenyan agriculture are in bad shape. The tea and coffee industry which was once a model in the developing world is in trouble. The lending of Kshs 300 million to non coffee growers by the KPCU and other debts incurred by similar institutions is another very sad story. In general, the sector had deteriorated and it will cost a lot of money and energy to pull it back to its past glory.

iv) Technology Development and Transfer

Since the evolution of the high breeds developed during the 1960s and 1970s, The research system in the country has not come up with any tangible new technologies. The 1980s and 1990s have been a wasted period in terms of technology development. This has resulted in low yields due to repeated use of genetics material. Crop management has been cited as a major factor in increased productivity. Government budgets to support agricultural research have been tremendously reduced instead of being increased. Investments in agricultural research and extension systems are currently seen as crucial to the success of the new agriculture - led

growth strategies of development. A central objective is to redress the inequities arising from the transfer of technology which has proved inappropriate to the needs of many small scale farmers of whom the majority are women.

v) Women's Access to Agricultural Education and Training

The inherent bias against women in the Kenya's present system of formal education has also been reflected in the university education over the years. Egerton University which until recently occupied middle ground in Kenya's system of agricultural training - runs two programmes of training in agriculture: a three year diploma program and a three year degree program. The Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Nairobi awards the B.Sc and M.Sc degrees in various fields of Agriculture. The graduates of these institutions are employed by MOA and KARI.

At Egerton University, the percentage of female graduates from diploma programmes grew from 14% in 1971 to 25% in 1986. From 1986 onwards women comprised between 24% and 26% of the student body.

The enrolment of women peaked in 1985 at 28% then dropped to 24% in 1986, women made up 26% of the student body (Mullei 1991)

At the Faculty of Agriculture, Nairobi University, male graduates in B.Sc in Agriculture constituted 95% of the total. Indeed, by 1976, of the 175 graduates only 15 of them were females - who consisted of only 9% total. Though the proportion of women trained in agriculture has shown a remarkable improvement since 1977, men continue to dominate the training within the college. To date, out of the 1,243 B.Sc. graduates that the college has trained since it was started, only 280 of them are women - constituting 23% of the total. (Bahemuka, 1990).

Even when other degree courses are included, the above general trend does not seem to change. In general, the proportion of female graduates in all the course for any given year ranges from 19% (for 1983) to 27% (for 1987). From 1983-1989, out of the 951 graduates that the college had trained in various fields of Agriculture, there were only 222 women graduates - who constituted only 23% of the total. (Bahemuka, 1990).

As has been argued earlier, the low proportion of women trained in Agriculture at the University level depends on the biased distribution of student (by sex) in the lower levels of our educational system.

The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) is the major institution in Kenya in-charge of agricultural research. KARI has 6200 employees (scientists and support staff) out of whom 1,320 (22%) are women. Of these employees, only 116 are scientists while the rest are support staff. Male scientists number 484. Of the women scientists, 43 have M.Sc and 5 have PhD while for men, 174 have M.Sc and 25 PhD. Since 1987 KARI has embarked on a training program to upgrade its staff. Based on the available data, KARI has tried to give equal chances to both sexes. However, through experience, the Institute has found out that the traditional roles of women as mothers at times interfere with their advanced training. Since most of the post graduate training is done abroad, some women are unable to take such offers due to their commitments at home.

The inability of women graduates to reach policy and decision making levels of the government infrastructure has important implications for the country's development as a whole and for the status of women. Available data in the Kenya's Ministry of Agriculture which employs about 75 per cent of women extension workers at the certificate level (technician level) had only 8 at the graduate level (senior agricultural officers).

Women provide 70 per cent of all agricultural labour in Kenya. They maintain substantial roles in the production of commercial crops as well as food for domestic consumption and sale. Because of the key role women play in agriculture, females ought to have great access to educational opportunities and leadership positions in diverse agricultural fields. Women as extension agents have better established communication links and rapport; and more sensitive to situation of women farmers, have a more holistic approach to farmers and their needs and will influence the system in addressing such needs and in formulating suitable packages to recommend to the farmers.

National statistics show that women's employment in the formal sector is quite low. Women are very active in small scale trade of food commodities and other household products. Studies by the Government of Kenya's Ministry of Transport and Communications showed that over 90 percent of sellers in areas markets are women. Frequently, however, they are excluded from access to make formal and larger scale marketing channels. Of the small percentage employed, few hold managerial positions. In addition, very few hold agriculturally related positions. This situation is due in part of women's unequal access to education and lack of encouragement to enter agriculture as a field of study.

C. Proposed Strategies to Overcome Identified Constraints

Preamble

The following suggestions would work, only if there is a will in our culture/society to act on women's plan and/or to make things happen. The real issue for me is "what is it that will make men hear, listen and then act? What can we do as women to make men listen and act? They have ears but they cannot hear!

D. Long Term Objectives/Actions

Policy Level

1. Policy changes should include legislation, and regulations to ensure the inclusion, involvement, participation, and productivity of women professional and producers. In the long term Kenya needs a legislation which is committed to gender issues in all the development plans/strategies. Such Act/legislation would require that all development programs be administered so as to give particular attention to those programs, projects and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economies thus improving their status and assisting the total development efforts. This stipulation could have two main objectives. The first objective would be to raise the status of women in society vis-a-vis that of men. This objective is concerned with gender equity. The second objective is to increase economic growth of facilitating the participation of women in development efforts. This objective would be concerned with economic growth and productivity. The two objectives go in hand, in so far as a country cannot achieve full productivity if women are excluded from or marginalised in the production process.

Action: Parliamentarians, Women Organisations

2. Agricultural policies should be studied, analyzed and debated before they are made. Women organisations should carry out policy studies to determine how they impact on farmers. Policy briefs should be prepared for policy makers.

Action: Universities, women organisations

E. Short Term Objectives/Actions

1. Deregulate air freight charges for horticultural products, reduce jet fuel prices, encourage cargo charter airfreight to Nairobi by providing economic incentives.

2. Eliminate movement controls to provide incentives to maize producers and traders

Action: Ministries of Finance and Agriculture

3. Focus on the development of high quality seeds. Address appropriate and extension strategies which will, among other things, take into account special problems of women at the farm level.

Action: Ministry of Agriculture: KARI

4. Investment in the infrastructure sub sector and the pre cooling facilities should be a top priority for the new leadership in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Action: Ministries of Agriculture and Public Works

5. Organise export markets in the smallholder sector. Organise women own cooperative to export agricultural input, and to assist women in the marketing of their produce.

Action: Women businesses and exporters

6. Factors influencing the Choice of Agriculture as a major:

- provide information to females in primary and secondary schools and their parents to inform them about job opportunities in agriculture
- insure that girls have the opportunity to take science courses in secondary schools
- continue to monitor agriculture enrolment by gender, especially the degree program;
- develop a fact sheet on the jobs in agriculture
- provide information on the availability of scholarships and loans for advanced study
- access women to overseas training

Action: Parents, universities, donors

7. Gender balance in appointment for Role Model

For women to rise to influential positions, men leaders need to be convinced to consider the importance of gender balance in appointments. The aim should be to have many women in decision making levels in the agriculture sector. There are not enough women at leadership positions to act as role models for young

future women professionals.

Action: Ministry of Agriculture, Universities, KARI

In conclusion - women have a great deal to offer in the development of Kenya. Kenya women's potential is just beginning to be tapped - thanks to the efforts of people like yourselves. There is however a long way to go. We have made a start but much remains to be done. The challenge of giving women the full and proper role in agriculture development as well as in other sectors of our economy is with all of us. I challenge you to develop full potential of that force -Kenya's women agriculturalists.

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Women, Health and Development

DR FLORENCE MANGUYU

Introduction

Since the International Year of the Woman 1975, and the UN Decade for Women that followed, women's status in society has received increased attention. The significance of women's health and socio-economic wellbeing and the roles that women play in society, have been recognised as pivotal links in sustainable development.

Despite the development gains of the 1960s and 1970s, the number of women and children living in extremely adverse conditions has increased. Feminization of poverty continues. The challenge, is finding the best means to integrate women fully and effectively in the development process. Approaches to women's concerns will need to shift from the sidelines of development to a concerted initiative to bring women into the mainstream.

We cannot speak of economic development without human development, and human development cannot be achieved without women's involvement. Women need to be alive and healthy to play their full part in the development process. No country can afford to do without the human potential inherent in women.

The conventional focus on women in development, unfortunately suggests that women are merely agents and objects in the development process, rather than beneficiaries and active participants as well. As a result, the African woman has been treated as a variable in the development process and projects. Although women have now been recognised as being central to production in Africa, they and the issues that concern them as well as their perceptions are at the periphery in development planning and execution. We must therefore shift our focus from women in development to *women's development*. Efforts must be made to involve women in health and development planning. In other words, we must be sensitive to gender dimensions in planning.

All across the world, millions of women and girls go through their entire life without ever having enjoyed a state of good health. This situation is prevalent in the developing countries and is almost the norm in Africa. Women in Africa have continued to suffer and die needlessly despite the awareness already created on women's health.

The Primary Health Care (PHC) initiative launched at Alma Ata in 1978, was called by the World Health Organisation (WHO), "the most optimistic statement of purpose ever made by the world community." PHC emphasises a new approach to health care that stresses equity, promotive and preventive health. "Health for All by the year 2000", with PHC as its centrepiece, has held a great promise for women. But the Year 2000 - that imposing figure - is only seven years away and it appears that to achieve "Health for All" by that time, will require a miracle in Africa particularly for women. A little progress has been made, in that women are now able to stand up and speak out on issues that affect their lives, their families and communities. Networks of women groups and non-government organisations, have been formed so we can now share women's concerns and learn from each other. We now know for instance, that women do not need to suffer and die as is the case since the world has the knowledge and the technology to improve the health of women and to prevent these deaths.

Over the last decade, a decline in health spending per person has been documented in the majority of African nations. The incidence of low birth weights which is a sensitive indicator of the well being of women, has increased in some countries. The internal and inter-country armed conflicts that have characterised the last decade have been devastating for women and children. Although available figures show that the proportion of malnourished people in the developing countries has declined, the absolute number of persons so affected has actually risen due to these conflicts and the increase in population. This is also true in other social spheres such as illiteracy, unemployment, people without clean water and safe sanitation. In all these situations, the most affected are the poor and the environmental degradation, have resulted in massive population displacements both internally and across national borders. The above issues may seem obvious and not worth of repetition, but anyone who has worked long enough on women's issues knows that what seems obvious to some, may not be seen as important.

Ov view

Apart from the general health needs, women have special needs specific to them as women and related to their role in child

bearing. Besides being health consumers in their own right, women provide most of the health care in the world. This they do through their daily chores of providing food, (including breast feeding), water, fuel and the love and care for children and other members of the family, including the sick and aged. In fact the best health worker the world can have is a well informed woman. Regrettably health planners have not given women's special health needs the priority required. Women have thus had to bear a disproportionate share of unmet health needs.

The disparities in health status between sexes are critical indicators of inequity in society. What therefore is the current status of women's health in Africa? In attempting to answer this question, one is confronted by the almost universal lack of accurate data. We know that many women suffer and die needlessly each day in Africa. We know what they die of and have a pretty good idea on when they are likely to die, but the exact magnitude of the problem is not well defined. Inaccurate data is obtained from studies conducted in big health institutions leaving out the majority of women who live, suffer and die in rural areas. The available figures are, certainly, under-estimates because registration of birth and deaths is not universal and medical audits are never contemplated even in big hospital set-ups.

