

BEYOND INEQUALITIES 2005

Women
in Namibia

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BEYOND INEQUALITIES 2005

Women in Namibia

A profile of Women in Namibia
produced by the
University of Namibia (UNAM)
and the
Women In Development Southern Africa Awareness (WIDSAA) Programme
of the
Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC)

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PREFACE

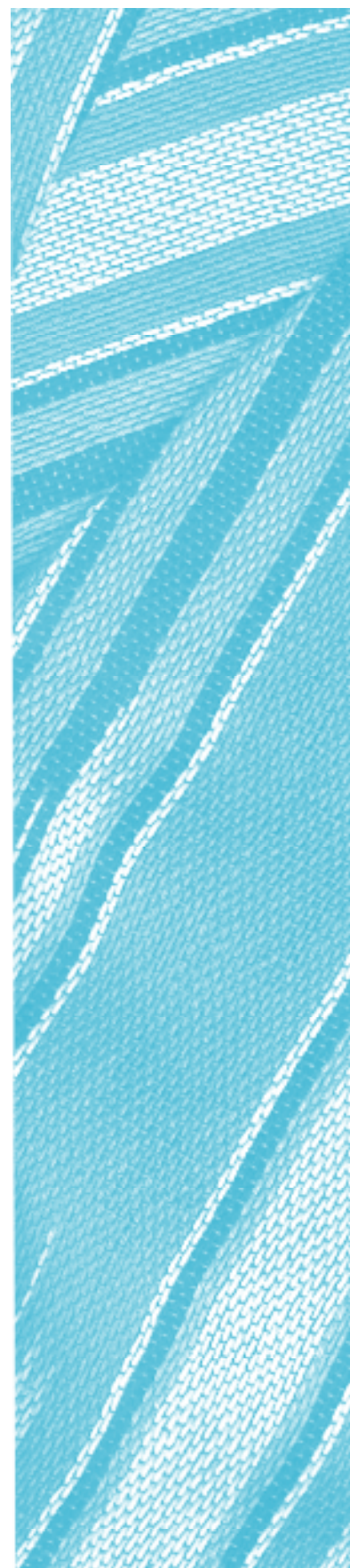
Beyond Inequalities, a series of publications profiling the status of women in southern Africa, has played a significant role in contributing to knowledge on the role of men and women in development in the region, and the efforts being made at mainstreaming gender-equality concerns at all levels. The first set of profiles, presenting the situation of men and women in 12 SADC countries, were published between 1998 and 2000. This new *Beyond Inequalities* series is an update on the status of women, in the context of the dynamic changes, new challenges, setbacks and opportunities that have occurred in the last few years, particularly since publication of the first series.

The analysis of the status of women in SADC is located within some important frameworks, chief amongst them being the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPFA), resulting from the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China, and the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, including the 1998 Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children. The region has experienced rapid socio-economic and political shifts, and the focus is increasingly geared towards ensuring that the region accelerates efforts towards economic emancipation. Thus, key developments such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in particular, identify new benchmarks and targets for governments to achieve in order to realise human development and, by extension, equality of opportunities and outcomes for all.

This is a significant time in southern Africa and beyond, in that it is the eve of the end of the decade for achieving women's full equality in line with the BDPFA. The milestones can be identified in the region's response to the challenges of policy, institutional and legislative developments. Twelve SADC member states now have gender/women's empowerment policies in place; Swaziland and Mozambique's policy development processes are at an advanced stage. All countries identified critical areas of concern from the BDPFA, and it is significant that a majority identified issues of women's health (later including HIV and AIDS), economic empowerment and education as key areas for targeted action. In the political arena, there is a slow but upward trend of women occupying seats of power in SADC, particularly in politics, where representation in the legislatures rose from an average of 17 percent to almost 20 percent in the last five years and continues to rise toward SADC's 30 percent target, which has been surpassed in some countries, notably South Africa where 43 percent of the cabinet are women.

There have been advances in legislation, particularly on issues of sexual and domestic violence, with some countries widening the definition of rape to include marital rape, and tightening remedies for survivors of domestic violence to include removal of the abuser from the home. All SADC countries have now ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and all have adopted, but few have ratified, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Institutional structures such as gender/women's ministries, departments, units, and gender desks, were put in place or their man-



UNAM

The University of Namibia was established by an Act of Parliament in 1992. The mission of the university is, among other things, to undertake basic and applied research that will contribute to the social, economic, cultural and political development in Namibia. This includes the development of a civil society that tolerates dissenting views; and the development of a research capacity that will give the university a voice in policy formulation. The Gender Training and Research Programme (GTRP) is an educational as well as research programme of the Social Sciences Division of the University's Multi-disciplinary Research and Consultancy Centre (MRCC). The MRCC was established in 1993 to enable UNAM to best serve the people of Namibia. The key mission of the MRCC is to "promote, conduct, and co-ordinate research, provide consultancy, advisory, and other services to the community; foster, in collaboration with UNAM's faculties, national and international NGOs, line ministries and other relevant centres, the transmission of the accumulated body of knowledge through teaching and research." Since 1995, the GTRP has carried out numerous gender-related training and research programmes aimed at developing gender awareness at the local, regional and national levels.

SARDC

The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) is an independent regional information resource centre which seeks to enhance the effectiveness of key development processes in the SADC region through the collection, production and dissemination of information, and enabling the capacity to generate and use information. SARDC has five main areas of focus which are pursued by specialist departments for environment and water resources, gender, democracy and governance, regional economic development, and human development. SARDC has offices in Harare and Maputo and partners in all SADC member states. Founding Patron was the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

dates expanded to take on the challenge of implementing the ambitious plans to achieve full equality between men and women, and in particular women's empowerment. The SADC Gender Unit, by virtue of the restructuring exercise of the institution, has also been integrated into the Department of Strategic Planning, Gender and Policy Harmonisation to ensure it continues to play a pivotal role in facilitating gender mainstreaming. Most of these structures, however, are inadequately resourced and skilled, and thus remain relatively weak and unable to implement gender policies and plans adequately; this has largely limited the effectiveness of post-Beijing plans and initiatives. Gender and/or women's empowerment groups continue to play a role in bridging this implementation divide, and are influential in the policy and programmatic arenas, although they face their own challenges.

Whilst milestones have been achieved, there have been setbacks, and new issues have emerged. Some of the greatest threats to human, and in particular women's development, are HIV and AIDS and other communicable diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. There are an estimated 14 million HIV-infected people in the SADC region, representing approximately 37 percent of the global total; women and girls being the hardest hit as both the infected and affected. The pandemic has placed a heavy toll on women's labour through increased unpaid care work, as well as further compromising their sexuality rights by virtue of the imbalance of power intersecting with negative cultural beliefs and practices socially and in intimate relationships. The current *Beyond Inequalities* series seeks to highlight some of these issues, and women's coping mechanisms, as well as government and other stakeholder responses.

Although there is now an acknowledgment that HIV and AIDS are development challenges, their gender dimension and links to human rights remain a challenge. The SADC Declaration on HIV and AIDS adopted in July 2003, places a premium on increasing access to treatment and awareness, and, to some extent recognises gender as a key variable. Resource allocation to address the multi-dimensional nature of the pandemic remains weak in most countries and very few countries in SADC are close to reaching the target of universal access to treatment, though some have targeted programmes for pregnant women to prevent parent-to-child transmission.

Poverty remains high, with 40 percent of the population in SADC living in extreme poverty. The SADC Executive Secretary recently observed that poverty reduction strategies employed by governments in the region are trailing behind in terms of meeting the benchmarks set by the MDGs, to halve poverty by 2015. In fact, SADC economies have generally experienced slow growth in recent years, with few exceptions. The average growth rate of 3.23 percent in 2002 falls below half of the seven percent target growth rate set in the MDGs, if poverty and other development indicators are to be effectively addressed in the next few years. A compromised economic outlook and high poverty hits the most vulnerable hardest, in this case women and children, with a corresponding negative impact on their ability to meet their most basic needs. Ten years after the Beijing Conference, poverty remains one of the biggest challenges in the region.

The *Beyond Inequalities* series has been updated based on the conviction (highlighted in the last series) that information is a strategic resource for socio-economic development. Information can catalyse development, and unless the players have access to reliable informa-

tion on the complexities and nature of gender relations and how they intersect with development, effective response and the process of positive change will remain slow, and ineffective. The profiles thus identify issues, challenges, limitations and opportunities for accelerating the pace to achieve gender-equality in SADC, through identifying the roles of men and women, their relationships to economic, political and social resources to achieve the highest level of human development.

The series, including this update, was conceptualised and has been implemented by SARDC WIDSAA, in collaboration with partners at national level. WIDSAA aims to contribute to the improvement of the status of women in the SADC region, through awareness-building and collecting, documenting and disseminating relevant, timely, quality and current information to a range of strategic stakeholders. In particular, the information is targeted to policy makers, researchers, media, co-operating partners, development agencies, and the non-governmental sector.

To update this set of *Beyond Inequalities* profiles, a concept paper was developed and shared with partners in SADC countries for comments and critique. The concept paper outlined the rationale and methodology for approaching the updating exercise. This was followed by terms of reference for partner organisations to co-ordinate the research and writing of the profiles, which also included guidelines on style and presentation of the drafts by the researchers.

Each partner organisation identified a multi-disciplinary team of researchers to conduct the work on the profiles. This was coupled with a survey of the previous *Beyond Inequalities* series to determine the nature and extent of access and utilisation, in order to enrich the updating exercise and provide pointers towards a more effective dissemination strategy. The drafts were reviewed by individuals and at annual partners meetings where the researchers presented their initial or working drafts to a group of 25-30 people for critique. This was preceded by a Gender Reference Group meeting to review the drafts and provide guidance on content, methodology and management of the updating exercise.

