
The material posted here was provided to the Division for the Advancement of Women by the Government in response to the Secretary-General's Questionnaire on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. It has been made available in electronic format from the form received. In cases where it was not possible to reproduce charts and tables supplied, these can be obtained by contacting the Division for the Advancement of Women directly.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

PART ONE

OVERVIEW OF TRENDS IN ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

1.1 Introduction

The advancement of women in Botswana can be measured by the extent to which they have been constrained or assisted to develop as individuals as well as members of society at all levels of the household, the community, institutions/organisations, and the nation. At all these levels Botswana women are still subordinate to men as reflected, for instance, in:-

- unequal access to power and decision-making;
- limitations on rights and freedoms which are not imposed on men, particularly the marriage institutions;
- the feminisation of poverty (i.e., women constitute the majority of the poor);
- the incidence and escalation of male violence against women;
- the sexism in educational curricula and the gender stratification of careers;
- unequal employment opportunities and the marginalisation of women in the formal sector; and
- Male control of women's reproductive choices.

1.2 Botswana's priorities

The preparations for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) which provided an important opportunity to consolidate ongoing efforts to advance the course of women in Botswana. The preparatory activities undertaken by the Botswana Government and Women's NGO's led to a new collaboration between them, which made it possible, after a national consultative process, to identify six out of the twelve critical areas of concern in the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action as priority national issues. The following are the six critical areas as adopted by Botswana in order of priority:

1.2.1. Women and Poverty, including Women's Economic Empowerment

Women and female-headed households tend to suffer poverty and economic marginalisation more acutely than men and male-headed households in Botswana. A number of factors contribute to the differentials in the experience of poverty and economic advantage. These include legal and cultural conventions that restrict women's access to and control of productive resources. Gendered inequalities also exist in the development of human capabilities (education, skills and information). There are inequalities in access to development programmes and resources, as well as the increasing burden on women of caring for relatives including children, the aged, and terminally ill family members (invalids). This translates to women having lower incomes but more dependants. This situation contributes to lack of development of human capabilities and perpetuates women's poverty in particular, over generations.

The study of poverty and Poverty Alleviation in Botswana, commissioned by the Government in 1996, pointed to an urgent need to address the poverty problem. It stressed, in particular, the issues of skills training, improvements in access to credit for the small producers as well as in the delivery of extension services and increased community participation in planning and implementation of development programmes which seem to have significantly constrained current efforts aimed at poverty alleviation.

The reduction of poverty as it affects women in Botswana requires a strategy and policy environment that recognises that this is a problem with multiple and interlocking causes and that it affects people differently.

1.2.2. Women in Power and Decision-Making

The participation of women in decision-making at all levels of public and private life is important as an issue of human rights as well as for the strengthening of the democratic process. Democracy also requires that all participate in the making of decisions, not only at the national, public level, but at all levels including the so called private sphere of the family, their work place, the school, the club, the trade union or any other organisation.

The reality in Botswana however, is that men wield most of the power at all levels of the society, from their positions as the legal heads of the households, making decisions over family resources, to their strong control over women in public institutions such as Parliament, Cabinet and local government. As of the last general election there are 35 males as opposed to only 8 females in the Parliament whilst in Cabinet there are 13 males in comparison with 4 females.¹ The public service is no exception to this scenario

These power relations are reinforced by the socialisation process, where boy children are socialised into roles which prepare them to exercise power in the family over women, younger children, and productive resources. These socialisation processes take place in different locations, which include the

¹ Please note that in our last report we stated that there were 40 males and 4 females in the parliament while the cabinet had 15 males and only 2 females. Therefore these new figures after the general elections held in October 1999 indicate an increase in these ratios.

home and the school and lead to gender stereotyping which result in under achievement by girls at schools, as well as their concentration in certain traditionally female dominated careers or fields of study.

Legal guarantees of equality are important to ensure that women have documented rights, but these should be accompanied by adequate enforcement mechanisms which women can resort to in cases of violation. In the case of Botswana, there exist a number of laws and practices, which discriminate against women, in spite of the equality provisions of the Constitution.

1.2.3. Education and Training of Women

Botswana's national education vision of social harmony espouses the national principles of democracy, equality, development, social justice, self-reliance and unity. A Gender Education and Training Programme has to be developed whose

respective roles and responsibilities of various government departments. As a result, there are more obstacles in realising national goals for meaningful empowerment of women.

1.5

PART TWO

FINANCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES

2.1 Resource Allocation

The Women's Affairs Department is mandated by Government to handle all issues relating to women including equality and women's advancement and is operating on a recurrent budget of about P6.6 million. There has been an increase in the amount of money allocated to women-specific policies/programmes since 1995. The National Women's Machinery falls under the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. In 1998/99 the Ministry and the National Women's Machinery were respectively allocated 5% and 1% of the total national budget.