Health statistics are often not desegregated by gender, this area of health management has not been seen as a priority and as such, not much energy or resource has been put into it. The situation is showing some improvement and good research protocols now demand that women and girls are no longer under-represented as they have been, for example in studies based on hospital records, which are poorly kept in any case. Most women live in rural areas and their lives and all about them revolve around the household. Research based on household sampling may therefore reveal quite a different picture on welfare of women and their health seeking behaviour. But even in the household, social cultural factors and taboos may make women voiceless because women are often not the family spokesperson or even their own for that matter. It can be very frustrating at times, when during a household survey, a woman fearing that what she says might reflect poorly on her family, answers with "I don't know" response to the majority of questions.

Life Expectancy

Women have an inherent biological advantage over men which makes their life expectancy five to seven percent longer than that of men. This difference is less in the developing countries averaging two to three percent. This biological advantage is often negated by the discriminatory treatment towards girls and women by the

risks associated with child bearing. Life expectancy is expected to rise in developing countries both for men and women. In the least developed countries, it is 49 years for men and 52 for women while in the rest of the developing countries the figures are 62 and 65. In the developed countries the figures are 70 and 77.

This gap may narrow, in both developing and developed countries, as women adopt health threatening behaviour such as smoking and heavy alcohol consumption. In Africa the gains in life expectancy, however, mask many inequalities in people's choices to live long, healthy and happy lives. All too often, lives are cut short in their prime and from causes that are avoidable, this is most evident in maternal mortality.

Special Health Needs of Women

a) Safe Motherhood and Maternal Health

The world Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 500,000 women die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth (maternal death). For every maternal death, there are 15 more women who suffer chronic ill health also related to pregnancy and childbirth (maternal morbidity). About 99 percent of the maternal deaths occur in developing countries. The causes of maternal deaths and morbidity are well known and the world has the technology and knowledge to prevent them.

Most of the data on maternal mortality and morbidity available are based on hospital admissions and do not reflect the real situation in the country, because about 75 to 80 per cent of births occur at home and are unassisted or assisted by untrained non-health workers. The reporting of the outcome of pregnancies (births, deaths, abortions, morbidity) both for the mother and baby, would help the country develop the true picture of the situation.

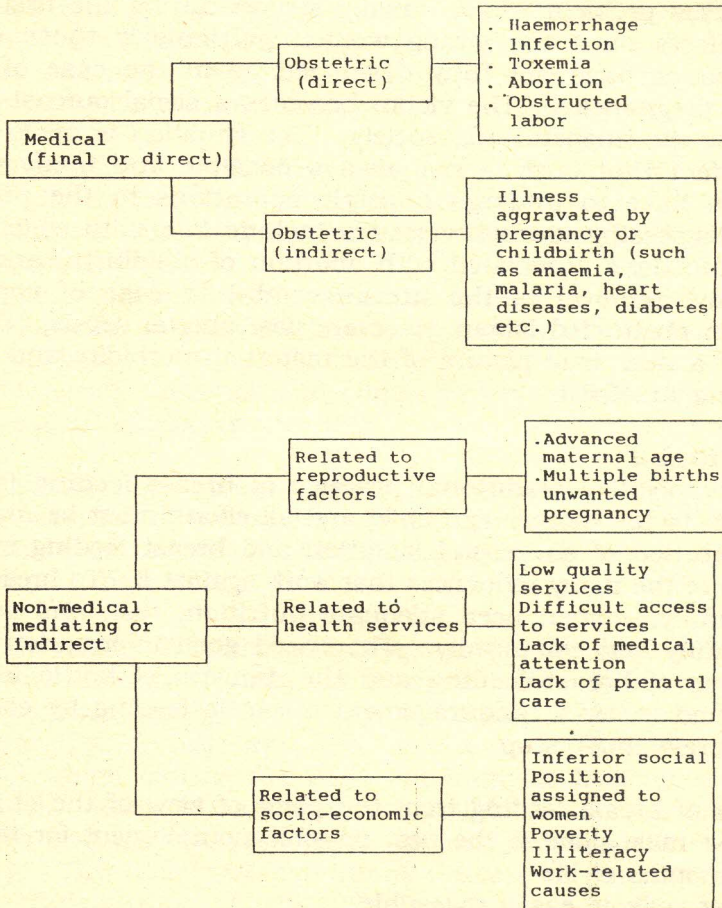
Causes of Maternal Deaths and Morbidity

Maternal deaths may be due to direct causes as complications of pregnancy and delivery and/or from indirect causes. Direct causes account for 50 to 85 per cent of deaths and the five most important causes are, haemorrhage, obstructed labour, sepsis, eclampsia and abortions. Anaemia, which is very common in women and children, is usually aggravated by pregnancy and its complication, such as haemorrhage.

Indirect causes of death are due to chronic and acute medical conditions such as anaemia, diabetes, heart diseases, malaria and other infections.

The African woman has attained one of the highest birth rates

CAUSES OF MATERNAL MORTALITY



experienced anywhere in the world with a total fertility of as high as 8 in some countries. This high fertility among women whose health is already comprised results in equally high rates of mortality and generally higher in rural than in urban populations. For example, in the Coast Province of Kenya where the overall hospital based maternal mortality rate is 221 per 100,000 live births, it is 164 for Mombasa, but 305 for the rest of the province and 542 in the case of Kwale District. Several studies have demonstrated that a lot of the pregnancies which end up with mortalities are unplanned. It is not surprising therefore that abortion has been shown to be a most important cause of maternal mortality.

One of the most distressing issues of reproductive morbidity is the development of urinary incontinence (vesico-vaginal fistula) sometimes associated with faecal incontinence (recto-vaginal fistula). This problem which usually strikes during the first child birth affects most the young women particularly those whose pelvic bones have not fully developed as in the case of early teenage pregnancies. The victim becomes a social outcast abandoned by the husband and society. The situation is made worse by the fact that cure is not always possible and many of the sufferers have to undergo multiple operations in the process. Other distressing morbidity issues include infertility which may follow infections associated with abortion of childbirth, and hysterectomy (removal of the uterus-womb-) in case of ruptured uterus in obstructed labour or severe post abortal sepsis. Studies to show a near true picture of the maternal morbidity and injury is lacking in Africa.

b) Lactation

The very positive traditional practice of breast feeding is both beneficial to the mother and child and all efforts must be made for the protection of successful lactation and breast feeding even in the face of the many influences that work against it. To breast feed successfully, women need adequate nutrition, rest, and support from family and community. They need good information about the value of breast feeding and the dangers of bottle feeding. Direct and indirect encouragement of bottle feeding by commercial interest must stop.

Benefits of breast feeding from the point of view of the child:

- breast milk alone is the best possible nourishment for the first 4-6 months of life
- breast milk is easily digestible
- breast milk protects baby against diarrhoea, respiratory infections, allergies and other illnesses
- breast milk is always clean and pure and at the right temperature
- it is emotionally satisfying

- there is no danger from unclean bottles or contaminated water in the formula

Benefits of breast feeding from the mother's point of view include:

- it gives the best possible chance for child survival and good health
- it is emotionally satisfying
- it helps reproductive organs return to normal after childbirth
- it helps delay the return of ovulation and therefore helps in the spacing of births, although breast feeding is not a reliable means of birth spacing.
- it is economical

Several African countries have adopted the international code for breast milk substitutes and formulae. In these countries, feeding bottles are totally discouraged in maternity units both in government and private hospitals. There are many factors that influence mothers who do not breastfeed:

- Migration to urban areas - mothers in urban areas are less likely to breast feed than in the rural areas
- Mothers working away from their homes with no possibility for nursing breaks
- The erroneous belief that bottle feeding is modern and that formula is somehow "more scientific" and therefore better for the baby
- Maternity hospitals and clinics which do not encourage "rooming in" of mother and baby.

Regrettably, the failure of medical profession to train the staff in the benefits of breastfeeding and the techniques to help new mothers get started, have also significantly influenced the tendency of mothers not to breastfeed.

c) Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and AIDS

All the sexually transmitted diseases have serious repercussions on women's health. More than 20 disease agents are known to be transmitted sexually including the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which causes the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Many STDs cause irreversible damage to the fallopian tubes and may be responsible for ectopic pregnancies and infertility. The ulcerative conditions associated with STDs facilitate the transmission of HIV. Pregnancy, in a woman who is HIV positive may enhance the development of AIDS in the woman. As many as thirty to fifty per cent of HIV positive mothers will transmit the infection to their babies either during pregnancy or at birth. It is important that AIDS does not make people forget the

EMPOWERING KENYAN WOMEN

seriousness of other STDs particularly gonorrhoea, syphilis and chlamydia which are more prevalent. Many female victims of these diseases may not be aware of their afflictions as these diseases may cause no symptoms or signs in women, and may be first diagnosed while investigating their long term complications such as infertility.

d) Cancer

i) Cancer of the Uterine Cervix

The leading cancer in women in developing countries is that of the uterine cervix. Uterine cancer in developing countries occurs at a much younger age and is largely diagnosed when chances for effective treatment are low. It is therefore a significant cause of death in women at a time when their social and economic contribution is most needed. Even more significant is the fact that cancer of the cervix is preventable and can be cured if detected early.

Cancer of the cervix is directly related to an increased rate of STDs, and early sexuality made worse by multiple sexual partners. Screening for early changes that later develop into cancer can be easily and inexpensively carried out using cervical cytology. This has been shown to be effective in reducing the incidence of invasive cancer. Introduction of cancer screening will lead to a saving of lives and money needed for the very expensive treatment of advanced disease. If screening services are introduced into MCH and FP clinics a wide population can be reached. Nurses and paramedical personnel working in peripheral clinics can be trained to take adequate specimens thus making the services cost effective.

ii) Breast Cancer

Advanced cancer of the breast can be prevented by the routine palpation of the breast either by the woman herself or during medical checkups. Most early tumours cause lumps in the breast and if such lumps are detected during self examination, a doctor should be consulted. Fortunately the majority of such lumps turn out to be benign. Besides breast palpation, mammography at certain ages is useful.

e) Menopause

The life expectancy of the African woman is rising (currently approaching 60 years) and with this the accompanying menopausal problems. These problems are as a result of the cessation of ovarian function and reduced circulating levels of oestrogen. The organs of reproduction are the ones mainly affected but also the bones especially of the spine and long bones. In the past,

problems associated with menopause have been thought not to be prominent in Africans. This could be because few women lived long enough to appreciate the problems and because of lack of access to medical facilities which are in any case overwhelmed by the more dramatic infectious diseases. Besides, women after their reproductive periods are over, are not regarded as good consumers of health facilities. Health system planners, need to be aware of the needs and potential contributions of older women.

f) Mental health of Women

It is a myth that mental illness is rare in the developing world, and that life in such countries is simple but sane, lacking the mental and emotional stresses of complex modern societies. In Kenya, for instance, 25 per cent of all patients seeking treatment for different ailments have some degree of mental illness. More women than men suffer from mental illness but far more men are getting treatment.

Depression in women is quite common due to the different socio-cultural expectations placed on the women from birth. The management of a mentally ill person does not depend on the patient alone, but on the family and the community. The stigma associated with mental illness in African countries makes the management even more difficult. A psychologically and mentally healthy mother is better able to take care of her children and family. Although poverty is not a chief cause of mental illness it does tend to aggravate it.

g) Women with Disabilities

To be female and disabled in our society is a double tragedy. This is even worse, when the disabilities are combined with being poor, illiterate, malnourished and living in rural area. There are no data to show how many people have disabilities and the type and degree of the disabilities that they have. The rough estimate is that one person in every ten has significant changes the way a woman sees herself and is seen by others. Several of the causes of disabilities are preventable. These include, home and road accidents, nutritional deficiencies, preventable childhood diseases such as poliomyelitis and measles.