The partner organisations and researchers held validation workshops with national stakeholders, and some constituted working committees that provided input at various stages of development of the drafts. The methodology for production of the profiles was thus a participatory one, to ensure wide ownership and participation in the process of development and production.

The profiles are all similarly presented in four parts, preceded by an introduction. The Namibia profile has a special section on Background and National Context. Part I gives a situational analysis, Part II provides information on achievements and constraints in the context of policies and programmes, and Part III discusses the way forward. Part IV provides references and a bibliography of materials used.

Many challenges lie ahead. Ten years of working on achieving gender-equality after Beijing has produced mixed results, with a rollback of some gains made. This *Beyond Inequalities* series gives current insights and perspectives on achievements, gaps and the way forward, as well as areas where opportunities can be found for revitalising processes or finding new direction. The focus of the next decade is on delivery of policies and programmes, and the *Beyond Inequalities* series provides information on what has worked and what has not, and what can be strengthened or abandoned as gender activists in SADC shape an agenda for the future.

WIDSAA

Women In Development Southern Africa Awareness (WIDSAA) is the gender programme of SARDC. The programme was established in 1994 to serve as a catalyst and information service to the SADC region's governments, parliaments, NGOs and agencies, the media and the public in the formulation of policy affecting women. WIDSAA's objective is that SADC women are empowered and advanced, and that all structures are engendered to facilitate gender equality and equity.

HIVOS

The Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries (HIVOS) is a Dutch non-governmental organisation, which operates on the basis of humanistic values. Hivos aims to contribute towards a free, just, and sustainable world. The organisation is committed to the poor and marginalised and to organisations with similar interests in countries in the South, including Africa, central Asia and southeast Europe. Sustainable improvement of their situation is the ultimate benchmark for Hivos work. An important cornerstone is strengthening of the position of women in society.

Namibia National Gender Policy 2000-2005

Box 1

Principles

The National Gender Policy (NGP) uses education and training as a tool to promote social transformation for gender-equality in all aspects of life. It concentrates and supports efforts aimed at improving awareness among policy-makers, planners, implementers and others, of the provision of the constitution regarding the equal status of women and men, and the roles of women and men as equal partners in the country's development.

Objectives

To contemplate on how the government can encourage and value the contribution of women in national development and the development of the society as a whole.

To, in line with affirmative action, support the integration of women and a gender perspective into the mainstream of national, regional and local development initiatives.

Support the increased participation of women in decision-making in all spheres of the Namibian society.

Priority Areas

Gender, poverty and rural development
 Education and training
 Reproductive health
 Violence against women and children
 Economic empowerment
 Power and decision-making
 Information, education and communication
 Management of the environment
 The girl-child
 Legal affairs.

Implementation

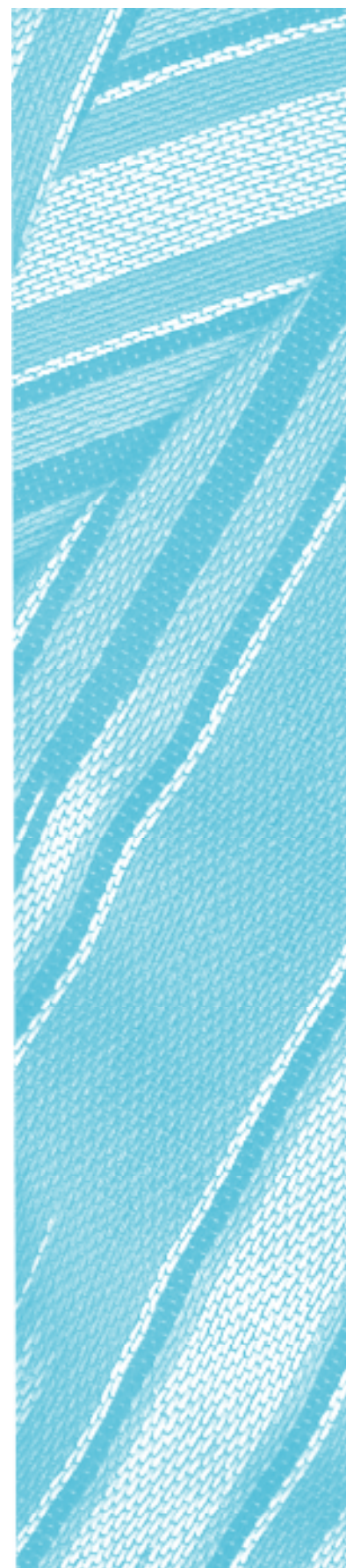
Co-ordinating body Department of Women's Affairs.

Other stakeholders Gender Focal Points in line ministries, Gender Sectoral Committee, Department of Women's Affairs, Gender Commission and the Gender Network Co-ordinating Committee, which ensures that all programmes and policies developed are implemented.

SOURCE: Government of the Republic of Namibia, *National Gender Policy*, Department of Women's Affairs, GRN, Windhoek, 1997

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SARDC WIDSAA Team, Harare

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As can be expected with a publication of this magnitude and topical diversity, several gender specialists authored specific sections of this document in their particular areas of expertise. Edith Dima wrote the section "Aging" while Michael Conteh drafted the section on "Women and the Media". Andrew Niikondo drafted the "Gender-based Violence" section and Grant J. Spence wrote the "Education" chapter, while Sayumi Yamakawa drafted the sections "Adolescent Sexuality", "Adolescents and HIV and AIDS" and "Teenage Pregnancy". Dianne Hubbard gave extensive input and made recommendations for sections relating to the legal status of women in Namibia. Grant J. Spence also reviewed drafts and assisted with editing the draft before submitting to SARDC. Michael Conteh and Titus Frans assisted with document collection and data preparation. Dr. Heike Becker supplied information. Many thanks to the following stakeholders who gave substantial input into their specific areas of expertise: Dr. Lucy Steinitz, Veronica de Klerk and Liz Frank.

Eunice Ipinge was the project co-ordinator and was responsible for co-ordination, drafting and reviewing drafts of the manuscript, while Dr. Debbie LeBeau conducted the research and drafted the manuscript.

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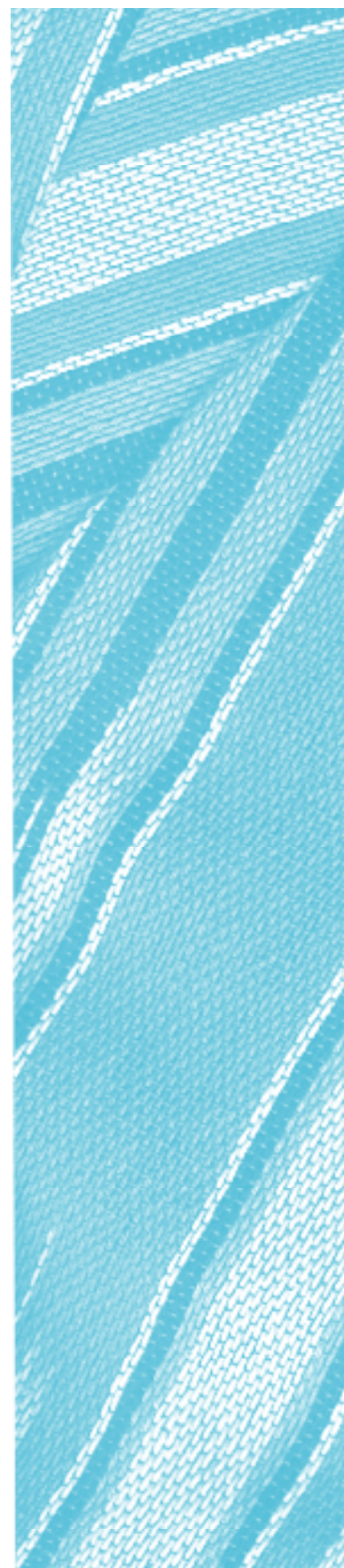
Thank you.

Eunice M. Ipinge, Dr Debbie Lebeau

October 2004

ACRONYMS

AAA	Affirmative Action (Employment) Act
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BDPFA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CCN	Council of Churches in Namibia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CoD	Congress of Democrats
COSEDA	Co-operative Support and Development Agency Trust
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DAW	Department for the Advancement of Women
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs in the Office of the President
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECN	Electoral Commission of Namibia
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWENA	Forum for African Women Educationalist in Namibia
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFP	Gender Focal Points
GMBS	Gender and Media Baseline Study
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
GSC	Gender Sectoral Committee
GTRP	Gender Training and Research Programme (UNAM)
HDI	Human Development Index
HFSP	Household Food Security Programme
HIS	Health Information System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIVOS	Humanist Institute for Co-operation with Developing Countries
HPI	Human Poverty Index
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
KAPs	Knowledge Attitudes and Practices
LAC	Legal Assistance Centre
LaRRI	Labour Resource and Research Institute
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
MAWRD	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MHETEC	Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation
MIB	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MLRR	Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
MMCVAWC	Multimedia Campaign on Violence Against Women and Children
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MP	Member of Parliament
MRCC	Multi-Disciplinary Research and Consultancy Centre
MRLG&H	Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing



MWACW	Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare
MWTC	Ministry of Works, Transport and Communication
MYS	Ministry of Youth and Sport
NACP	National Aids Control Programme
NAMEC	Namibian Men for Change
NAMWA	Namibia Media Women's Association
NANAWO	Namibian National Women's Organisation
NAP	National Agricultural Policy
NAPPA	Namibia Planned Parenthood Association
NASE	Network Against Sexual Exploitation of children
NAWA	Namibian Women's Association
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NCAS	Namibia Child Activities Survey
NDP1	National Development Plan 1
NDP2	National Development Plan 2
NECD	National Early Childhood Development
NEPRU	Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit
NGCO	Namibian Girl-child Organisation
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NGP	National Gender Policy
NGPA	National Gender Plan of Action
NHE	National Housing Enterprise
NID	Namibian Institute for Democracy
NISER	Namibia Institute for Social and Economic Research
NNAWIB	Namibia National Association of Women in Business
NPA	National Programme of Action for the Children of Namibia
NPC	National Planning Commission
NRCS	Namibian Red Cross Society
OAHs	Old Age Homes
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OVC	Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
PEP	Post-Exposure Prophylactics
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARDC	Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
SIAPAC	Social Impact Assessment and Policy Analysis Corporation
Sida	Swedish International Development Authority
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPWC	SWAPO Party Women's Council
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SSD	Social Sciences Division (UNAM)
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TRP	The Rainbow Project
UDF	United Democratic Front of Namibia
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme On AIDS
UNAM	University of Namibia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNTAG	UN Transitional Assistance Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAD	Women's Action for Development
WCPU	Women and Child Protection Unit
WID	Women In Development
WIDSAA	Women In Development Southern Africa Awareness