At the moment very few government ministries have an allocation for women's programmes. As a result the National Women's Machinery is responsible for almost all activities in this area. With the minimal resources currently at the disposal of the Department only a small portion of this requirement can be met in most cases, only in part.

Additional to the regular allocation of financial resources by Government, the National Women's Machinery has received support from:

- **Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)**- funded the comprehensive review of all laws affecting the status of women in Botswana and also funded a study tour to Sweden. The National Women's Machinery has also undertaken a number of training activities supported from this source. The Women's NGO Coalition has been funded from this source to support activities of various women's NGOs.
- **Government of Botswana/ United Nations Development Programme** support to the National Gender Programme. The programme support document for this project was signed in June 1997. Support provided in this project, focuses on gender capacity-building and training, advocacy, lobbying, IEC and social mobilisation, research and development of information management systems, policy and programme development, as well as, regional cooperation.
- **UNIFEM**
Various projects aimed at empowering women economically have benefited from this fund.

The National Women's Machinery as a policy formulation and coordinating agency is not ordinarily in the mainstream of implementing programmes and activities in gender related issues. Implementors of policies/programmes include government departments, the private sector, women's NGOs, CBOs and women's groups. These implementing agencies do require varying forms and degrees of support. Many need some funding to take aspects of the National Plan of Action (NPA) to their constituencies. Unfortunately this is still to happen at a level significantly high to make a positive impact on the lives of Botswana women, particularly those in the rural areas where the majority of the poor female-headed households are found. There is therefore, a need to rationalise resources, as a major portion of the current support is temporary.

2.2 Institutional measures

The NGOs play a very important role in planning and shaping the follow-up activities aimed at making the NPA a reality. The National Women's Machinery and the Women's NGO Coalition hold forums on a regular basis to share information and ideas on women's issues. The fact that the National Women's Machinery is not decentralised makes the NGOs role quite significant as they work with the communities at the grassroots level as implementation partners.

The formulation of an NGO policy is at an advanced stage. This is in view this important role played by these organisations in the development of the country. Furthermore, under the National Development Programme, a Multi-Purpose and Information Centre which is to be located in Gaborone is at its design phase.

The formation of a National Council on Women (NCW) is at an advanced stage. The Committee will include academic institutions and a cross section of the Botswana society. Immediately following the establishment of NCW, thematic sub- Committees will be formed to serve as technical committees on the six critical areas of concern as espoused in the NPA.

There is an effort by the National Women's Machinery to come up with Gender Focal Points in government ministries and departments. While this is still

PART THREE

Critical areas of concern	Examples of successful policies, programmes and projects to implement the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (indicate any targets and strategies set and related achievements.	Examples of obstacles encountered	Lessons learned	Commitment to further action/new initiatives
<p><i>i. Women and Poverty, including Economic Empowerment of Women</i></p>	<p>Joint programming and implementation with NGO's/CBO's and women's groups through sub-contracting them to carry out a number of projects aimed at empowering women: Example: Kgetsu Ya Tsie Project- where women harvest and process veld products. This group of women also uses the Gramen Bank model for small loans for women's economic empowerment activities in their community.</p>	<p>Limited skills in project management.</p> <p>Limited financial support.</p>	<p>Need to develop requisite skills in order for projects to be sustainable.</p>	<p>Continually assist women in engaging in projects that will empower them economically.</p> <p>Remove all legal provisions and practices which discriminate against women.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Women's Exposition- this is an annual women's fair that seeks to expose women's activities in the area of economic empowerment. The fair also exposes women entrepreneurs to a wider market during the period of the exposition. Examples of items exhibited include processed foods, metal works, art & painting, manufactured goods e.t.c 	<p>Community mobilisation with a centralised department is problematic.</p>	<p>Decentralisation of the department is necessary</p>	<p>Increase women's training and employment opportunities to reduce their dependency on men.</p> <p>Conduct regular poverty assessment and monitoring exercises.</p>

**iii. Education
and
Training of
Women**

Revised National Policy on Education (1994) which inter-alia provides all Batswana children with ten years of basic education and also introduces pre-vocational skills such as computing and technical fields.

Policy on Vocational Education and Training- this places a special emphasis on the participation of marginalised groups including women.

Gender sensitisation directed towards increased participation of females in education and training

iv. Women and Health

Following the adoption of the Primary Health Care Policy the following achievements have been made;

Collaboration involving Ministry of Health (MOH), women's health NGO's & WAD to conduct workshops as part of health education efforts, these include occupational health matters.

Inadequate participation of males in women's health issues.