The effects of disability in women is varied. For women in traditional societies disability may lead to complete isolation or abandonment. It is often assumed that a disabled male should learn some skill or profession that will enable him to earn a living. The same assumption is not made about women with disabilities. While vocational rehabilitation programmes are generally male oriented, employment programmes for disabled people often have a male bias. Disabled women are frequently victims of rape and

violence. Many disabled women find the attitude of society harder to deal with and more disabling than that of the disability itself. Disability for them is not so much a physical condition as a psychosocial crisis. To prevent disability and reduce its effects in the lives of women will require that society moves on all fronts to improve the total status of women.

Factors Influencing Women's Health and Development

Health and the wellbeing of people is affected by many factors all of them interrelated. While it is important to discuss these factors separately e.g. mortality, education, social and economic factors etc an intersectoral approach is always needed when action programmes are to be developed. This intersectoral approach has often been lacking when addressing the health of women as all too often the tendency has been to focus on specific periods of woman's life e.g. during pregnancy, delivery or when she becomes ill enough to go to hospital. But the health status of woman at any one given time is the net result of her experience cumulated over her life however young or old she may be.

i) Economic Factors

In the world today, one billion people live in extreme poverty. Of the poor, women are the poorest. Further, the group between the "better off poor" and the "extremely poor" is widening. The influence poverty has on health cannot be overemphasized. Poverty, more specifically, household poverty, restricts choice in very many areas that affect basic good health. Being poor means:

- not having enough food
- not having adequate shelter, water and sanitation
- not being able to get health services when required even when health services are free
- not being able to send children to school or attend adult education classes
- living day by day just for survival and not being able to plan for the future
- losing one's human dignity because of the conditions one has to live in - physical, emotional and social

Poverty will affect the health of everyone not just women, but women are hit hardest. When women are unable to adequately provide for their children and family, the welfare of the community is affected.

ii) Status of women

This operates more subtly, and the consequences may not be easy to measure. The status of women in turn affects many other aspects of her life and the way she responds to them and the

decisions she makes or does not make in her life. Women's roles are normally divided into reproductive and productive roles. One wonders why men's roles are not similarly defined. In societies where large families are the norm, women gain higher status the more children they have even when this means permanent ill health and premature death.

iii) Education

So much has been said and written about the benefits of education for women, that one wonders why the world tolerates a situation where less than 100 percent of its women and girls are in school. Equipping women with education means that half the battle is won. Education means that one is better able to understand health messages. Women who have been educated tend to marry later and have fewer children. They are more likely to seek medical care including prenatal and postnatal care and are more likely to have their children attend child welfare clinics for immunization and growth monitoring. Infant mortality rates are lower in the educated than in the illiterate. The opportunities for a paid job are more, thus increasing the women's earning capacity. Clearly, education opens more doors for a woman resulting in a better health for her and her children. Education has been the starting point for women's advancement in many different fields. Unfortunately for some, little formal education has reinforced their subservient role in society where they have been taught that girls are not good at science and technical subjects and they do not need education for a career since they will get married anyway.

iv) Environmental Factors

Awareness on the deteriorating environment has been created over the last few years in many ways, for some, we have become aware through reading, watching videos and attending conferences on the subject including the Earth Summit in Brazil last June. For the rural women in Africa, awareness has come in more concrete terms through personal daily experiences such as having to go farther to fetch water or firewood. Awareness has come through tilling a less fertile land and therefore a smaller harvest. The poor women in the rural areas are the experts in environment by right and practice for they live through the effects everyday and contribute to its deterioration as they struggle to survive. They cannot survive in the present without destroying their own future. Also significant to health, is the smaller home environment e.g. overcrowding household fires and smoke, pesticides and fertilizers in farms and fields, disinfectants and other household goods including consumer goods e.g. skin creams, alcohol and tobacco etc.

v) Water and Sanitation

In community health an estimated 80 percent of all sickness and disease can be attributed to unsafe water and inadequate sanitation. Similarly too, the best three elements for good health are adequate food, clean water and a safe sanitation. Water is so important in a woman's life that one woman once said, "I spend so much time and energy looking for water that if I find anyone wasting it washing their hands, I'll kill them!"

vi) Food and Nutrition

In theory and fact, the world can and does produce enough food to feed its people but malnutrition still affects more than 500 million people. Between 20 and 45 per cent of women of the child bearing age in developing countries do not eat the WHO recommended minimum of 2,250 calories a day let along the extra 280 calories a day during pregnancy. About a third of all children in Africa are undernourished. There are many reasons which contribute to the prevailing situation but the underlying factor is poverty i.e. the inability to earn enough to secure the adequate, and the right kinds of food. Nutritional deficiencies are common in Africa particularly in the very young. Anaemia, especially nutritional anaemia affects nearly two thirds of pregnant women and about half of all women in this region. Besides diet, there are other causes of anaemia e.g. repeated pregnancies in close succession, malaria and intestinal infestations etc. Anaemia leads to easy fatigue and lower resistance to disease thus increasing the health risks for the pregnant woman and her child.

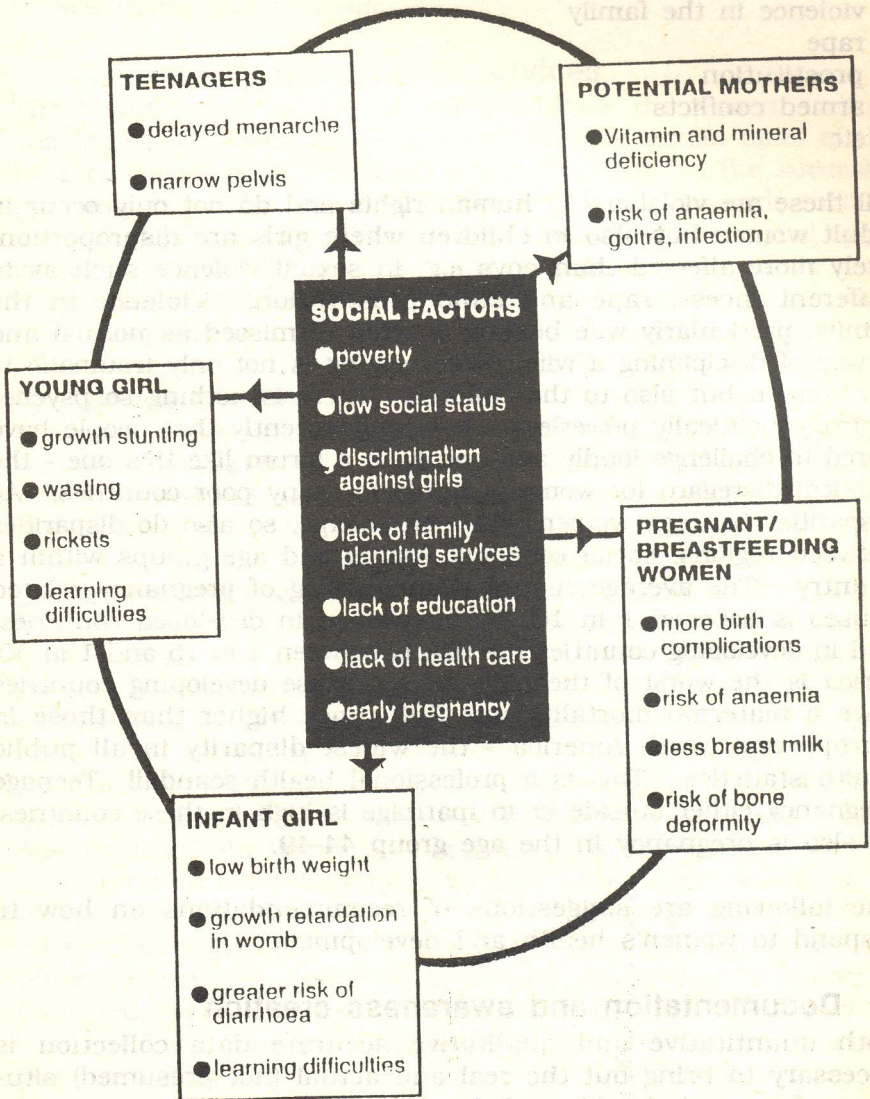
vii) Lifestyle

An individual's lifestyle and behaviour also plays a major part in determining the health state of that individual. When talking about life-style there is a tendency to think that there is a series of options and choices. It is true indeed that some people do make choices in the way they live, eat, dress and work etc. Such people have options and they can theoretically choose to live in a way that will affect their lives positively or negatively. For many women in Africa, however, there are no choices. A woman's fate is determined by others at birth or even before birth in these days of advanced technology where sex can be determined before birth. Her predetermined fate affects her schooling, diet, age at marriage and even the number of children she is expected to bear, and her social status.

viii) Customs and Traditions

Many harmful traditional practices are passed on as "cultural values" and therefore not to be discussed, changed or challenged. It is surprising how we hide behind "culture" and allow traditions such as female genital mutilations and early betrothals and

Vicious circle of malnutrition in women



Source: Population Information Program, 1988

marriages to continue at this time and age. Women have to unite and fight against these ills and injuries to themselves perpetrated under the guise of culture.

ix) Violence and Exploitation

Violence and exploitation on account of gender may take many different forms:

- violence in the family
- rape
- prostitution
- armed conflicts
- etc

All these are violations of human rights and do not only occur in adult women but also in children where girls are disproportionately more affected than boys e.g. in sexual violence such as in different incest, rape and child prostitution. Violence in the family, particularly wife beating is often dismissed as normal and a way of disciplining a wife. Wife beating is not only traumatic to the women but also to the children. There is nothing so psychologically politically powerless. It is only recently that people have dared to challenge loudly and openly in a forum like this one - the political disregard for women's needs in many poor countries. As disparities between women and men emerge, so also do disparities between regions, social economic status and age groups within a country. The average risk of women dying of pregnancy related causes is between 1 in 10,000 for women in developed countries, and in developing countries the risk is between 1 in 15 and 1 in 50. Africa is the worst of the high risks. These developing countries have a maternal mortality rate 200 times higher than those in Europe and North America - the widest disparity in all public health statistics. This is a professional health scandal! Teenage pregnancy either outside or in marriage is high in these countries, so also is pregnancy in the age group 44-49.

The following are suggestions of recommendations on how to respond to women's health and development

1) Documentation and awareness creation

Both quantitative and qualitative accurate data collection is necessary to bring out the real and actual (not presumed) situation of women's health and development status. Data must be desegregated into gender at different ages and in different countries, and in different localities in the same country. Data so collected must be availed to *all* people so as to create awareness into the existing status of women.

In particular health development planners must be made aware of data so collected in order to plan responsively. Women too need to be aware of such data in order to be awake to their own health.

2) Attention to Root Causes

Attention to Root Causes of maternal mortality and morbidity - both medical and non medical causes. As we call for Safe Motherhood, we must issue a similar call for the eradication of what makes motherhood unsafe.

3) Provision of Health care services

The health needs of women must address the women in total. Looking at the health needs of women at only certain times of their lives can have negative impact on women and on the success of programmes. Achieving total health for women demands their full participation in defining their health needs and developing appropriate policies. The level of women's health is one of the major factors in determining their inability to contribute to a nation's development.

4) Quality of Care

The poor quality of the health care provided, is in many cases the reasons why health care is not sought even where free and accessible. It does not need much education for a woman to recognise the poor quality of health care provision. Quality care is not just a greeting, a smile, or saying kind words to patients, but rather feeling profound respect and recognition of women's rights. Quality should be associated with giving sufficient information for the women to be able to understand the issue at hand. Health care services should be more humane than technological, they should be identified as elements of, not obstacles to progress in medicine and health. Illiteracy is not ignorance and women and men who have not had a chance to go to school are capable of understanding health messages and deserve to be treated with the human dignity due to them. In family planning methods of contraception seem to depend on discriminatory attitudes of policies makers and providers not on personal choice and preference. Quality care is absent when one is forced or coerced into using a particular family planning method. Assumption is often made that the poor, uneducated rural women are unable to manage or make decisions that suit them and providing these women with limited contraceptive choices is really doing them a favour. In population programmes women have been "targeted" as objects of policies and services rather than subjects of them. Birth spacing is not synonymous to population control, which is laden with ideological assumptions about who should have access to birth control, how a family is defined and when sex is legitimate.