NAMIBIA DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Official Name	Republic of Namibia
Capital City	Windhoek
Independence Date	21 March 1990
Head of State and Government	President Hifikepunye Pohamba
Last Election held	November 2004
Ruling Party	Swapo party
Legislature	National Assembly and National Council
Languages	Oshiwambo 48.5%, Nama/Damara 11.5%, Afrikaans 11.4%, Kavango groups 9.7%, Otjiherero 7.9%, Caprivian groups 5%, San groups 1.2%, Tswana 0.3%, German 1.1%, English 1.9%
Land Area	824,392 sq km
POPULATION	
Total	1,830,330 women 51.5% men 48.5 %
Population Growth Rate	2.6%
Urban population	33%
HEALTH	
Life Expectancy at Birth	women 50 years men 48 years
Birth Rate	34.1 births/1,000 population (2003)
Death Rate	19.17 deaths/1,000 population (2003)
Infant Mortality Rate	women 49 deaths/1,000 live births men 55 deaths/1,000 live births
Total Fertility Rate	4.1 children born/woman
Population with access to safe water	87%
EDUCATION	
Adult literacy rate	81% women 83.7% men 84.4%
ECONOMY	
Gross National Product (GNP)	
per capita	na
annual growth rate	5.6%
Gross Domestic Product	US\$2.82 billion (2002)
as % of GDP- agriculture	11%
-industry	28%
-services	61%
Gross Domestic Product (per capita)	US\$1.667
Average annual rate of inflation	8%
Export/ Import ratio (as % of imports)	96.97% (2002)
Currency N\$=100 cents	N\$5.9659= US\$1

Note All statistics are for 2001 unless otherwise specified.

SOURCES Government of the Republic of Namibia, Namibia 2001 Population and Housing Census, Central Bureau of Statistics, Windhoek, 2003.
<http://www.npc.gov.na/census/index.htm>
www.sadc.int



INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant areas of progress on gender in Namibia since 1996/7 has been government policies and programmes, including the establishment of the national gender machinery, the ratification of international instruments and national policies, as well as progressive gender-related law reform.

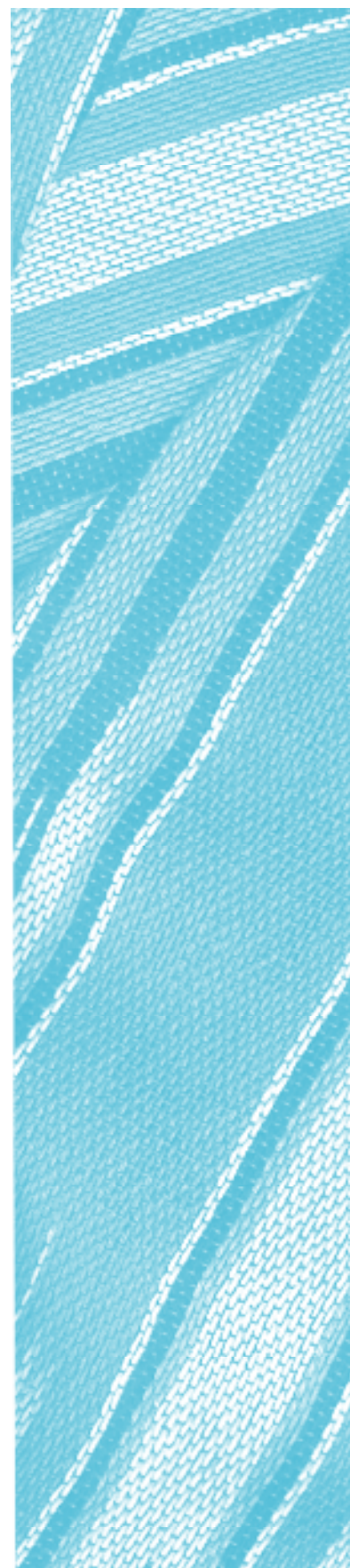
The first section of this publication focuses on post-Beijing legal reforms. Although law reform is a key step in institutionalising women's equality, changing laws and government policies alone neither guarantees women's protection of their human rights nor ensures that gender-based discrimination is eliminated at all levels of society. Indeed, gender-specific law reforms may, initially, lead to higher levels of gender-based violence because some men may perceive women's rights as a loss of their own rights. This is not to say that law reform should not be instituted, but that law reform alone cannot effect changes in the social and cultural realities within which women live. Changing attitudes and behaviour is important in effecting gender-equality.

Given the short period that many gender-related pieces of legislation and programmes have been in existence in the country, there needs to be mechanisms to monitor their implementation, as well as to evaluate their impact at the community level. In addition, laws need to be simplified and translated into local languages for access by community members.

The government has established several institutions and developed a system to address gender inequalities in all spheres. One important milestone was the establishment of the Women's Desk in 1990, which was upgraded in 1997 to the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) in the Office of the President, and later in 2000 to the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW). Currently, the MWACW is the lead organisation for co-ordinating national gender initiatives, although, it is supported by a host of other government institutions, NGOs, donors, parastatals, political parties and civil society. The MWACW was mandated, through a Cabinet decision, to establish Gender Focal Points (GFPs) within all government ministries and institutions.

Some parastatals have also significantly contributed to the advancement of women's issues in the country. For instance, the University of Namibia has Gender Focal Points (GFPs), the Gender Training and Research Programme (GTRP), and several other departments such as Sociology, Law and Education which offer courses on gender. NGOs have also contributed significantly to the development of gender sensitisation. Several gender-related NGOs have come into existence within the last 10 years, while others have changed their mandates, and yet still others have aggressively implemented gender policies and programmes.

Two major policy documents guide the social and economic policies of the government of the Republic of Namibia: The Second National Development Plan (NDP2) and the Namibia Vision 2030. Namibia, as with most other countries in southern Africa, has a predominantly agrarian economy. Approximately 67 percent of Namibians live in the rural areas and depend on subsistence agriculture, often in conjunction with cash income, pensions and remunera-



tions. However, there is a disproportionate number of women in the rural areas due to male migration.

Various social structural factors continue to constrain women from unfettered use, ownership and control over the means of production such as land, property and cash. It is important to note that, in general, the most commonly identified custom that contravenes women's rights is the practice of evicting widows from their homes and confiscating of their property by their deceased husbands' relatives. This lack of access to property, including lack of access to the means of production (land) for most women keeps them in a cycle of poverty. Land ownership means the ability to use the land or other immovable property to secure bank loans. However, women are restricted from obtaining bank loans because of their lack of ownership of immovable property.

Women's participation in the labour force is particularly difficult to measure since the majority of women are technically unemployed or involved in informal enterprises. There is lack of recognition of the importance of women's labour. Economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) do not recognise women's domestic and unpaid economic activities. Of interest is that women's participation in the urban labour force has risen over the past 10 years, while rural participation for women has shown a corresponding decline. This supports the contention that women are migrating to the urban areas in search of employment.

Employment levels – and conversely unemployment – for women are still significantly lower than for their male counterparts. However, for all employment categories that do not have cash remuneration attached, women dominate, while men dominate in the same sectors when payment is involved. In the informal sector, women still undertake gender-stereotyped activities such as brewing beer, cooking and making baskets and other handcrafts. Women still dominate in street vending, while men tend to dominate in shop-based selling.

As in other parts of the world, children in Namibia participate in chores as part of their socialisation. The most common chores in the home are child-minding, cooking, fetching water, collecting firewood, cleaning and washing clothes. These chores are done almost exclusively by girls and women. Children whose family members are affected by AIDS have increased household tasks as they care for affected adults as well as siblings.

Regarding participation in politics, research indicates that women and men are interested and do participate in the political arena in about equal numbers, a finding which contradicts the general trend that men are more interested in politics than women. However, women are not as likely as men to run as candidates or to be elected to political office in Namibia.

A number of barriers, including family responsibilities, discriminatory cultural beliefs, harassment, lack of education and lack of solidarity among women voters and candidates all hamper women's full participation in the political arena.

Lack of control over sexuality, the most intimate of human expressions, leads to lack of control over any other aspect of one's life. Many young girls come from economically marginalized households and are driven by poverty or a desire for economic advancement to participate in risky sexual relationships that expose them to HIV infection.

Adolescent sexual behaviour has become a serious public concern, not only because such behaviour is considered undesirable, or even culturally prohibited in many Namibian ethnic groups, but also because of the high rate of HIV infection and teenage pregnancy in the country. This Update makes the critical link between girls and women's vulnerability to HIV infection and their lack of control over their sexuality.

Many people continue to use "tradition", "custom" and "culture" to justify patriarchy. With many women's movements promoting women's human rights, as well as new laws for gender-equality and increased awareness, many women are demanding their rights. However, the biggest barrier to gender-equality remains the discriminatory attitudes of men.

Only a few years ago in Namibia, most people neither understood what domestic violence was nor did they view assaults on women by partners as necessarily wrong. However, today, only a few people still view it as acceptable. The major challenge remains men's desire to maintain the status quo. However, there is increased knowledge about gender-equality. This increased awareness could be due to the work of such organisations and programmes as the Multi-Media Campaign on Violence Against Women and Children (MMC VAWC), the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) and government who have launched education and information campaigns.