Need to involve men in women's health issues

Limited resources

More resources should be mobilised

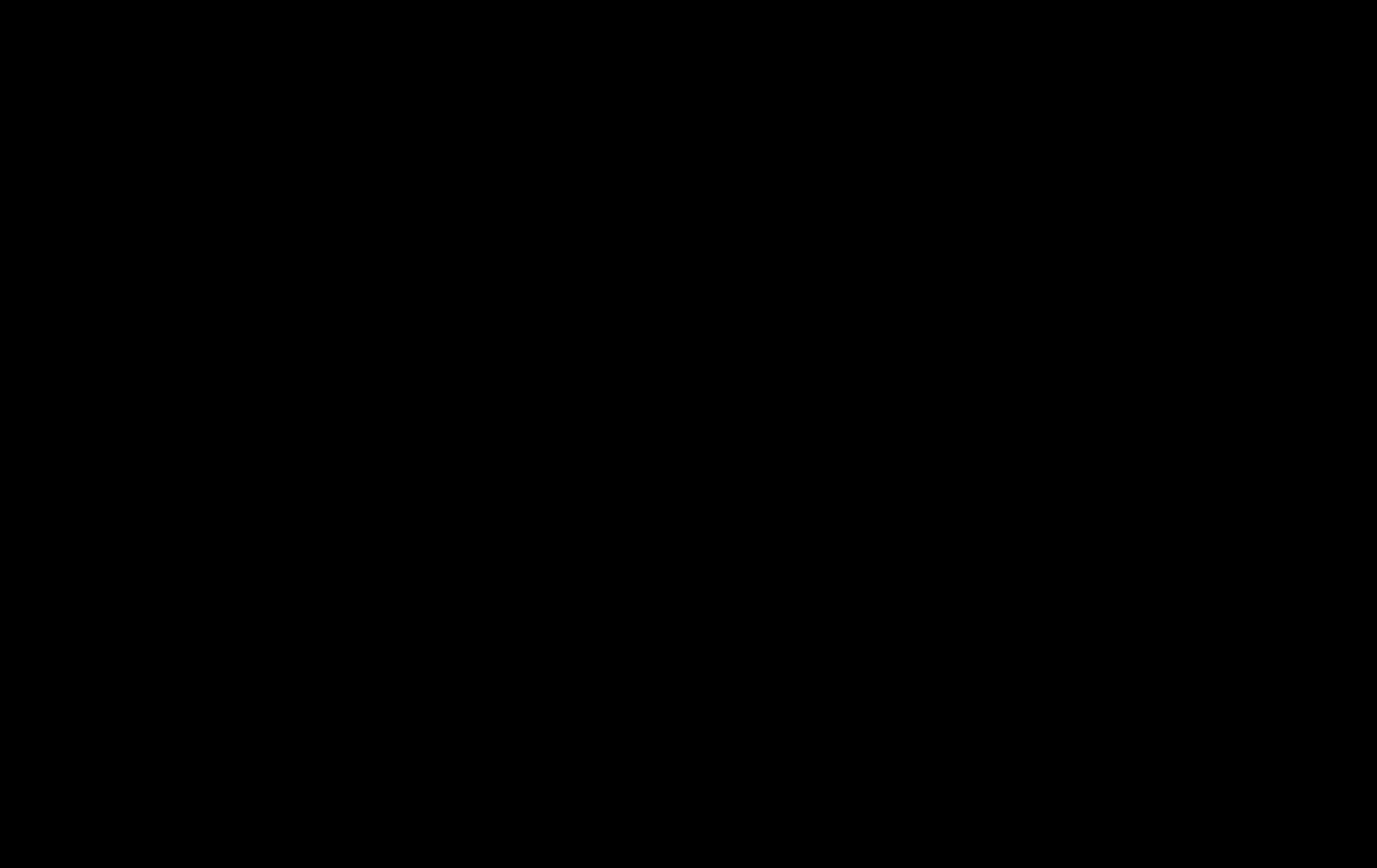
Lack of follow up.

Efforts by the MOH include the Safe Motherhood initiative, Maternal & Child Health Care, Women & AIDS and Home Based Care. The government has set aside resources to implement the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programme.

Cultural barriers resulting in limited enjoyment of reproductive rights by women.

Attitudes

Insufficient knowledge base.



***Institutional
Mechanisms***

NWM elevated to fully-fledged department.

Inadequate staffing and financial resources

Need to increase both human and financial resources of the NWM.

Strong collaboration and joint programming with women's NGOs

Resources

Need to mobilise additional resources for joint

Insufficient requisite skills among women's NGOs personnel.

Establishment of the National Council on Women and its Sub-committees

Bureaucratic procedures.

Ill-distribution of gender aware citizens across the country, resulting in difficulties in geographical representation of members.

Botswana's vision for women's advancement and equality for women in the new millennium

The Government of Botswana is committed to ensuring that Botswana women and men actively participate in national development through meaningful contribution in the economy, socio-cultural activities, political power-sharing and the creation of an enabling environment that is free from gender discrimination. The comprehensive review of laws that discriminate against women is expected to trigger a process that will systematically ensure a removal of law-related barriers that have constrained women's free participation and limited their choices and opportunities for self development and national contribution.