5. Political commitment and community participation

Change of policies in order to prioritise women's health issues require political commitment and reallocation of resources. Resources, besides financial and material, include time allocation, decision making, access to knowledge and information, social support and so on. In Africa, the responsibilities placed on women far outweigh their resources. Women must be consulted on programmes that concern their welfare - for wherever women are, whatever they are doing, they need to be in decision making positions

6. Social Status of Women

Any programme that wishes to address the needs of women must aim at uplifting their social status. Women form more than half of the world's population and no development can be attained by developing only half of that population. In other words, any programme or project that neglects, forgets, discriminates or otherwise ignores half of the population (whatever that half may be) is bound not to succeed. If we were to make but just one recommendation in order to respond to women's health and development - I would suggest we address the Social Status of Women.

Conclusion

There is now enough convincing evidence to show that providing people with information, skills and opportunities and enlarging their choices so as to raise their level of achievements, is the best investment governments can make. Ensuring that these investments reach all women, especially the poor women, will be the most important victory of our time and will guarantee human development that is sustainable and long term.

Development programmes must address the needs of women as individuals not merely as mothers and variables of change in production and reproduction. Africa should not continue to sacrifice half of its population, in the name of structural adjustment programmes. Women have had to struggle hardest and do more with less so that others may have more. They have had to work harder so that others may profit. Development and health planners in governments, NGOs as well as donors agencies and financiers cannot continue to be indifferent to what has been the silent world of women. Women must be involved as equal and active partners in the development process.

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Empowering Women Through Education: Forward Looking Strategies

DR. EDDAH W. GACHUKIA

1. The Context

There is general agreement to-day on the benefits of education in raising the overall quality of life and for bringing about egalitarian change. Increasingly, the education of women and girls is recognised as one of the most reliable tools for development with particular reference to health and nutrition, environmental management and general productivity. Available research suggests that the sustained impact of girls' primary education on economic growth is higher than that for boys. This difference is associated with the multiple nature of women's roles and varied contribution in their reproductivity and productive roles. Among the clear linkages established between the education of women and girls and desirable change include:

- (a) Improved family care, health and nutrition which are to-day identified as dependable outcomes of the education of a mother. Colclough (1990) highlights female literacy as a powerful factor in achieving significant rates of child survival, growth and development.
- (b) High levels of literacy and education of women provide for higher aspirations for their children and higher levels of readiness of such children for learning.
- (c) A close correlation has been established between the education of only four years of education (Colclough:1990).
- (d) Female education is also associated with increased avenues and opportunities for income earning by women in both formal and informal employment. Education is seen as a possible tool for opening up opportunities that would otherwise have been closed to them and for increasing women's chances of advancement in employment.
- (e) In Kenya, as in other countries of Africa where women constitute the majority farmers contributing in large measure to food production and management, the education of women is

seen as leading to increased adoption of new scientific methods and use of appropriate, more efficient technological developments.

- (f) The World Development Report (1992) stresses the link between female education and positive impact on the environment. This is in recognition of women as the principal managers of natural resources. Relevant education therefore empowers them for productive use of such resources.
- (g) Perhaps more relevant to the election process we have tried to address throughout last year (1992), the education of women is seen important to the well-being of democratising societies which largely depends on the levels of intelligent understanding and awareness, and self-confidence of individual citizens. Besides being a source of information and knowledge, education provides for, alternatives in problems solving from which an individual can deliberately choose. Good education also empowers the individual decision-making and questions of what others say or do and for asserting one's own views and will. In this way the individual becomes more aware of her rights and may assert them within an enabling environment.

An informed and literate individual is less likely to follow blindly what others say or do. A broad base of information and knowledge promotes the adaptability of the individual to new ideas and make independent decisions is an essential component of democracy.

Literacy which is an essential component of education makes the individual self-reliant in the acquisition of information and knowledge. It is a liberating tool since there is no end to knowledge. Illiteracy is associated with conservatism and lack of flexibility to change and to adaptation of new ideas. Education and literacy on the other hand, bring about exposure to unlimited sources of information and continual knowledge towards a certain desired end.

For our purpose, that desired end is full exercise by women and men of their democratic rights. It is also the creation of an enabling environment within which all members are regardless of gender, ethnic group or geographical region, can enjoy social justice and equal rights, participating fully in the running of their affairs and utilising their potential with increased efficiency in the country's development.

2. The Problems

Kenya has made tremendous progress in the provision of education for her citizens. National enrolment at primary level was 95 per cent in 1990 while the average adult literacy rate was 60 per

cent. We are however cautioned to interpret these national statistics with care because they conceal serious disparities based on regional, economic and gender lines. This is because while nearly 100 per cent access at primary level has been achieved in such districts as Nyeri, Kakamega and Kirinyaga, access in Wajir and some other nomadic districts is estimated at under 30 percent. The education of girls is particularly hampered by higher rates of drop out and low completion rates. Current estimates indicate that only one girl in three enrolled in class one at the primary school level actually completes primary education. (UNICEF:1992).

Other indicators point to participation including higher absenteeism among girls and poor performance relative to boys. Girls who drop out of school prematurely and especially during pre-literacy stage join their illiterate sisters who have never enrolled in school and in this way perpetuate the vicious cycle of illiteracy.

The Kenya Literacy Survey (1988) carried out in thirty rural districts revealed worrying disparities by gender in the rate of illiteracy, i.e. 38 percent for males and 62 per cent for females. Although women form the majority in literacy for all in correcting gender imbalances in education.

In acknowledging serious disparities by gender throughout the educational system, we wish to acknowledge the combined efforts of both government, NGOs, communities, parents and donor agencies to increase access and quality particularly with reference to girls. Such intention is clearly expressed in recent initiatives under Kenya's programme of Action for Children in the 1990s and Basic Education for All. In both, Kenyan goals are set e.g. universal primary education and reduction of illiteracy by 50% by the year 2000. The prevailing economic situation is, however, already hindering the achievement of these goals. The introduction of cost sharing has particularly hit poor parents who will now be forced to choose which children to send to school with predictable outcome in favour of boys.

In this paper, we propose the longer-term goal of boosting participation of women and girls and in educational programmes. In the short-term, we are more concerned not with mere participation but more with increasing the impact of education on the lives of women and girls especially in egalitarian change. This is because recent events have convinced us that it is not enough for women to participate, it is the quality of participation that will make a difference in terms of the benefits women and girls derive from development. In this sense education has to have a purpose and not be an end in itself. It has to be empowering and be deliberately tailored in such a way that *it can empower women and girls for*

quality participation in the creation of a democratic society. This is because although women continue to participate in the electoral process in larger numbers than men, it is not clearly evident that the majority deliberately use their vote to their own advantage.

Although women's organisations and other NGOs undertook education, awareness, and gender sensitization campaigns aimed at increasing quality participation of women and men both as candidates and as voters, and in advocating for gender equity in political participation and decision -making, their efforts were limited by time, resources and other logistical constraints. *The time is nevertheless ripe for taking stock and going back to the drawing board in an effort to improve this performance for greater impact the next time around.* Towards this end, education has an important role. Yet women cannot participate in educational programmes until identified hindrances are eliminated. These include their low social status, and the low valuation attached to their education, their heavy workload and multiple responsibilities which make time available to them a constraint etc, etc.

Among the strategies identified are empowerment in numbers through increasing outreach, advocacy and creation of an enabling environment, deliberate elimination of disempowering content and methodologies and the inclusion of empowering context, approaches and materials. How to mobilise for a multi-media and intersectoral *harambee* effort, pooling the resources of all agencies, groups and individuals, is a major challenge for the next five years. Above all, gender sensitization of women leaders and other individuals who are in a position to undertake this education or are in key positions and therefore likely to influence the status quo.

3. Promoting Awareness

The overall objective of this initiative is to provide for increased and more effective participation of girls and women in education both in the mainstream and outside of the mainstream, and their true empowerment in this process. More specifically, this initiative should:

- (a) Provide reliable data on participation and especially non-participation, and identify the causes of low and non participation.
- (b) Analyze available data on women's needs for knowledge or lack of it and prepare materials/packages for action and advocacy.
- (c) undertake advocacy and lobby activities to promote increased resources and elimination of identified negative factors.
- (d) Create new knowledge and data and engage in material produc-

tion to influence the quality of education and especially in corporation of empowering images and portray of gender roles and relationships.

- (e) Promote complementary programmes that facilitate the increased female participation in educational programmes.
- (F) Mobilise resources for female education including organisational and human resources.
- (g) Provide for sustained monitoring of female participation and of the content of education e.g. incorporation of essential components like political and legal literacy.
- (h) support women and girls for more effective participation and achievement in education.

4. Strategies

(a) *Outreach to the grassroots:*

Among the major criticism floating on the women's agenda during the pre-election period relate to the fact that elite women talked to themselves at numerous *seminars and workshops held in big hotels in Nairobi*; that little contact was established at the grassroots level where the message belonged. There were of course efforts to get to the grassroots that were greatly hindered by time, deliberate obstruction and lack of resources. The sessions organised in Nairobi were also varied in terms of objectives and target groups e.g. those aimed at:

1. consensus building,
2. recruiting allies (e.g. the media),
3. empowering candidates,
4. educating in a practical manner election monitors and campaign managers etc.

These and other objectives remain valid and had their own value in facilitating the election of six out of eighteen women to Parliament and numerous civic candidates. Nevertheless the greatest women's agenda remains that of reaching out to the rural areas, to the grassroots and monitoring the needs and participation of girls and women in educational programmes. Women and girls are not homogeneous, their needs and context can vary by region, ethnic group, social and religious orientation, besides level of education.

Although the ministries in charge of education and literacy currently provide data on enrolment within the formal system, there is little follow-up or analysis of such data for feeding back into planning and programming. Organisations such as AAWORD, IDS, BEREC etc. have the necessary capacity for providing for reliable data collection and analysis and organising for dissemination of such data in formats that are actionable. Specific individu-

als in these institutions should be identified to undertake participatory research that will pin-point the needs and preferences of women in political participation.

A number of women's organisations have contact with grassroots and can undertake monitoring e.g. of girls who drop-out due to forced marriages and use existing machinery and rehabilitation of such girls. Isolated cases of such rehabilitation and re-entry are encouraging.

Who will play the role of watch-dog is the issue. How to empower communities, especially women's groups at the grassroots level for this role is a priority issue.

Activities aimed at public mobilization, using a multi-media approach - religious organisations, chiefs' *baraza*, women's activities, agricultural demonstrations, activities of co-operatives, adult literacy programmes, the print, electronic and folk media etc. provide successful outreach. Here again, women have access to all these media and fora and should improve their usage for the promotion of female education and strengthen advocacy and monitoring.

(b) The need for increased literacy

As indicated earlier, education and especially literacy is a vital component for self-reliance in the search for knowledge and for decision-making. Of all the media accessible to women during the pre-election period, printed material became the next viable. This was in view of inaccessibility of radio which is the difficulties of communication by road. Television is of course out of reach for the majority of Kenyans. The printed word and word of mouth therefore become the most popular and practical means of education and awareness creation. While the situation, especially in the use of radio, might improve in the long-term, *printed materials remain practical and easier to produce*. However, over 50 per cent of women in Kenya are illiterate. Printed materials may have no value for the illiterate because they depend on others to read for them. In addition, illiterate people depend on the literate not only to read and write for them, but *also to mark their ballot papers*. There are numerous reports of women and other illiterate voters whose ballot papers were wrongly marked or deliberately spoilt because they could not handle them on their own.