Although this Update paints a somewhat gloomy picture of the situation of women at risk of gender-based violence, it is notable that Namibia has made significant strides in addressing gender-based violence. In addition to law reforms as well as improvements in judicial and law enforcement mechanisms, another important milestone in the battle to end gender-based violence has been the production of several publications highlighting domestic violence in the country.

In the area of education, there has been a significant improvement in access for all Namibian children. The introduction of mobile school units in marginalized areas has further improved access for children who might otherwise not be able to attend. These improved policies and programmes have led to an increase in the enrolment of children, especially the girl-child, at all levels.

The choice of subjects is still gender-stereotyped. Women are still by far the majority in the traditionally female domains of domestic science, needlework and typing. In an age where mathematics, science, computer technology and other technical skills are a prerequisite for job eligibility, this is highly disturbing. The girl-child faces two additional obstacles to completing her education: teenage pregnancy and the effects of AIDS.

In the area of gender and health, indicators show that the overall fertility rate has dropped from an average of 6.1 in 1991 to 4.1 in 2001. The declining fertility rate has been attributed to women's greater participation in the formal economy, higher levels of education and better access to and utilisation of contraceptives, as well as the impact of AIDS and the fear of contracting HIV.

Regarding water, energy and related resources, the water, electricity and construction industries are relatively underdeveloped, and thus, Namibia has a limited infrastructure with which to provide people, especially the rural populations, with formal housing, electrification, transportation, communication and access to water and sanitation facilities. Because more women than men live in the rural areas, and

female-headed households tend to be poorer than male-headed households, lack of rural infrastructure disproportionately affects women and female-headed households.

Full recognition of women's contribution to the socio-economic development of the country has yet to be recognised. As a result, women are still denied access to productive resources that would allow them to enhance their economic productivity.

The government aims to ensure women's full participation and equal benefit from development. The country has adopted a systems perspective, where different stakeholders work together to address key social and structural challenges.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this publication is to update the situation of women in Namibia since the first profile compiled in 1997. It highlights what developments have taken place in gender and development since then and the challenges the country faces in this regard. It summarises information relating to the position of women from the analytical and strategic framework of autonomy, the principal element being the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural environments in which women in Namibia must conduct their lives.

Significance of the profile

This profile is important because it brings to the attention of policy-makers pertinent issues that still need urgent attention in order to address glaring problems faced by women in Namibia, including issues such as poverty, illiteracy, inequality, oppression, and AIDS. It is also the only document of its kind, which provides relevant qualitative and quantitative data on a wide range of topics pertaining to women in one report; and it clearly presents gaps (in quantitative and qualitative terms) on issues, which reflect the situation of women in Namibia today.

Methodology and methods

A literature review of information relating to Women in Development (WID) was conducted and relevant ministries; NGOs and donors were contacted for documents. Research was also conducted at the University of Namibia library, SSD resource centre and the government library. Over 200 documents were collected and reviewed and several national databases were analysed for gender-disaggregated data. Key individuals were interviewed while consultative meetings with gender stakeholders from government, NGOs, parastatals and political parties were also held. During the data collection, two drafts were prepared and reviewed by the appropriate sectors. The final draft had input from stakeholders at a national consultative workshop.

No primary research was undertaken and information is strictly based on desk research of latest available information. As might be expected, variations in data were encountered in certain reports for some topics. Effort was made to return to original data sources and confirm statistics. Due to the nature of desk studies, many other authors' works were reviewed and are referenced. Effort was made to appropriately and correctly reference all data sources, but the authors would like to apologise in advance for any errors in citation. No independent or subjective conclusions were drawn or recommendations

made by the authors, except those that emanate from published facts in the documents referenced, however, some conclusions are extrapolated from the published data.

Theoretical perspective

The guiding analytical framework in this profile was informed by the intersection between women in development and gender perspectives. These perspectives seek to analyse the position of women relative to men in Namibia. The analytical framework revealed the different social situations and experiences of men and women, the different roles played by men and women as well as ideologies shaping their lives. The analysis was also conducted from a developmental perspective, paying particular attention to key socio economic, political, cultural and other development processes that have taken place in Namibia, and how these have impacted on the role and status of women in particular. By using this analytical framework certain themes and topical areas/issues key in shaping the women's empowerment agenda in Namibia were identified.

Outline of the profile

Part I Situation Analysis. This section presents a brief analysis of the gender implications of key indicators in economics, politics, education, information, health and other social areas which impact women's lives. Trends over time, which show changes in women's legal and social status are also reviewed.

Part II Policy and Programmes. This section looks at the policies formulated by the government of Namibia, with input from several NGOs. It examines, among others, the National Gender Policy (NGP), National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA), the Namibia Vision 2030, the Second National Development Plan (NDP2) and findings from two national studies done on behalf of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW).

Part III The Way Forward. This section integrates the issues presented in Parts I and II. It also outlines achievements in, and constraints to, implementing gender-sensitive policies and programmes with particular emphasis on the concerns outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action, Namibia Vision 2030, NDP2 and by NGOs, and in particular recommendations for what needs to be done.

BACKGROUND AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

There were an estimated 1.8 million people living in Namibia, as of 2001. Of this total, 51.5 percent were female and 48.5 percent were male. In 2001, there was a total sex ratio of 94 for every 100 females.¹ The annual population growth rate between 1991 and 2001 was 2.6 percent, while the growth rate prior to 1991 was 3.1 percent. This drop in the rate of growth is attributable to the AIDS pandemic. Approximately 67 percent of the population live in rural areas, a decline from 72 percent in 1991.

Sex ratios by regions

Namibia has a classic age/sex pyramid indicative of a developing country with 39 percent of the population less than 15 years of age.

The sex ratio differs considerably by region. Some regions have more men than women. For example, Erongo has the most skewed sex ratio with 115 males for every 100 females. Karas has 114; Otjozondjupa has 107; Khomas has 102; and, Kunene has 101 females per 100 males. The northern regions have the lowest sex ratios. Omusati has the lowest with 81 males per 100 females; Ohangwena has 83; Oshana has 84; Oshikoto has 90; and, Kavango has 91 males per 100 females. This indicates that females are more likely to live in the regions that also exhibit the highest levels of poverty and social deprivation.

The Namibian Constitution

The Namibian Constitution, which was adopted at Independence in 1990, identifies the family as a basic fundamental human right and also provides for equal rights

in and during marriage and in divorce. The Constitution further commits Namibia to eliminating all discriminatory practices based on, among others, sex, colour and race. With the abolishment of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic government, women's equal rights are enshrined in the constitution.

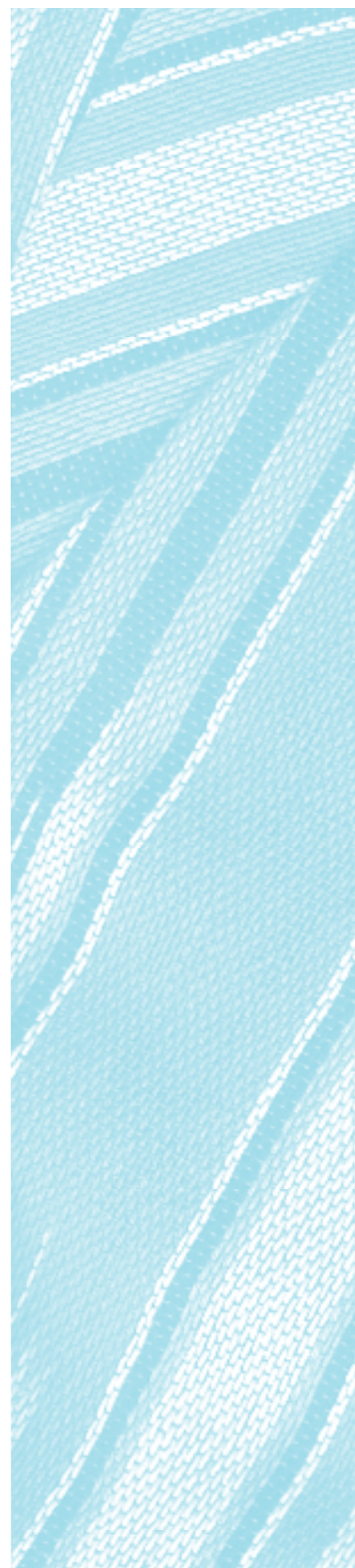
Furthermore, it recognises the previously disadvantaged position of women and encourages the implementation of affirmative action policies that advance women's social status and roles within society. In addition, the Constitution calls for legislation to give women equal opportunities and provides for equal remuneration as well as maternity and related benefits.

Through the Constitution, Namibia acknowledges and encourages equal power relations in all spheres of social, legal and economic life.

The Namibian government has signed several international and national instruments for the promotion of gender-equality. Namibia also has political commitment at the highest level, the President, to advance gender. However, despite the support of the President and the efforts by gender advocates, there is still a pervasive negative attitude towards gender-equality, both at the community and national levels, which is a serious challenge to implementing gender policies and programmes.

International developments and their impact

Namibia is one of the few African countries whose constitution pro-



vides that the ratification of international instruments is self-executing. Namibia is a signatory to several international gender conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which parliament ratified in 1992 and the CEDAW Optional Protocol ratified in 2000, as well as the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPFA), the African Regional Platform for Action and the African Charter on Women's Rights ratified in 2004, all of which uphold the principles of gender equality.²

These international documents contribute to the Namibian national vision of gender equality and provide guidelines for all national gender-equality programmes.³

The BDPFA and CEDAW form the basis for current gender policies and programmes in Namibia. The Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW) is tasked with the implementation of the CEDAW. Many of the provisions contained within CEDAW, such as the definition of discrimination, policy measures to eliminate sex discrimination and affirmative action provisions, parallel and reinforce those in the Constitution. All of these international instruments provide the foundation for the domestication of gender-equality policies and programmes at the national level.