One sees therefore the need to aim for significant reduction of illiteracy among Kenyans and women in particular as an *important goal in the democratization process*. The women's agenda in post-election Kenya must therefore include achievement of functional literacy as an important component of the democratization process.

ess. Such inclusion reinforces and complements the female literacy and Basic Education goals started in the National Plan of Action for *the implementation of the convention of the Rights of the Child in Kenya 1991 and the National Plan of Action for the achievement of Basic Education for All in Kenya respectively*. Both aim at reducing illiteracy by 50 percent by the year 2000. With the concert efforts and involvement of the women of Kenya, however, it is possible to exceed by far such achievement and within a shorter period.

Already, the factors that hinder women's participation in education and literacy have been generally identified. It now requires the efforts of NGOs and particularly research organisations to refine and analyze existing data and to make it actionable. We need to know:

(i) Which girls are not in school and why. As watch-dogs, it is our business to know which children are missing out on school especially girls. It is our business to be informed about participation rates and girls performance. In Kenya the national enrolment rates is said to be 94 per cent for girls and 95 per cent for boys. Closer analysis by region and gender is however very disappointing, with reference to pastoralist and nomadic populations. While the enrolment of girls exceeds that of boys, girls' enrolment is of great concern in Wajir, Marsabit, Turkana, and Mandera. Even more worrying is the low rates of survival of girls within the educational system.

(ii) Which girls have dropped out of school especially in the lower classes because these will continue the vicious cycle of illiteracy. They need to be followed up and either rehabilitated within the educational system or guided into existing education and training programmes for out-of-school youth. There are very few of these programmes that we targeted for girls.

(iii) Which illiterate women are not enrolled in literacy classes and why? How can they be supported so that they enrol and survive until functional literacy has been enrolled?

(iv) To what extent are literacy programmes so gender sensitive as to be tailored to the work-patterns, timing and interests of the target group, especially women. Because of their multiple roles, the convenience of venue and timing considerations are important if women are expected to participate.

(v) What environmental factors and tuition factors hinder women's participation in literacy classes? i.e. who are the teachers and other participants. Gender mix is a hindrance in some areas and

so is gender sensitivity of such teachers.

(vi) What literacy and post-literacy materials are available and how gender sensitive are they i.e. what is the content of literacy and post-literacy materials? How sensitive are they to the empowerment process.

(c) Education and Socialization:

Not all education is empowering. In Kenya, it is now very clear that tradition education empowered women for sufficient management of family and domestic affairs but socialized them away from public life and leadership roles. Traditional oral literature continues to bombard learners with stereotype images of women and men. Women are in particular depicted as foolish, unwise, dependent, lacking in leadership qualities, weak, lacking integrity, untrustworthy etc. Myths, legends, narratives, proverbs, "wise sayings" etc. continue to demean the roles and contribution of women. Little has been done to change the *status quo* even in cases where such literature is a gross misrepresentation of reality. The mass media have gone further in this process and continue to portray popular images that disadvantage women.

Dr. Anna Obura has made available to us an excellent analysis of the educational materials being used in the education of our children. School text-books continue the vicious cycle described above in the portrayal of gender role and relationships with women always depicted as playing unimportant, subservient roles.

The paucity of women in leadership roles, their timid nature so evident during elections, their willingness to be led by men, their evident failure to question the *status quo* and support other women must be first and foremost rooted in their socialization and education. A major challenge facing Kenya women and during the post-election period then is how to de-socialize women and girls towards leadership and acceptance of leadership as an essential role of women. We can do so by:

(i) Continuing the search initiated by Anna Obura of identifying negative/undesirable images of gender roles and relationship in educational materials, i.e. data creation.

(ii) Undertaking gender sensitization of teachers and their educational personnel for increased sensitivity to the needs of girls and their empowerment.

(iii) Especially ensuring the gender sensitivity of all new educational materials (including literacy materials) and evaluation of old ones for necessary action during revision. Dr. Obura's criteria for

such evaluation are strongly recommended.

(iv) Deliberate creation of gender sensitive literature for both adults and children ensuring empowering portrayal of gender roles and relationships. Such sensitization of creative writers and publishers is necessary.

(v) Invading the mass media as an educational and socialization tool so that it becomes an effective tool for the empowerment of women in its portrayal of gender roles and relationship.

(vi) Complication of profiles of women in leadership positions in all fields and sectors, i.e. the depiction of women as achievers, thinkers, managers etc and adaptation (including translation) of such institutions, adult education classes and for reading and viewing by the general public. Role models are extremely important for paying the way for other women especially young girls and for creating motivation for achievement.

(vii) There is need to emphasize the independent status of women and conversely to de-emphasize the dependence of women on their male relatives and colleagues. While such process has to be complemented by legal provisions that view women and girls in their own perception of themselves and other women as dependants. In this process, women's contribution in all sectors and levels needs to be continually highlighted in concrete terms in order to raise the perception of women and their roles.

(viii) As the first socializers of children, women need to understand the urgent need for changing their socialization of girls and boys for more mutually benefitting future roles.

(ix) Identification of women in key positions who are likely to have opportunities unavailable to other women for appropriate interventions and articulation of gender concerns. These are women leaders in all sectors and at all levels -MPs, councillors, department heads, organizational leaders and women of DDCs, religious bodies etc. Frequently, we make the gross mistake of assuming that because we are women, we are gender sensitive or we know all about women's concerns. Women need gender sensitization even more than men do. Gender sensitization individuals with analytic tools so that they become self-reliant in issues identification.

(d) Networking

Networking involves first and foremost the identification of allies and potential collaborators. The process of taking stock demands that we identify what is our total strength. Only *harambee* effort will lead us to the realization of stated goals. Who is doing what,

where, with whom, or for whom, with what capacities, what coverage, what support they need, who can they collaborate with for increased impact etc. are some of the issues we need to settle as a matter of urgency. How do we prioritize the needs and goals so that we are able to measure achievement? How do we pool our resources?

We need to strengthen networks - especially with grassroots.

- (i) Determine the purpose of networking - building consensus - grassroots women are already ahead of us in this process.
- (ii) Identify organizations, institutions, individuals with grassroots connections. Determine their capacity/strength and needs.
- (iii) Explore alternatives for bringing about true/credible interaction between women of different social, economic, professional, political and religious backgrounds.
- (iv) Establish focal points etc.

Institutional support is essential in order to strengthen those organizations whose mandate is likely to impact more on the education of women and girls. Strengthening begins with building linkages with others in the field. FEMNET has been engaged in gender sensitization and the training of trainers. In the last two years, over 2000 people have been trained comprising of leaders, planners, development workers, creative writers and media personnel. FEMNET is ready to collaborate with all organizations. One envisages a situation where for example MYWO hopefully combines her literacy and awareness campaigns with those of World Vision, Action Aid, YWCA, religious organizations, Kenya Association of Adult Education and Literacy etc. who are also involved at the grassroots level, besides Government of Kenya agencies and who might have technical skills and financial resources MYWO does not have. Each agency has its own strength and such strength should be used in collaboration with others' capacities to ensure that all illiterate and semi-illiterate women are reached. The YWCA mandate addresses youth and younger women; religious organizations cater for all groups including children (day care); Action Aid and World Vision have extensive programmes in ASAL areas that address issues relating to provision of water (hence alleviation of women's workload and saving them time), and bursary schemes for poor children including provision of school uniform. The idea is common approach by all agencies working with communities at the grassroots level, which would be oriented towards community empowerment.

Network can also be enhanced through the use of print and audio-visual materials. Our media organizations and professional bodies already have materials that are ready for sharing. New materials

should be innovative so as to meet the empowerment criteria. *The translation of appropriate materials into local languages is expensive but absolutely essential for effective networking at the grass-roots level.*

(e) Support to girls and women

Having identified the causes of non-enrolment and poor participation/achievement, it is important to initiate concrete measure for supporting them.

(i) Financial and Material Support

Women's groups in the rural areas are well known for raising funds for fees, uniforms, textbooks etc. for children of their members who otherwise may have dropped out of school. The women's Bureau has well over 30,000 such groups registered. Several organizations and donors are already providing support to such groups.

MYWO and religious groups particularly suited for monitoring and mobilising support for girls at the primary school level. The Kenya Association of University Women has for a long time been associated with support of bright poor girls who would have missed out at the secondary school level. In these days increased cost-sharing, bursary, schemes for the poor will be greatly needed. Other groups should get involved in this exercise drawing the attention of government, NGOs, donor and the private sector to such cases. A co-ordinated effort is called for.

(ii) Psychological and Moral Support

Women are best suited for understanding the hazards that prevent girls and women from effective participation. At all levels of the educational system, guidance and counselling is needed to motivate girls towards improved performance. The provision of role models both in real life or in literature is one way of building motivation. The quest for increased appointment of women into managerial and leadership positions especially in the field of education should persist:

The Kenya Federation of Business and Professional Women have been associated with running career guidance and counselling workshops for secondary school students. The Young Careers Group also undertakes visits to schools and these have been highly motivating for young girls. They are however very limited in terms of coverage. Yet we have so many career women in Kenya today it should be possible to excite them for undertaking such an important role.

The democratization of the women's movement should provide for

wider participation by women in the political process of the country.

(f) Mobilization of Resources

There seems to be a feeling among donors that the issue of a female education is sensitive and that it should not be highlighted by them, rather any pressure should emanate from within. In the past the government seemed satisfied with its own efforts and the progress achieved in accessing education to girls and women. Recent efforts however, aimed at providing reliable data, desegregated by gender, some of which were undertaken by the government itself, (CBS and individual ministries have revealed serious disparities that cannot any longer be ignored. As a result, the government itself has undertaken affirmative action aimed at the gradual elimination of disparities. Such affirmative action is evident in the ratio of expenditure on science equipment for girls' secondary schools. The recent lowering of the cut-off point for women students this academic year is another short-term measure.

Such positive action by the government and the universities needs to be complemented by donors and NGOs and the private sector. The Donors to African Education - DAE Group - on Female Education is one that is looking for good, innovative, replicable ideas. The forum for African Women Educationalist, a group of African Ministers of Education and Vice-Chancellors and the African Academy of Sciences, among other organizations with innovative projects for impacting on the education are already soliciting for proposals from gender sensitive researchers and organizations with innovative projects for impacting on the education of women and girls. We also need to generate internal resources as Kenyans are willing to contribute to education.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the efforts of NGOs recognize the ultimate responsibility of the government in providing education for all citizens. In Kenya, however, the tremendous strides made in education were facilitated by citizens efforts through the *harambee* movement. Citizen participation is needed now more than ever before. For the education of women and girls in particular, the disparities so clearly evident will only be eliminated through affirmative action by all those involved in the process of education and women's development. The attention of women in their organizations and as individuals is drawn to the need for close monitoring of the education system especially during this period of SAPs and increased cost sharing which is already hindering the correction of gender imbalances. What happens in terms of accessing education to girls, children of the poor both in rural and urban households (squatters and slum dwellers), the handicapped and the displaced

(street children, internal and external refugees) - among all these groups, women and girls are the greatest losers. That is the responsibility we are called upon to undertake. We are also called upon to ensure both quantitative and qualitative improvements.