Namibia has also ratified several international conventions to protect the rights of children.

The government signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and ratified it on 30 September 1990 and also signed

the Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, both of which form the basis for the National Programme of Action for the Children (NPA).

Two other international instruments are important in this context. These are the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography which was signed on 8 September 2000 and ratified on 16 April 2002 by the government. It entered into force internationally on 18 January 2002.

The ratification of these agreements offers additional protection for the girl-child, and shows Namibia's commitment to the development and protection of children.

Issues of Customary Law

The Constitution states that customary laws may be practised in Namibia, if they do not infringe the rights granted to an individual in the constitution.⁴ A system of customary laws applies to most women in Namibia's traditional African societies. These have developed within specific societies over time and usually reflect the "collective consciousness" of the society at that moment in time. Traditional courts, which implement customary laws and hear disputes within the community, are usually comprised of men and women are less likely to be treated fairly.

In rural areas, domestic disputes are primarily reported to relatives, neighbours, headmen and chiefs.⁵ Various traditional authorities hear violations of customary laws in traditional courts which are presided over by a senior headman or chief. Customary laws and the courts' roles appear

to differ not only from culture to culture, but also from headman to headman. For example, most of the Owambo “self-stated” laws – written selected aspects of customary laws decreed by traditional authorities – make no mention of domestic violence (except the “law of Uukwaluudhi”), while they include explicit rules for the handling of rape cases and all cultural groups stipulate different payments for the crime of rape.

Although in some cases women may be treated unfairly in customary courts, many women regard customary laws and courts as better suited to hear certain types of cases – in particular rape cases – than the state’s legal system. Women found the proceedings at customary courts more sympathetic to rape survivors, for example, the members of customary courts are said to be more inclined to “believe” the woman. The period between the crime and the trial is much shorter in customary courts. The compensation the victim and/or her family may receive from the perpetrator or his family is also a gratifying outcome, which is lacking in the state’s legal system.

Although the Constitution states that customary laws may only be practiced in Namibia if they do not infringe upon rights granted to an individual in the Constitution, civil and customary law have yet to be harmonised. Of importance are several new acts and bills being put into place to protect women. Data shows⁶ that “Women in many African communities, as well as many policy-makers, have begun to question the constitutionality of customary laws claiming that they are racist because they apply only to African communities, while civil law applies to every-

one else.” Namibia has initiated a number of legal reforms to address previous gender discrimination based on civil law, but reform in the area of customary law has moved slowly.

Current law reform on gender

Legal reform is the first step towards dismantling a social structure that systematically discriminates against women. At independence there were 13 laws that favoured men over women.⁷ Many of these laws have been changed, but not without resistance from male lawmakers and indeed male community members.

Currently, there is a confusing web of civil and customary laws that govern women’s rights. There are several government initiatives such as the Customary Law Bill (not yet released), which will, among other things, recognise customary marriages and attempt to address some of the problems with harmonising customary and civil laws. Several new Acts and Bills are in place to protect women (See Box 2). These, and attempts to improve law enforcement and judicial responses to violations of women’s rights, have gone a long way towards guaranteeing women more equitable protection in the country.

Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996)

At Independence, Roman Dutch law allowed a husband to acquire power over the person and property of his wife upon marriage. A husband had absolute power over his wife as well as overall property within the marriage, even if the wife had acquired such property prior to the marriage. As such, the wife could not make decisions with regard to property without her husband’s

consent. She could not buy a house or car, acquire a bank loan or enter into contractual obligations without her husband's consent. Conversely, a husband did not need the wife's consent in any of the same matters.

The Married Persons' Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996) specifies equality of persons within marriage and does away with the legal definition of the man as head of the house. The Act also provides women married in community of property, equal access to bank loans and stipulates that immovable property should be registered in both spouses' names. The Act further offers alternatives to couples intending to enter into marriage to ensure that there is equal participation and power relations. However, the Act only covers couples married under civil law, giving husbands and wives equal guardianship of children from the marriage, and it does not sufficiently address discrimination within the family. In addition, most community members do not understand the purpose of this law.

More urban men than women know about the contents of the Act. Men living in the rural areas know about it but have less information about its contents than their urban counterparts. As with gender-equality, most men do not agree with the contents of the Act, and several blame it for causing social and marital problems. Interestingly, far more men than women in both the rural and urban areas know about the Act and many men know about it through other men, particularly because of its contentious nature. Although men are not happy about it, they know that legally, women should have equal rights within marriage. The Act creates a legal basis for gender-equality.

Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003)

Another key law influencing gender and development is the Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003). It defines domestic violence broadly to include physical abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse (including destruction or damage to property), intimidation, harassment (including stalking), trespassing, and emotional, verbal or psychological abuse (which requires a pattern of "degrading" or "humiliating" conduct).⁸ The Act identifies a domestic relationship as a civil or customary marriage; a former marriage or those engaged to be married; a cohabitation relationship in which two people of different sexes are or were living together as if they were married; parents who have a child together, or are expecting a child together (whether or not they lived together); parents and children; family members related by blood, marriage or adoption (as long as there is some connection); and, any two people of different sex who are or were in an intimate or romantic relationship. A domestic relationship is said to exist for one year after the partners have broken up, throughout the lifetime of the child or for one year after the child has died (Part I).

In addition, the Act simplifies the process of obtaining a protection order, including the protection of persons and property. Any person, interested in the well-being of a minor child (as well as the minor child him or herself) can lay a complaint and request a protection order on behalf of the child (Part II). The Act also makes provision for the perpetrator to move out of the family home, thereby making the incident less traumatic for victims in the household. The introduction of this Act made society

aware that violence within the home or family is not a private matter and is not tolerated. Since it is a relatively new law, guidelines for implementation, monitoring and evaluation are still being drafted and there are still no statistics on the incidences of domestic violence in the country. In addition, this law does not apply to same sex relationships.

People, especially from the rural areas, are unclear about whether or not domestic violence is a specific crime.⁹ Some believe that the law says, "Men are not supposed to beat their women." Rural women are more likely than their urban counterparts to say that they do not know if there is any specific law against domestic violence. Whether or not it is identified as a specific crime, all urban women and most rural women indicate that it is illegal for a man to beat his wife. Several rural women make the observation that domestic violence happens in their village but no one interferes because it is either regarded as normal, not illegal, seen as a family issue or the man's right to beat his wife. The law is not well understood by all, men and women alike.

Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000)

One of the most progressive laws enacted on rape is the Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000). The previous law pertaining to rape in Namibia was inadequate and actually contributed to marital rape and the rape of individuals other than women, since these acts were not legally defined as rape, but indecent assault. Under the previous law, rape was defined as "unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent" leaving many cases unprosecuted because they fell outside the legal definition, given

that many forms of sexual assault (such as forced oral sex, sodomy or inserting objects into the vagina) were previously not defined as rape, and sentences for such offences were lenient and could have been as innocuous as probation or a suspended sentence.

The word "consent" did not focus on the use of force or coercion used by the perpetrator. Under the new Act, the term used is "coercive circumstance" which is broadly defined to include physical force, threats of force, or other circumstances where the victim is intimidated. Hence, the new law also protects young girls and boys, as well as men against rape (given that it is a gender neutral law) and provides for stiffer minimum sentences for rapists and more strict bail conditions for people accused of rape. This is also a relatively new piece of legislation and the process of implementation, evaluation and monitoring has been under going revisions.

Another problem with the previous law was the use of the term "unlawful sexual intercourse" to define rape, which was problematic in marital contexts. It was generally regarded as a husband's lawful right to have sex with his wife and hence marital rape was not classified as a crime in Namibia. This exemption of marital rape from the law reinforced the notion that a wife was the property of her husband. The new Act defines marital rape as illegal, letting men know that wives are not their property and men cannot force them to have sexual intercourse against their will.

People know that the new rape law exists but are still unsure whether marital rape is illegal. Urban men are divided as to whether a man can rape his wife, while the majority of urban women agree that a man can rape his wife. However, they say that

most wives do not report it. Most rural women and men do not believe that marital rape is possible. Most women identify men's power and control as reasons for marital rape.

Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (AAA) (No. 29 of 1998)

In keeping with the Constitution's goals of affirmative action, the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (AAA) (No. 29 of 1998) focuses on disadvantaged groups, including the racially disadvantaged, women and the disabled. The Act identifies a set of measures to ensure that persons in specific groups have access to equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce.

The AAA further makes provision for the establishment of the Employment Equity Commission (EEC), which has as its main objective the oversight of the implementation of the AAA. The EEC has, over the years, published reports and guidelines – complete with forms to be used and prepared by employers on their AA plan – for the administration of the AAA.¹⁰ One challenge is the lack of mechanisms for implementation and enforcement. In addition, the Public Service Commission and the EEC do not have GFPs to emphasize gender issues within this sector.

Maintenance Act (No. 9 of 2003)

One of the more recent laws is the Maintenance Act (No. 9 of 2003), which gives parents a legal duty to maintain their children who are unable to support themselves. Both parents are responsible for the support of children regardless of whether the children were born inside or outside of a marriage and whether or not the parents are subject to any other system of customary law

which may not recognise one or both parents' liability to the child (Article 3). This new Act provides relief for women who are most often left as the sole caregivers to children. Further, under the new Act, the petitioning parent can be granted an order to be paid maintenance in kind (goats or cattle) where the father is not employed but owns livestock.

The procedures under the new Act apply to both civil and customary marriages, but women in some communities feel that it is culturally and socially inappropriate to make use of these mechanisms as fathers of children in matrilineal communities do not pay maintenance, as this is considered the responsibility of the mother's uncles).¹¹ However, as Hubbard¹² points out, this system fails to function due to the influence of Westernisation; many uncles prefer to take care of their own children. This Act is still new and it is too soon to measure its impact. In addition, there is need for awareness-raising to inform community members of their newly acquired rights and/or responsibilities under this Act.