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APPENDIX I

Women and the Environment

WANGARI MAATHAI

- We all have to play our part in order to protect our environment.
- Wangari talked about the Greenbelt Movement, details of which she referred the participants to a pamphlet which she circulated
- She however spelt out the main objective of the movement: To raise the consciousness of our people to the level that they can be moved to act - to do the right thing for the environment.
- People should not do things because they are forced, but because it is the only logical thing to do. A person's consciousness drives her or him to do all that she or he is capable of doing.
- Pointing out that the environment has been destroyed because of greed and other evils, she said we need to heal it before it is completely destroyed.
- There is need for creating awareness. If there was awareness of the need to protect the environment - all would take part, at least by making this an issue to be raised before those in authority.
- Disasters such as the recent train crash is as a result of our negligence of protecting our environment.
- Farming, cannot be supported because of soil erosion - This can be prevented by humans.

Suggestions

- Raise awareness so that our people can understand the entire process of protecting our environment
- Protect the percentage that we still have - plant a tree
- Empower people so that they know what is good for them. This will raise their consciousness to the level where they listen to their good "god" in them so that they do what they think is right.

The group started the discussion by each member identifying her concern with the environment. The following were the major concerns:

1. tree planting, and no cutting of any
2. pollution in general, garbage
3. protection of open urban areas
4. clean drinking water
5. soil conservation
6. what the community is doing as concerns the environment

EMPOWERING KENYAN WOMEN

7. what strategies to empower women to keep their environment clean
8. environment and health
9. relationship between women and the environment
10. integrated approach to the whole environment
11. correlation between the environment and other areas of development

Strategies

The group will base its strategy on *Women's Action Agenda 21* which was constructed by women worldwide in the November 1991 World Women's Congress for a healthy planet. The document is attached

APPENDIX II

Women's Action Agenda 21

PREAMBLE : TOWARD A HEALTHY PLANET

People everywhere are frightened by mounting evidence of the deterioration of Earth's lifegiving systems. Human beings are part of the web of life, not above its laws. We have a special responsibility to respect all of the Earth community, including our air, water, soil and natural resources, our fauna and flora, and the atmosphere that shelters us.

We, women of many nations, cultures and creeds, of different colours and classes, have come together to voice our concern for the health of our living planet and all its interdependent life forms.

We have listened to each other speak of the ills of our societies, our families and children, our sacred nature. We have been inspired by the courage and commitment of our sisters throughout the world who protect and repair our natural heritage.

As caring women, we speak on behalf of those who could not be with us, the millions of women who experienced daily the violence of environmental degradation, poverty and exploitation of their work and bodies. As long as Nature and women are abused by a so-called "free market" ideology and wrong concepts of "economic growth", there can be no environmental security. Rainforest dwellers, island peoples and inhabitants of fragile arid zones are threatened with displacement and dispossession due to human disruption and pollution of vulnerable ecosystem. In a world that condones such practises, there lies little hope for long-term survival or peace among peoples.

We are deeply troubled by the increasing quality of life disparities between inhabitants of industrialised nations and those in so called "developing" nations and by the growing numbers of poor within the rich countries. In all instances, women, children, minorities, and the indigenous people are the chief victims.

We are outraged by the inequities among children the world over, with millions denied food, shelter, health care, education and opportunities for a full and productive life. We condemn the racism and disrespect of diversity on which this inequity feeds.

We equate lack of political and individual will among world leaders with a lack of basic morality and spiritual values and an absence of responsibility towards future generations.

We will no longer tolerate the enormous role played by military establishment and industries in making the 20th century the bloodiest and most violent in all of human history. Militarism is impoverishing and maiming both the Earth and humanity. It is urgent that resources currently consumed by the military be redirected to meet the needs of people and our planet.

We believe that a healthy and sustainable environment is contingent upon world peace, respect for human rights, participatory democracy, the self determination of peoples, respect for indigenous people and their lands, cultures, and traditions, and the protection of all species.

We believe that basic human rights include access to clean air and water, food, shelter, health, education, personal liberty, and freedom of information.

We come together to pledge our commitment to the empowerment of women, the central and powerful force in the search of equity between them and among the peoples of the Earth and for a balance between them and the life support systems that sustain us all.

Women are a powerful force for change. In the past two decades, thousands of new women's groups have been organised in every region of the world, ranging from community based groups to international networks. Everywhere, women are catalysts and initiators of environmental activism. Yet policy makers continue to ignore the centrality of women's roles and needs as they make Fate of Earth decisions.

We demand our right, as half the world's population, to bring our perspectives, values, skills and experiences into policy making, on an equal basis with men, not only at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992 but on into the 21st century.

We pledge to undertake our Action Agenda 21 on behalf of ourselves, our families, and future generations. We appeal to all women and men to join in this call for profound and immediate transformation in human values and activities.

ACTIONS

Democratic Rights, Diversity and Solidarity

Recognising that Nature is not limited by national sovereignty or boundaries and that environmental degradation is global,
Observing the worldwide social and environmental consequences of development based solely on economic growth measurements,
Recognising the creative diversity of our culture, class, race, and the eco systems and political structures within which we live,
Believing that the world's indigenous peoples have long been denied basic human rights or acknowledgement of their contributions to world culture,
Recognising the interconnectedness of women, the environment, economic policies, development strategies, social justice and the survival of all species,
We will promote the principles of this Action Agenda and encourage people everywhere to use political and economic means to make its recommendations a reality

We will seek to protect all those who uphold these principles from forces that would silence their voices or stand in the way of environmental and social justice.

We will demand full and equal participation for women and men in public policy analyses, at senior levels in government and non-government organisations, in decision-making, implementation, administration and funding at international, national and community levels.

We recommend that the democracy strengthening principle observed in some nations - that no more than 60% or no less than 40% of either sex be included in government bodies - should be applied universally to all public policy making groups. The guide to women's empowerment is achieving a critical mass of

representation in decision-making not mere tokenism. Gender balance must be observed in the national delegations to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); in the permanent missions of UN member states; in the UN Secretariat's professional staff; in the World court, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and UN specialised agencies and programs.

We demand that all governments comply with requirements of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and that they ratify and implement the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the UN Convention on Human Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We will organise groups to publicise, coordinate and assist women's action in issuing report cards on progress toward a healthy community, village, region or nation.

Code of Environmental Ethics and Accountability

Recognising the current moral and ethical double standards that are applied to environment and development activities, women's participation and social justice throughout the world,

Recognising that, in contrast, the women's global environmental model is cooperative rather than competitive, values women's roles, work, and participation, and acknowledge the responsibility that accompanies power and is owed to future generations,

Believing that a universal code of ethics and international laws should be based on equity, respect for humans and other species, and biologic and cultural diversity,

Distressed that policy planners and political representatives use barren instruments (systems of national accounts) on which to make all major economic and environmental decisions,

Insisting that national boundaries should not impede the development of global concepts of the environmental and responsibility on a global level,

We will work for adoption of an International Code of Environmental Conduct by business and industry, governments, UN agencies and non governmental organisations that includes precautionary and preventive approaches, considering the true value of the environment and the effect on women when planning activities that may affect the Earth,

We support new principles of international environmental law, including: strict liability for environmental harms (the polluter pays) the intrinsic value of biodiversity, and non adversarial dispute resolution mechanisms to include the public in decision making about compensation for victims.

We call for non governmental monitoring systems that will hold institutions, corporations, states, organisations, and individuals accountable for their actions, products, and policies.

We demand time used studies of women's work (house-hold, cottage industries, subsistence agriculture, child care, elder care, volunteer community service).

We demand that qualitative indicators be used for environmental and natural resource measurements.

We urge governments to agree to timetable for implementation of full cost accounting that includes environmental and social costs - and assigns full value to women's labour - in national accounting systems and in calculation of

We require governments, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and lending agencies to establish environmental audits with which every funding proposal must comply before implementation of loans.

Women, Militarism and the Environment

Knowing that military expenditure, the international arms, trade and armed conflict deprive billions of human beings of basic security and well being,

Realising the disastrous environmental impact of all military activity, including research, development, production of weaponry, testing, manoeuvres, presence of military bases, disposal of toxic materials, transport, and resource use,

Aware that research on and use of military weaponry, including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, contribute significantly to environmental degradation, genetic mutation, illness and death,

Recognising that militarism often leads to the occupation of lands and the denial of human and environmental rights,

We call on UNCED to include in its Agenda 21 and final documents statements on impact of militarism on the environment, development, and humanity and to support measures that will transfer the world's vast military resources to positive, life enforcing programs.

We urge an immediate 50% reduction in military spending, with the money saved reallocated to socially useful and environmentally friendly purposes.

We demand creation of gender balanced national civilian commissions that would open to public scrutiny all military activities, expenditures, and research and development.

We demand that nuclear weapons be dismantled, that nuclear testing cease immediately and a global nuclear test ban treaty be negotiated, signed, and enforced.

We demand the cessation of space activities and supersonic flights that release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and threaten the ozone layer.

We demand that more decisive actions be taken to ban international traffic in nuclear, chemical, biological, and poison gas weapons or constituents of such weapons. Mechanisms should be developed for enforcement of this ban, whether against governments, businesses, or individuals.

We support a UN commission report that recommended re-assigning military related satellites and other information gathering systems to monitor and share global environmental data.

We demand that armies be used as environmental protection corps to monitor and repair damage to natural systems, including clean up of war zones, military bases and times of natural and man made disasters.

We condemn governments that turn their armies against their citizens, causing millions of individuals to become refugees and displaced persons.

We will educate our daughters and sons to shun military service if it is in the service of governments that use military power to exploit the resources and people of other nations.

Foreign Debt and Trade

In full knowledge that the industrialised nations have been the net beneficiaries of exploitation of the abundant natural resources of poor nations,

Observing the disastrous social, environmental, and economic consequences of international lending practices and current terms of trade between industrialised and non industrialized nations,

Concerned about negative impact on the poor, especially women and children, of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Structural adjustment policies,

Appalled by the flow of capital from poor nations to the banking systems of rich nations, depriving them of funds for needed domestic, social, economic, health, and education programs,

Recognising the grievous consequences of this practice for poor families in the developing countries and for the natural resources upon which we all depend,

We demand immediate official foreign debt cancellation.

We will work for reduction of commercial debt via mechanisms equivalent to corporate bankruptcy law.

We will cease to do business with banks that refuse to reduce the total owed and/or the interest rate on the whole debt owed by each of the poor nations.

We will oppose those debt for nature exchanges (swaps) that are not subject to wide public debate and that threaten sovereignty and indigenous people's rights to land and self determination.

We will hold personally accountable corrupt officials, who borrow in the name of their people, for the social and environmental consequences for those loans and for personal misuse of such funds.

We call for the rejection of structural adjustments policies (SAPS) that shift the responsibilities of basic social services from governments to women without compensation or assistance.

We call for renegotiation of trade agreements to ensure an equitable relationship between the prices of raw materials and prices of manufactured goods.

We call for the dismantling of all unfair protective trade measures used by the industrialised nations.

We demand a total ban on the export of goods rejected for local consumption in or by the country or origin.

We suggest that historic audits of nation states (from 1945 onward) be conducted to determine the net beneficiaries of natural resources exploitation, as current assessment that would serve as the basis to cancel foreign debt.

Women, Poverty, Land Rights, Food Security and Credit

Recognising that while their living conditions deteriorate, women in many regions bear a major responsibility for domestic food production (Africa 80%, Asia 60%, Latin America 40%) as well as for protection of soils and other natural resources,

Noting that no one knows the realities of the over exploitation of the land more intimately than the women who till it, draw and carry its waters, use its trees for fuel, harvest forests for healing herbs and medicinal plants, and use their

We will campaign for the rights of urban populations not to be forcibly evicted from their homes and for their rights to use urban land for subsistence production of crops and livestock as well as small scale trade and production, without harassment and with support from governments and international agencies.

We urge UN member states to adopt and implement the UN conference on Settlements (habitat) Global Strategy for Shelter to the year 2000 by strengthening women's involvement in the human settlements delivery process. Central government planning and implementations must involve local government and communities in these decisions, with non-governmental organisations functioning as a bridge between the official male dominated policy making mechanism and the practical approach of local communities and women's groups.

We call for the transformation of development strategies and development cooperation agencies. In every new or already established aid-giving mechanism or program, policy that specifies involvement of women on an equal basis with men in determining the allocation of funds should be enforced.

We seek immediate enforcement of directives specifying that every funding proposal be examined for participation of women, including grassroots women, in design and management and for its impact on the economic, social, health and educational status of women as well as community level indigenous people.

We demand that, to compensate for 46 years of underfunding the needs of women and their families, half of international development resources should be reaching women through broad scale projects such as access to drinking water, upgrading technologies, and researching ways to reduce women's workloads.

Women's Rights, Population Policies and Health

Knowing that the major causes of environmental degradation are industrial and military pollutants, toxic waste and economic systems that exploit and misuse nature and people, we are outraged by suggestions that women's fertility rate (euphemistically called population pressures) are to blame,

Recognizing that this analysis, if unchallenged, lays the ground work for the re-emergence of top down, demographically driven population policies and programs that are deeply disrespectful of the basic human rights of women as guaranteed in the convention on the elimination of All Form of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),

Knowing that it is the number of people plus their consumption of resources plus their wastes that determine their environmental impact, we note that a person in the industrialized world has a far greater negative impact on the environment than a person living in a poor country,

Aware that the right to reproductive health and choice is a basic human right of all individuals, we point out that the World Fertility Survey estimates that there are 500 million couples who wish to plan their family size but have no access to the means to do so,

Fearful of the threat to women's lives by HIV pandemic and recognising that women's ability to protect themselves from AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and to determine when to have children is a prerequisite for women's health, self-determination, and empowerment.

We condemn any attempt to deprive women of reproductive freedom or the knowledge to exercise that freedom.

We demand women-centred, women-managed comprehensive reproductive health care and family planning, including the right to prenatal care, safe and

EMPOWERING KENYAN WOMEN

legal voluntary contraceptives and abortion, sex education, and information..

We urge governments, multilateral and donor agencies to increase investments in comprehensive reproductive health services and to include men as beneficiaries of family planning education and services. Family support services should include child care and parental leave.

We call on policy makers to recognise, that raising the economic, health and education, and social status of women are essential to ending environmental degradation.

We call for recognition of the existence of a global, environmentally introduced cancer epidemic and demand removal from the environment of carcinogenic substances, which have particularly adverse effects on women and children. Particular attention in medical research and treatment should be paid to women's cancers: breast, ovarian, cervical, uterine, and vaginal. Research and remedial action should also focus on the effects on health of toxic chemicals, nuclear wastes, radiation, pesticides and fertilizers.

We demand that all governments systematically alert their citizens to the danger of AIDS and provide them with the information on how to avoid contamination.

We ask the World Health Organisation, International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, national governments, public health groups, corporations and unions to increase efforts to eliminate environmental occupational hazards in factories, offices, and on the land.

Biodiversity and Biotechnology

Concerned by the deterioration of habitats and ecosystems that are home to the millions of species with which we share the Earth,

Realising the tragic loss of species upon which our interdependent ecosystems depend,

Recognising the treasure of plant and animal knowledge that is tended and passed on by the indigenous people of the world,

Knowing the attempt of commercial interests of the industrialised nations and multinationals to control the natural heritages of species in the nations of the South through patenting life forms and attempting to control gene banks,

Aware that genetically engineered organisms released into the environment pose a threat to natural biologic diversity,

We insist that the UNCED Convention on Biological Diversity address the risks of biotechnology as well as the conservation of species.

We are concerned about genetic engineering in agriculture and oppose the release of genetically manipulated organisms into the environment. Since research and development of genetic engineering in plants, bacteria and viruses, and animals is proceeding and in some cases products have been commercialised.

We call for immediate and direct regulation of research and development in biotechnology and ask that a citizens' board with independent science advisers be included in the review and approval process of all biotechnologies by governments.

We recommend that new biotechnologies be evaluated for whether or not they are appropriate and sustainable for humans and environment. This means the

approval process must include not only the examination of their efficacy, safety, and quality, but also an evaluation of their social and economic impacts on those who use and are affected by the technologies.

We demand that the testing and release of organisms be done only in the country of origin and that biotechnology products that are not yet approved or are restricted in the country of origin be prohibited from use or sale elsewhere.

We recommend that there be no patenting of life forms or life form technology, including non-regenerating seeds, to protect against the commercial exploitation of local farmers and the genetic resources of developing nations.

We will work for a ban on bovine growth hormone, for a boycott of dairy products with BGH and for labelling requirements in the interim.

We insist that information on the risks of biotechnology be made wisely available in clear lay person's language.

We recommend that every country and international development agency seek to reroute agriculture onto a sustainable path by supporting and educating farmers in organic and integrated pest management methods and by changing national and aid policies that subsidize chemical and genetic engineering based agriculture.

We will support indigenous people in their efforts to protect their natural environments. Aboriginal and indigenous people, and specifically women, must be recognized as providing vital wisdom and leadership in resisting the destruction of the Earth and its creatures, and in creating a new, life-affirming global reality.

We call for a redefinition of biology, one that gives priority to conservation biology and ecology and stops the trend in reductionist methods at the gene and molecular level, a trend that negates the primary of the organism and ecosystem.

Nuclear Power and Alternative Energy

Noting alarming increase in levels of radiation from man made sources in our air, water, soil and space,

Concerned at the rising death toll from nuclear power accidents, exposure to nuclear wastes and other radiation induced cancers and disease,

We urge that new nuclear research, development, production, and use be stopped, that uranium mining be halted, and that nuclear power production and use be phased out and replaced by environmental-friendly energy sources.

We deplore the environmental racism responsible for dumping, siting, or replacement of environmentally hazardous facilities in the communities of colour around the world, including those in North America.

We demand that export of radioactive and other toxic wastes to countries of the South and communities of colour be stopped and that the nations responsible for such wastes be responsible for cleaning them up.

We call for a ban on food irradiation and urge support for research into alternative medical diagnostic and healing methods that do not involve the use of radiation.

We propose that energy efficiency, conservation, and self renewing sources such as sun, wind, and water be implemented globally as an alternative to nuclear power and fossil fuels. Available technology for these alternatives should be

refined and implemented by this transition.

We call for promotion of mass transportation systems, including accommodations for bicycles, reducing reliance on fossil fuel cars, and development of more energy efficient motors vehicles.

We propose that a curriculum be developed and taught in every language in all schools throughout the world to educate and protect present and future generations from the risks of radiation exposure and contamination.

Science and Technology Transfer

Believing that science and technology should be at the service of the many rather than for the benefit of the few,

Observing that, on the contrary, they are used to "harness" nature, contributing, to the degradation of ecosystems for short-term profit,

Aware that a very small proportion of the world's research and development resources are devoted to meeting basic needs of the rural poor,

Witnessing the disempowerment of women through lack of access to appropriate and sustainable technology and the disregard for women's wealth of experimental knowledge,

Observing that all too often women have been the victims of the misuse of scientific discoveries and inappropriate technologies,

We urge that marriage of ethical values with scientific investigation and use, and the development of people friendly, non violent criteria for all technologies, including their appropriateness for both women and the environment.

We demand that all technology transfer be appropriate and sustainable, with special attention paid to longterm costs and benefits for people and the environment. Resources must be made available for research and development technologies appropriate for women.

We urge that developing nations, and particularly women, be provided with immediate access to appropriate technologies that lead to provision of safe water for drinking and farming; transport; renewable energy sources; sustainable agriculture practises; and basic health care, such as sanitation and vaccinations for children. Benign technology transfer should include public transportation and computer technology and training, with guarantees that computer data and other information technologies not be used to violate rights to privacy and security.

We will support an promote communications strategies for disseminating information on appropriate and inappropriate technologies to women worldwide. The flow of information should be South-South, as well as North-South and South-North.

We call for more education and training of women and girls in sciences and technology worldwide and emphasise the need for training women in the developing countries at college, and university levels.

We urge the UN, governments and non-governmental organisations to create rural and urban training centres of excellence, North and South, that will serve to disseminate environment-friendly technologies to women.

Women's Consumer Power

Recognising that women are powerful catalysts, as individuals and in groups, in creating a healthier planet for ourselves, our families, our communities, and

nations,

Believing that our spending choices should express concern for environmental protection,

Aware that the power of the consumer is decisive in industrial planning and production,

Believing that women can use their consumer power to enforce environmentally and socially friendly industrial development,

Noting that many products bought by women in industrialized nations are based on low wages and hazardous working conditions of women in poor countries and communities,

We pledge to act in solidarity with women around the world to change policies responsible for economic, social, and political inequities and restore our planet to health.

We will form and strengthen existing networks among women globally to facilitate the analysis of consumer goods, from the extraction of raw materials through production processes to use and disposal - to measure holistically the environmental, socio-economic, and health impacts of a product.

We will engage in campaigns supporting investment in environmentally sound productive activities and encourage initiatives to reduce fossil fuel energy use, overconsumption, and wastes.

We pledge to use women's enormous consumer power to boycott businesses and institutions that are not eco-conscious and to support and commend those that are.

We pledge to reduce paper consumption and to promote recycling - not just recycling used products but developing reusable products.

We will organise campaigns against siting sewage treatment plants and incinerators in poor urban communities and seek non polluting solid waste management planning and restrictions on mercury emission restrictions.

We will seek to reduce the use of cars and encourage the use of public transport systems, redesigning them to reduce energy consumption, and focus on safety and accessibility to those who experience difficulty in using mass transportation.

We will choose natural products, avoiding those based on animal testing or toxic chemicals, and seek safer food products.

We advocate development of retraining programs and creation of new socially useful job opportunities for those displaced by the transition to more eco-friendly societies.

Information and Education

Believing it is a basic human right to have access to unbiased information about the quality of the environment in which we live,

Recognizing the risk that the media may become dominated by forces which perpetuate a world view that ignores cultural diversity and integrity,

Believing that only through wide dissemination of information on environmental and developmental issues will we be able to confront the challenges of environmental decline,

EMPOWERING KENYAN WOMEN

Aware that information concerning the environmental and health impact of military and industrial by products is often classified as secret for national security or proprietary reasons,

We invite the media to join with us in promoting the principles of this Action Agenda.

We demand that the UN monitor all activities of governments that threaten the environment, including space and ocean probing, and make information about such activities known to the world community.

We will work to create and strengthen formal and informal information systems and exchanges that adhere to the principle of openness and inclusiveness, giving voice to the majority of citizens, of reporting on violations of human and environmental rights.

We recommend that all countries offer environmental education at the primary and secondary levels, including ecology and consumer education.

We will promote environmental ethics education in our school and in informal learning settings with the purpose of promoting harmony between all living systems and solidarity among peoples.

We strongly support the establishment of a non-governmental organisation whose mandate and cooperation on environmental emergencies and environmental rights would be similar to those of Amnesty International.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Realizing that there may be an attempt to create new institutions to manage the world's ecosystem based on the current "economic growth" model,

Believing that such institutions might not have as their primary objective the long term sustainability of the Earth's species and ecosystems,

We call instead for creation of a permanent gender balanced UN commission on Environment and Development (analogous to the UN Commission on Human Rights) to promote environmental awareness and to station ombudspersons in every region of the world, to receive and investigate NGO, group, and individual complaints about environmental hazards, maldevelopment, government, and private misuse of UN and international aid funds and violations of UN conventions, treaties, and international law. Its duties should include monitoring compliance and enforcing principles of an International Code of Environmental Conduct.