Criminal Procedure Amendment Act (No. 24 of 2003)

Yet another recently enacted law is the Criminal Procedure Amendment Act (No. 24 of 2003) – commonly referred to as the Vulnerable Witnesses Act – which is aimed at making the court process less traumatic for victims of crime and other vulnerable witnesses, especially in cases of sexual abuse and sexual assaults. Under the law, vulnerable witnesses do not have to testify in front of the accused but can testify on video. This Act will help in preventing survivors from being doubly victimised – once by the perpetrator and then by the legal system.



Proposed law reforms

There are several proposed law reforms that have not yet been passed by Parliament.¹³ One is the Labour Bill, passed by National Council on 4 August 2004, which – if approved in its current form – will provide protection for people from previously disadvantaged groups, including women and children. It specifically addresses discrimination in employment and creates an opportunity to strengthen key gender issues, in particular issues related to protection of people who are physically or mentally challenged. It also provides greater legal protection relating to HIV and AIDS, sexual harassment and maternity leave. One of the most important changes proposed by the Bill is in respect of pregnancy, whereby impending or current pregnancy is specified as another ground upon which employers should not discriminate.

Another is the Children's Status Bill, which seeks to give children born out of wedlock the same rights as children born into a marriage, which is critical in a country where teenage pregnancies and single parent households are prevalent. As of June 2004, the Bill has been reviewed at community hearings nationwide to determine its relevance to ensure that it is culturally and socially acceptable. Once the Bill becomes law, it will (hopefully) be a law that reflects community beliefs and cultural practices. Other related issues such as discrimination in inheritance between boys and girls will only be dealt with through inheritance law reforms.

Laws on rights to property and inheritance are probably the most blatantly racist laws still on the Namibian law books. Because of apartheid, the default position on marital property differs for blacks and whites. The Native Administration Proclamation No.

15 of 1928, which is still in force in post-independence Namibia, rules differently for civil marriages between "natives" in different communities in the country and is a clear violation of the constitutional prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race. The High Court has recently ordered that Namibia should reform this law before 2005.

In this regard, the Ministry of Justice is in the process of reviewing the laws relating to inheritance and drafting a marriage bill which will harmonise methods of inheritance and property regimes for all Namibians. The Communal Land Reform Act (No. 5 of 2002) addresses some women's rights to land in the communal areas; the current draft makes both men and women equally eligible for rights to customary land, altering the practice of evicting widows off communal land after the death of their husbands.

Under the Act, communal land must be re-allocated to a surviving spouse upon the spouse's death, while the right to remain on the land is not affected by remarriage. If there is no surviving spouse, or if the surviving spouse does not wish to remain on the land, then it goes to "such child of the deceased person as the Chief or Traditional Authority determines to be entitled to the allocation of the right in accordance with customary law". Although this Act offers protection for widows, it does not address other discriminatory traditional inheritance practices such as the deceased man's family taking all marital assets. A new marriage law is urgently needed.

Also of urgent concern is the reform of laws relating to divorce. Currently, divorce in Namibia is granted on the basis of fault and is generally viewed to be the women's fault. Unlike most coun-

Gender-related law reform

Box 2

Laws Passed

1. Labour Act (No. 6 of 1992)
2. Social Security Act (No. 34 of 1994)
3. Married Persons Equality Act (No. 1 of 1996)
4. Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (No. 29 of 1998)
5. Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000)
6. Communal Land Reform Act (No. 5 of 2002)
7. Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003)
8. Maintenance Act (No. 9 of 2003)
9. Criminal Procedure Amendment Act (No. 24 of 2003)

Laws being developed

1. Labour Bill
2. Children's Status Bill
3. Child Care and Protection Bill
4. Areas of Investigation for Law Reform
5. Marital Property Rights
6. Divorce
7. Recognition of customary marriages
8. Inheritance
9. Review of Combating of Immoral Practices Act (No. 21 of 1980)

tries in the world, Namibia does not allow divorce due to irreconcilable differences.

Responses to law reforms

Rural women believe they have been left out of development while urban women indicate that the government has contributed significantly toward improving the socio-economic status of women. Government initiatives have positively influenced rural women's lives especially through literacy training programmes and income-generating schemes. Women recommend government to provide better education, factories for uneducated women to be employed, income-generating projects, skills training, introducing offices of the MWACW countrywide so that rural women can benefit and financial assistance for women to start small businesses.

Many women do not utilise their legal rights because they do not know or understand the law or they are inhibited through their social and economic circumstances. The 2001/2002 UNDP report on gender and violence notes that during community research with urban women most of them did not know how to lay a charge against someone or how to access the courts. Male dominance of the

judicial system is also part of the problem. Female lawyers could be a possible solution, as some women suggested.

Law enforcement and judiciary responses to gender-related law reform efforts have many shortcomings, and their willingness to co-operate with all stakeholders, including NGOs has contributed to positive change. The courts have shown willingness to deal sternly with offenders, although there is still a long delay in bringing cases to trial. The training of police and judiciary officials on human rights "is showing dividends". Women have begun to report changes in the attitude of police officers and personnel in the judiciary. Police are also reportedly less likely to be indifferent to women complaining of domestic violence and rape. The LAC, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Namibian Police, supported by organisations such as UNICEF, work closely on training police, prosecutors and magistrates on new legislation, such as the Combating of Rape Act. However, one of the biggest problems in addressing issues of violence against women and children through the law enforcement and judiciary systems is the delay in getting justice.

PART I

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Women in the pre-independence period

Many challenges that women face in contemporary Namibia have been "influenced by the historical imbalance of power between women and men, social structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and related social problems." In a few Namibian pre-colonial societies, some women held positions of authority. In traditional African societies, individual women had *de jure* (as chiefs and headwomen) as well as *de facto* (as mothers and wives) social power. Although only a few women traditionally held positions of political power, Becker¹⁴ suggests that some individual women had political leverage through their male relations. In some cultures, such as the Nama, Kavango and Owambo, women were traditional leaders and chiefs¹⁵ however, the point here is that the social, political and economic organisation of these cultures was, and still is, that of male dominance.

When Western missionaries and colonial administrations arrived in Namibia, as elsewhere in Africa, they demanded to interact with men in positions of power and refused to negotiate with women, even if women were leaders. In many cases, this subordination to Western ideals undermined any social position women might have had.¹⁶ Many customary laws, whether or not they discriminated against women, were manipulated by colonial authorities – sometimes to advance South African government policy.

Western colonial ideas have also impacted gender relations by altering previous cultural beliefs

and practices as well as traditional control mechanisms. For example, in some African societies, "wife-beating" has been considered an appropriate method of correcting a woman's behaviour. However, pre-colonially the act of "wife-beating" was limited in that the woman was not to have clear visible signs of the incident. In contemporary Namibia, some men claim that a man beating his wife is a sign that he loves her.

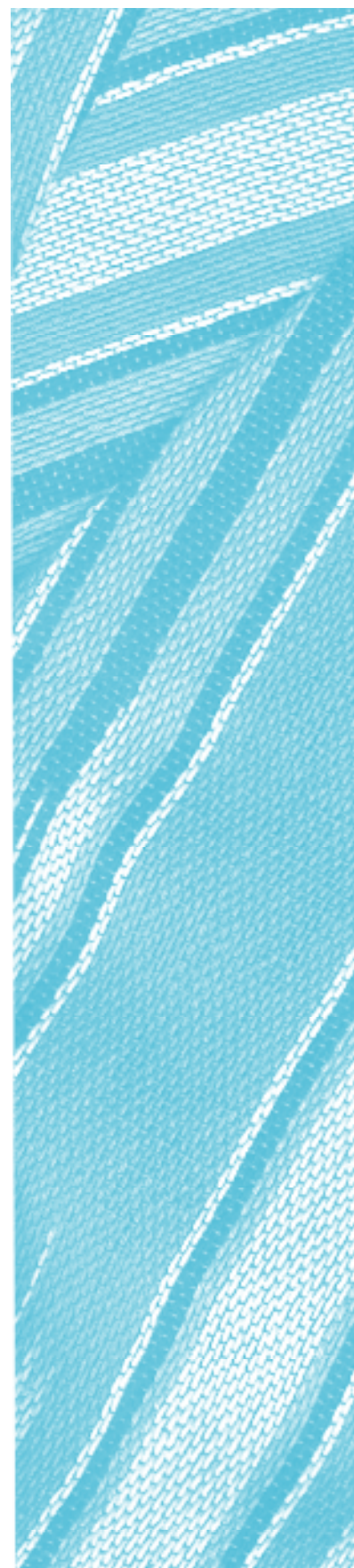
The prevailing laws (both Roman-Dutch and customary laws) classified women as minors. For example, in pre-colonial Herero society the gender distinction between men and women was weak. However, in contemporary Herero society men are considered *omuhona* (lord or master), a term once reserved for chiefs. Women under colonialism held a lower legal and social status than under any other socio-political environment which exists or has existed in Namibia. Both white and black women were discriminated against based on their gender, but black women were further discriminated against based on "race".

Post-Beijing national structural developments¹⁷

The government of Namibia has established several government institutions to address gender issues and developed a system within those institutions for addressing gender inequalities in all areas of Namibian life.

Government structures

The MWACW is designed for gender programme development and national co-ordination, to



constitute gender sectoral committees, organise ministerial Gender Focal Points (GFPs), co-ordinate international affairs and maintain multi-bilateral relations, facilitate gender research and contribute to gender sensitive and/or gender-related legislation. The National Co-ordination Division within the MWACW co-ordinates nationwide gender activities on a daily basis through regular correspondence with its subsections such as Regional Offices and Gender Sectoral Committees (GSCs).

The MWACW has also appointed one Development Planner of Gender Sectoral Committees to make the sectoral committees more effective. Areas of focus are derived from the National Gender Policy (NGP) and the National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA). The main divisions the MWACW address are organised into three issues:

- women's issues;
- children's issues; and
- community development.

Within the MWACW, the sections dealing with women's issues are the National Co-ordination, Gender Sectoral Committees, Training Programme Development, Ministerial GFPs, International Affairs, and Research and Legislation. However, the MWACW, as of 2004, is in the process of restructuring its divisions.

GFPs have been tasked to liaise with relevant departments, raising gender-awareness within their respective ministries, assisting their ministries to review policies and programmes from a gender perspective, reporting back to the MWACW, and drawing up annual gender-specific budgets for their ministries.¹⁸ They are primarily tasked with reviewing policies and programmes of their respective min-

istries and ensuring gender mainstreaming.

All ministries are also mandated by government to address past gender imbalances by reviewing their policies and programmes for gender sensitisation and mainstreaming. Ministries that specifically tackle gender issues include:

- the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) which drafts gender-related laws;
- the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) which promotes gender sensitive education;
- the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) which deals with women's health issues;
- the Ministry of Labour (MoL) which ensures women's participation in the work force;
- the Ministry of Finance (MoF) which budgets for gender sensitive policies for other ministries;
- the Ministry of Defence which has a Gender Plan of Action¹⁹; and
- the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation (MHETEC) through its Directorate of Youth has started a Gender Desk in order to focus on gender and poverty, rural development and ensuring a gender balance in all social, economic and political areas of life.²⁰

Some parastatals have also significantly contributed to the advancement of women's issues in Namibia. The University of Namibia (UNAM) has GFPs, the GTRP, which is a gender specific training and research institution, and several of its departments such as Sociology, Law, and Education which offer courses on gender issues from their unique perspectives. The GTRP has as

Relevant government mechanisms established to address gender issues Box 3

Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare
Gender Sectoral Committees
Gender Focal Points within ministries
National Gender Mainstreaming Task Force (a collaboration of stakeholders), and
Gender Commission (yet to be instituted).

some of its aims: to teach interdisciplinary courses on gender and development; to enable UNAM students to gain in-depth understanding of gender research; to provide post-graduate gender training; to promote awareness of gender issues; and to improve gender specific teaching and research. The Polytechnic also offers gender sensitive courses. The Polytechnic states in its mission that it provides an academic institution of high quality to all people regardless of race, colour, gender, etc. The NBC has made significant strides in providing the Namibian population with access to (from 20% to 40% of population) television and (from 65% to 90% of population) radio since independence. Also, now NAMDEB, which is the largest company (parastatal) in Namibia, has a woman CEO.

Gender-related NGO developments

Sister Namibia has changed its mandate from being a media project to an organisation dealing with women's rights and HIV and AIDS, sexual rights and women in politics, and has as its mandate the elimination of patriarchy and the encouragement of gender-equality. It is also mandated with addressing gender through media and communication, and to advocate for human sexual rights.

The Namibian National Women's Organisation (NANA-WO) addresses reproductive health, HIV and AIDS and inheritance issues, and is mandated with ensuring respect and collaboration among women, uplifting women by eliminating discriminatory laws, and maintaining a close relationship with other women's organisations.²¹

The Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) has become a driving force behind gender-specific law reform

and has developed a number of programmes aimed at women and children's rights. The LAC provides litigation and advice, conducts research and training, provides education and advocacy, and makes policy recommendations relating to human rights issues, under which women's and children's rights fall. In 1993, the LAC began its Gender Research and Advocacy Project which has been working on issues of gender-equality through such activities as research on law reform in the area of domestic violence and rape, as well as participating in mobilisation, advocacy and information campaigns.

Namibian Men for Change (NAMEC), launched in 2000, is the first male-driven initiative to address gender issues in Namibia and was specifically formed to sensitise and encourage men and boys to end violence against women and children. The organisation encourages changing abusive attitudes and behaviour. The Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (NAPPA) was launched in 1996, and the National Early Childhood Development (NECD) in 1997.

The Namibia National Association of Women in Business (NNAWIB) was also established in 1996. Women's Action for Development (WAD) was started in 1994 to train rural women for socio-economic empowerment, but has broadened to include socio-political empowerment and now includes Women's Voice which advocates for women's issues. It serves, supports and encourages disadvantaged women in Namibia by organising them into self-help groups by motivating, training and promoting income-generating activities. The WAD has been successful in its holistic development of rural communities through its two-

*Government to
reduce poverty through
agricultural
development, enterprise
and human capital...*

pronged approach of both socio-economic as well as socio-political empowerment for its members.

The Forum for African Women Educationalists in Namibia (FAWENA) was formed in 1999 with the specific goal of improving the educational status of the girl-child.²² Fawe has begun sending young girls for training, and has implemented projects on peer counselling.²³ For example, the Second NDP2 states that curriculum reform continues and the entire school curriculum was redesigned by 2001. The government also renders support to the NECD programme begun in 1997, which is committed to the holistic development of children.

ECONOMY

Macro-economics – policies and programmes

Two major policy documents guide the social and economic policies of the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN). These documents, the Second National Development Plan (NDP2) and the Namibia Vision 2030, indicate that the overall aim for Namibia's economic development is to transform the country from a developing, lower-middle income to a developed, high-income country by the year 2030. The Namibian government has tasked itself to reducing poverty through agricultural development, non-agricultural growth such as encouraging Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and empowering people through human capital development in education, health and shelter programmes. The government has adopted a Poverty Reduction Policy aimed at lifting the poorest people to above the poverty line.

The NDP2 and Vision 2030 state their medium-term objectives as to revive and sustain eco-

nomic growth, create more employment opportunities, reduce inequalities in income distribution, reduce poverty, reduce regional development inequalities, promote gender-equality, promote economic empowerment and to combat further the spread of HIV and AIDS. Economic development will depend upon the performance of sectors such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, tourism, fisheries, transport and communications. Some social and economic challenges include poverty reduction, land reform, employment creation, diversifying the economy, encouraging SMEs equitable distribution of resources and combating HIV and AIDS. In addition, the services sector needs to be developed. Peace and democracy need to be promoted to encourage concepts of social justice.

The government's National Agricultural Policy (NAP) is to work towards reducing inequalities that exist between the commercial and communal agricultural sectors by providing training, research, extension work and credit schemes to eligible communal farmers. It is believed that by assisting communal farmers, the government will be able to enhance agricultural production. The government plans to increase agricultural output to 10 percent of the GDP, reduce dependency on conventional agriculture for livelihood by 10 percent, and increase livestock off-take in communal areas from five percent to 10 percent by 2006. The government also plans to reform agricultural policies to advance the needs of small-scale farmers, implement a national drought policy and develop a policy to encourage domestic markets. However, some challenges to developing the agricultural sector



include the reoccurrence of drought conditions in southern Africa, as well as limited financial and human resources.²⁴

The NAP is also aimed at increasing and sustaining levels of agricultural production, real farm income and national and household food security. It aims to achieve agricultural production above the population growth rate, ensure food security, create employment opportunities in the rural areas, improve the profitability of agriculture, improve the living standards of farmers and promote sustainable utilisation of natural resources.

The Household Food Security Programme (HFSP) is designed to increase household access to basic foods, thereby reducing food insecurity at the household level. Female-headed households are specifically targeted by this programme by focusing on economic and technical empowerment of women, improving their ability to manage resources and encouraging their participation in community activity. In support of the HFSP, a National Food Security and Nutrition Council has been established, a Food and Nutrition Policy was adopted in 1995 and a National Food and Nutrition Plan was implemented. A National Drought Task Force is also in place to mobilise resources to cope with emergency and drought situations.

Macro-economic achievements

The economy of Namibia has performed better since independence than in the 1980s. Real GDP grew at an average rate of between 3.5 percent and 4.5 percent per year between 1997 and 1999. Agriculture has experienced considerable loss in its contribution to real GDP, as has the mining industry. These figures indicate that primary industries' performance varied in recent years due to climatic condi-

tions and fluctuating commodity prices. The agricultural sector continues to play an important role in the economy, especially in terms of employment, although the sector has experienced problems over the last few years due to droughts and floods, and is projected to register a fall of about 5.7 percent for 2003.

However, Namibia still exhibits a high dependency on raw materials, service and sales provision, with some development from the production sectors of the economy.

Any manufacturing which exists in Namibia is mainly concentrated in urban areas, mostly in the central, southern and western parts of the country, resulting in rural-urban migration of mainly young people. Because more women live in the rural areas, they have less access to formal employment and the cash economy than men have, rendering them dependent on the remittances of men working in the urban areas.

Per capita income in Namibia is US\$1,730, with an annual growth rate between 1999 and 2000 of 2.2 percent, which ranks Namibia relatively high among many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. However, income distribution in the country is very skewed which makes this figure misleading.²⁵ A few people earn such high figures while the majority of the population remains impoverished. Due to the dependence of Namibia on the extraction of raw material, its commerce, trade and financial sectors are also underdeveloped. As a consequence, manufacturing and industrial employment opportunities are scarce, causing the majority of unskilled labourers to search for employment as domestic workers (for women) and day labourers (for men).

*The economy of
Namibia has performed
better since
independence...*

Donor and government assistance

The government allocates about 46 percent of its national budget to the social sectors including health, education, water, sanitation and housing annually. Approximately 10-16 percent of this is on health and between 28-30 percent of the amount to education. Between 1998-2000, the government spent an average of 8.1 percent of the national GDP on education (up from a figure of 7.6 percent in 1990); 4.2 percent of GDP was spent on health care (up from 3.7 percent in 1990), and 2.8 percent of GDP in military (down from 5.6 percent in 1990).

Annually, total Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Namibia is about 16 percent of government expenditure and major areas targeted for ODA are human resources development such as education, health and social sector projects (such as potable water, housing and sanitation), accounting for about half of all development assistance.