We call for improvement of prevailing staff gender ratios in the UN system, noting that only some 4% of policy making positions are currently held by women. Equitable gender representation must be of equal importance with equitable geographic representation until gender parity is achieved.

We urge governments to increase their contributions to and support of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which assists governments in environmental assessment, undertakes studies, training, and major environmental management tasks, and negotiates and facilitates international environmental law. Its budget should be increased, to triple its current \$40 million a year.

We recommend that UNEP expand its efforts to benefit from the knowledge and experience of female staff members, consultants and its Senior Women's Advisory Group by actively pursuing a policy of gender balance in policy making. It should require a women's focal point in every regional and outposted office of UNEP to provide information and funding and help empower women in environmental management.

We appeal to donor countries to increase their contribution to UNIFEM, the only multilateral fund established specifically to increase the flow of development resources to women in low income countries, so as to reach a level of \$ 150 million annually by the year 2000. These funds are essential if UNIFEM is to enhance its catalytic role in providing resource and empowerment to poor women.

We urge all UN agencies to increase their commitment to integrating women's perspectives at all levels and in all programs and policies.

We support the recommendations of a "swords into ploughshares" report by a UN study group on "Charting Potential Uses of Military Resources for Civilian Endeavours to Protect the Environment". It proposes developing mechanisms for transferring to environmental protection and development programs some of the world's vast military resources.

THE UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCED)

We pledge to lobby our national governments to include equal numbers of women, as well as representatives of indigenous peoples and grassroots organizations, in their delegations to UNCED Preparatory Committee meetings and to the June 1992 UN conference in Rio de Janeiro.

We will conduct briefings for UNCED participants and press them to incorporate our Women's Action Agenda 21 into UNCED's Earth Charter, Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and other UNCED documents.

We will distribute our Action Agenda widely to our governments, to nongovernmental organisations, to multilateral agencies, business and industrial leaders, and to the formal and informal networks we maintain.

We will make subsequent recommendations regarding governmental and non governmental contributions to the UNCED process, including implementation and monitoring of its decision.

We call on world leaders attending the 1992 Earth Summit to sign a Global Climate Change Convention (with industrialized countries making a minimum commitment to a 20% reduction of carbon dioxide by the year 2000 and a Convention on Biological Diversity). New agreements are also needed on the safeguarding of forests and the conservation of Antarctica.

We pledge to be present in large numbers at the Earth Summit and Global Forum in Rio de Janeiro. We remind the policy makers that the women of the world intend to participate in decisions made at UNCED and afterward about the fate of our Earth.

We submit these recommendations as a basic guide to our efforts to promote environmental and economic security now and on into the 21st century.

SPEECH BY MRS. MARGARET GITHINJI, PERMANENT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF A SEMINAR ON POST-ELECTION WOMEN'S AGENDA: FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGIES, FEBRUARY 20, 1993, MILIMANI HOTEL, NAIROBI AT 9.00 A.M.

Dr Maria Nzomo, Chairperson, National Committee on the Status of Women,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the honour bestowed upon me through the invitation to come and open this seminar. This seminar, I believe, is an appropriate forum for some serious discussion on the status of women in Kenya. It is also an opportunity to chart out a new course of action that will continue to involve women in the task of nation building. Those of you who are gathered here will be called upon to assist in clarifying what will be right priorities needed to consolidate the status of women in Kenya in the next five years.

Looking back at the time of our independence, the average Kenyan woman was very disadvantaged. The statistics speak for themselves. In the field of education, where the most dramatic change has taken place, women were disadvantaged by a very large margin. Today, we are at a parity level in the primary school enrolment. It is of course not yet good enough, but we who are here are the product of this rapid change.

The twin effects of increased women enrolment in our educational system was and has been a greater exposure of women to professions and employment opportunities. To appreciate these achievement, it is important to realise that this change has taken place within a changing society that still cling to age - old beliefs of what role women should play in public life. There is nothing more illustrative about these changes than the status of women in the civil service. Today a woman in any professional cadre in the civil service is accorded the same status as her male counterpart. This has not been easy for much of the public to understand given the traditional roles women are expected to perform.

At this juncture, I would like to dispel the notion that the government is insensitive and stubborn to change on the status of women. This notion has been generated, unfortunately, by rather confrontational attitude for those who demand their agenda be given a hearing without realising that we are made up of diverse groups with different agenda.

I would like to convey on behalf of women in the civil service our most sincere gratitude on the recent announcement by His Excellency the President that all women in the civil service are now eligible for house allowance. This gesture is a reaffirmation of the policy adopted by the government to improve the condition of women in the civil service and indeed, the whole country.

In recent times the government has come under heavy criticism that it has little interest in promoting the welfare of women. Some of these criticisms even require

the establishment of a Ministry of Women's Affairs. How such a ministry would advance the welfare of women remains a total mystery to me. I would like to caution the advocates of such ideas that by doing so we acknowledge and accept discrimination in our public as well as private lives. The other most obvious fact is that all development programmes currently undertaken by the government are aimed at improving the welfare of all Kenyan's women included. Asking for such a ministry will dilute, to a large extent, programmes that have had a beneficial role to women.

The appreciation of women being professionally competent is one key criterion that the civil service has come to accept in the promotion and recruitment of women in public sector. The efforts to improve the quality of service has meant greater emphasis being placed on training within the civic service and this has exposed more women to professional training locally and abroad. There is also a lot of dialogue within the service that is often not known to the public on the status of women. This dialogue has, I am happy to say, proved to be the driving force for change and improvement on the status of women in the civil service.

The status of women in the civil service has always demanded very bold initiatives. In comparative terms, we in Kenya have achieved a remarkable record in promoting women in positions of responsibilities. For instance, we have women in very senior positions in both the armed forces and police. These women have attained those positions of influence and power not because they are women but because they are competent enough to handle the responsibilities that their jobs demand.

It is rather sad that much of the progress made by the government to integrate women in our public life goes unreported. For instance, the foreign service is one branch of the civil service that had first appointments of ambassadors and high commissioners who were women. This was not a token gesture but an acceptance that women would perform as well as their counterparts. My counterpart in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation is one of the beneficiaries of the deliberate policy by the government to promote women into positions of responsibility and influence.

We in Kenya are proud of many achievements in all spheres of life. Some may remember that unlike most of our neighbours, we were the first in electing a woman mayor to run the affairs of the City of Nairobi. This was before the rather loud campaign for feminist rights. This was not a token gesture but a commitment to uplift that status of women in public life.

Another good example is in the judiciary. Those who think that the government is not interested in the welfare of women should look at the judiciary. Women Magistrates and Judges have done so well that we never think about them as women but as competent lady judges.

Some of these issues do not warrant the type of confrontation we have gone through in the past few months. A lot of us would like to seriously and loudly appreciate what the Kanu government has done to improve the welfare of women in Kenya.

History is history and we should not distort it: Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to emphasise that we who are here are a product of the very aspirations that formed Kanu and, to be candid, I would like to say we are products of those hopes that guided the original Kanu manifesto in 1965. The manifesto re-affirmed what is now a general belief, namely, that women have to have equal opportunities with their male counterparts in a modern Kenya.

It may amuse you to learn that some of this change that has taken place has come to eclipse our male counterparts in the service. My appointment as the first woman Permanent Secretary sent shock waves through the system. I had by the grace of God to do my very best to succeed for the sake of myself but, more so, for the sake of our women. I wish to thank you all for the support you gave me. One very basic

fact we all must acknowledge is that women of Kenya are an integral part of our society despite the often misconceived ideas that we belong to the periphery. This unfortunate attitude is not confined to men but also to a large number of women. This may come as a surprise but the most bitter critic of a woman is another woman. Let me illustrate this. Today whether you are in Kenya or anywhere else in the world, the most hard working person in an office is a secretary. In our own context, she often happens to be a woman. To many people who lack the appreciation on the job of a secretary she appears to be the stumbling block between them and her superior. Yet this is not true. Time and time again, however, you run into people, and often women, who say that the rudest person they have ever met is a secretary. The reason for such harsh judgement is often due to misconceived ideas about what a secretary is supposed to be. The job of a secretary is not that easy. Many to executives today depend on their secretaries to organise their offices if not their own personal lives! This role is sometime confused with arrogance although the two are quite apart.

In the civil service, a secretary happens to be the most occupied person in an office whatever the rank of the officer she is serving. Her welfare therefore is part and parcel of any efforts to improve the working conditions in the civil service. In this connection, I would urge all of us to appreciate each others role, criticize cautiously but praise generously.

Other areas of concern on the status of women in Kenya is their role in the national economy. Today women comprise nearly 22 per cent of the labour force. They manage 27 per cent of the small holdings in the agricultural sector and they also manage 47 per cent of the holdings in the absence of men. The duo role of women as mothers and productive labour force continues to place a lot of stress on the existing services that the government has to provide. The current philosophy that guides the provision of portable water in one case in mind. The government has invested tremendous amount of funds in the development of water resources in order to relieve women in the rural areas the arduous task of fetching water which we all know takes up too much time. This in turn reduces the productivity of rural based women.

Similar observations can be made as well in the law, health and the environment, topics that I am glad you are going to discuss in this and many other fora in the future. Right now, the government is embarking on the next development plan that will affect women more profoundly than in the past. This plan has received the highest priority and all view on the status women are welcome input to the process of planning for development in the next five years.

In conclusion, I wish again to remind ourselves that our society is changing very rapidly in many spheres of life. The pace of change, however, is conditioned by our customs, values and cultures. Unfortunately some of these values, customs and cultures have conflicting roles for women and it is upon us to find harmony in such conflicting roles.

With these few remarks, I wish to declare this seminar open.

APPENDIX IV

Participants of the National Committee on the Status of Women Seminar on Post-Election Women's Agenda - Forward Looking Strategies, February 20, 1993, Millimani Hotel, Nairobi

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SEMINAR ON POST-ELECTION WOMEN'S AGENDA: FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGIES. FEBRUARY 20, 1993, MILIMANI HOTEL, NAIROBI

Programme

- 8.00 - 8.30 *REGISTRATION*
- 8.30 - 8.45 *WELCOMING REMARKS*
Dr Maria Nzomo
Chair, NCSW
- 8.45 - 9.00 *OFFICIAL OPENING*
Mrs Margaret Githinji, Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- 9.00 - 10.30 *WOMEN IN POLITICS AND THE LAW*
Dr Maria Nzomo: *Resource Person*
Prof Kivutha Kibwana: *Discussant*
- 10.30 - 11.00 *TEA BREAK*
- 11.00 - 12.00 *WOMEN AND THE ECONOMY*
Dr Jennifer Riria-Ouko: *Resource Person*
Dr Maria Mullei: *Discussant*
- 12.00 - 1.00 *WOMEN AND HEALTH*
Dr Florence Manguyu: *Resource Person*
Dr Catherine Lore: *Discussant*
Dr Khama Rogo: *Discussant*
- 1.00 - 2.00 *LUNCH*
- 2.00 - 3.00 *WOMEN AND EDUCATION*
Dr Eddah Gachukia: *Resource Person*
Dr Anna Obura: *Discussant*
- 3.00 - 4.00 *WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT*
Prof Wangari Maathai: *Resource Person*
- 4.00 - 4.30 *TEA BREAK*
- 4.30 - 5.10 *GROUP DISCUSSIONS*
- 5.10 - 5.40 *PLENARY SESSION*
- 5.40 - 6.00 *CLOSING CEREMONY*
H.E. Margaret Kenyatta