Several international donor agencies have specifically targeted the development of women's programmes and assistance for financial and technical support in this area²⁶ UN agencies such as UNIFEM, UNDP and UNAIDS; bilateral ODA such as Sweden and Norway as well as Bristol Myers Squipp Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, and Hivos have made gender issues a focus of their work in Namibia. Some donors fund research and development projects, while others fund projects if they have a specific gender component.

Access to the means of production

Namibia, as with most other countries in southern Africa, has a predominantly agrarian economy. The agricultural sector is

divided into the commercial and communal sectors. Approximately 67 percent of Namibians live in the rural areas and depend on subsistence agriculture, often in conjunction with cash income, pensions and remunerations. Of those, 36 percent have no source of income other than subsistence agriculture, which accounted for 2.8 percent of Namibia's 1999 GDP, while commercial agriculture accounted for 2.9 percent of the GDP.

The main sources of income for most Namibian households are wages and salaries (41 percent), farming (28 percent), pensions (11 percent), businesses other than farming (nine percent) and cash remittance (six percent). The 1999 Levels of Living Survey revealed that 73 percent of women were economically active compared to 79 percent for men.

Although women are the primary users of environment and land, they do not have the ability to own or have usufruct rights to it. Although all communal land, in theory, belongs to the Namibian government, communal land is allocated through the system of traditional authorities who are paid a fee for such rights. These rights are generally granted to men who are perceived to be the heads of the households. It is anticipated that the Communal Land Reform Act will address some issues of women's rights to land in the communal areas.

The Ministry of Finance, with the co-operation of Sweden conducted a gender analysis of the Namibian State budget. A gender-disaggregated analysis was done for key sector budgets such as basic and higher education as well as agriculture. It revealed that basic statistical tools and data were not gender-disaggregated, thus inhibiting effective gender analysis of national budgets.



Although some sectors of government have begun to collect gender-disaggregated statistics (for example in agriculture) and the MWACW, the national budget still does not have gender-disaggregated data and is "gender blind". The government has yet to mainstream gender into its national budget.

Formal and informal employment

Formal employment

Women's participation in the labour force is particularly difficult to measure since the majority of women are technically unemployed or involved in informal enterprises. There is a lack of recognition of the importance of women's labour as economic measures such as GDP do not recognise women's domestic and unpaid economic activities. However, it is the labour and coping skills of women which have, to a certain degree, subsidized the low wages paid to workers in the mines and other sectors. Table 1, shows that formally employed men are consistently more than women over the period under review.

However, employment levels – and conversely unemployment – for women (64.1 percent) is still significantly lower than for their male counterparts (73.2 percent). Table 2 indicates that most employed people work in the private and government sectors. Although women have lower participation rates than men in the private sector (35.7 percent versus 48.2 percent), they have slightly higher participation rates in government.

The study commissioned by UNDP²⁷ indicates that women are slightly more likely than men to work in agriculture (39 percent versus 38 percent), but substantially more likely to work in the service industry (52 percent versus 43 percent) primarily as

Labour Force Aged 15+ Years by Sex and Urban/Rural areas Table 1

	Urban (%)		Rural (%)		Total (%)	
	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
Male	75	74	65	51	69	60
Female	53	65	48	40	49	50
Both	64	69	56	45	58	54

SOURCE: Iipinge and LeBeau 1997:33; NPC 2003:37

domestic workers and waitresses. However, men are more likely than women to dominate in industry at 19 percent and eight percent respectively. In addition, men are almost twice as likely than women to occupy senior management positions, while women are more likely to be teachers and nurses, indicating that women continue to hold traditionally gender-stereotyped positions.

Formal sector employment still tends to favour men over women in high paying/high profile positions, while women's employment is concentrated in agriculture and domestic service. In addition, the classification of domestic duties (women's work for her own family) as economically inactive underestimates women's contribution to the nation's growth.

Informal employment

As can be seen from Table 2, women continue to be employed

Employed Population by Sex and Type of Employment Table 2

	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Subsistence Farming (with pay)	2.7	1.3	2.1
Subsistence Farming (without pay)	4.4	6.4	5.3
Other Employer (with pay)	4.0	3.1	3.6
Own Account (without pay)	3.9	6.3	5.0
Government (with pay)	18.5	19.2	18.8
Private (with pay)	48.2	35.7	42.7
Family Worker (without pay)	9.5	16.0	12.4
Other Family Worker (without pay)	3.3	6.1	4.5

SOURCE: NPC 2003:38

in less profitable economic activities than men. Women often take advantage of any income-generating activity available to them, regardless of risk or low profit turnover. As discussed in the box, women and children have been found working in some of the most squalid circumstances in Namibia.

Income and poverty

For Namibia, the poverty line is considered a subjective poverty measure and is based on an average expenditure of N\$462 per adult.²⁸ In a 1999 survey, 75.9 percent of all households in Namibia fell below the poverty line. Male-headed households tend to spend more than female-headed households (N\$537 versus N\$328), and are, on average, more likely to be above the poverty line compared to female-headed households.

Namibia's Human Poverty Index (HPI) is 37.8 percent, ranking it 62 out of 175 countries according to the UNDP Human Development Report of 2001/2002. However, when examining Namibia's Human Development Index (HDI), Namibia has a rating of 62.7 percent, ranking it 114 out of 173 countries.²⁹ The difference in these two figures indicates the skewed nature of income distribution in Namibia. The UNDP Report further indicates that women have annual incomes almost half that of men (US\$4 833 versus US\$9 511).

For the HPI, females scored 26 percent compared to 21.7 percent for men. Females' poor scores on this scale are due to their higher illiteracy rates, less access to potable water and higher percentages of income going towards food. Females also have a slightly lower HDI score compared to males (62 percent versus 65 percent), although this gap has significantly lessened since 1998 when it

was 65 percent for females and 77 percent for males. Females' lower HDI score is due to lower adult literacy rates and lower income levels. The Gender Development Index (GDI) for Namibia was 63 which placed Namibia at 100 out of 175 countries.

For people outside of the labour force, women are more likely than men to be homemakers (49.7 percent versus 32.9 percent), while men are more likely to be classified as students (44.2 percent versus 29.2 percent). Women instead of men tend to also dominate in unpaid family labour (24 percent versus 18 percent), and in the agricultural sector. Most notably, young women in the urban areas are most likely to be unemployed, although women of all ages are more likely than their male cohorts to be unemployed.

Gender division of household tasks

The 2002 Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) survey found that 18 percent of children nationwide do household chores, but the majority of this work is done in the rural areas. Nationwide, 23 percent of children fetch water and wood.³⁰ In most rural communities, women and girls are responsible for about 75 percent of the workforce that fetch water and collect firewood. Fifteen percent of children, primarily girls, nationwide care for people who are sick.³¹ Although the cause of the illness is not known, it can be assumed that many of the sick that children care for are people living with AIDS. Generally, girl-children's workloads are far heavier and diverse than boys.

Workloads

Subsistence agriculture is labour intensive. Gender disaggregated



data on subsistence agricultural productive and home reproductive work in the northern rural areas indicate male and female workloads are gender-stereotyped. Females are responsible for as much as 90 percent of subsistence agriculture for some tasks, but no less than 60 percent for others. In general, cropping, other than land preparation, is a gender-stereotyped female role, while the care of livestock is a gender-stereotyped male role. Cultivating fields is done by females, (70 percent) while looking after livestock is done by males (53 percent).³² The Agricultural Survey data indicate that in all regions female-headed households are less likely than male-headed households to own ploughs or oxen. On the other hand, the Agricultural Census data indicate that in most regions female holders are more likely to produce crops, while male holders are more likely to do both crop production and animal husbandry.

The data also indicates that on average male-headed households plant more hectares than female-headed households and, with the exception of the Caprivi, male-headed households produce a higher average tonnage for cereal products. In general, male-headed households have more people and more workers per hectare, and produce more crops per person and per worker than female-headed households. Limited access to livestock means that women have less ability to access the benefits of livestock ownership such as the use of them for food, income from the sale of meat, dung for fertiliser and draught power, as well as lowering the overall social and economic status of women due to their lack of livestock ownership.

Working children and the Girl-Child³³

The Namibia Child Activities Survey (NCAS) conducted by the MoL in 1999, is the first survey to specifically examine aspects of children's work in Namibia because of the absence of information on the topic. At the time of the NCAS, there were an estimated 1,126,263 people living in households with children six to 18 years old in Namibia, of which 445,007 (40 percent) were children between the ages of six and 18 years of age. There were slightly more boys (42 percent) than girls (37 percent) represented in the survey population. Of all children, 72,405 or 16 percent (15 percent females and 17 percent males) worked for pay, profit or family gain. As early as age six, boys and girls are drawn into the work force in sizeable proportions of nine percent for girls and 10 percent for their male counterparts. The LFPRs increase for both sexes as age increases, reaching 18 percent for girls and 18 percent for boys at age 11, and at age 18 reaching the peak of 25 percent for females and 27 percent for males.

Out of the total number of working children in Namibia, 69,050 or 95 percent were working in the rural areas, indicating that working children in Namibia is primarily a rural phenomenon. The majority were engaged in home-related jobs; 66 percent in subsistence agriculture and an additional 18 percent worked in their homes. In the urban areas the situation was more diverse with 31 percent working at home, 21 percent in an employer's home and 10 percent working on the street. These data indicate that urban working children are domestic workers and/or street corner vendors. Over 63 percent of working children engaged in

*Some children
participate in informal
sector employment...*

'elementary occupations' with 78 percent of these children engaging in agriculture, hunting or forestry. Ninety-eight percent of children in elementary occupations were from the rural areas.

Urban and female children tend to work for more hours than rural and male children. This may be in part due to the girl-child's participation in domestic chores, in both their homes and as domestic workers, which have longer working hours. Girls use tools or equipment more often than boys (64.4 percent versus 56.1 percent), are slightly more likely to be injured on the job (4.1 percent for girls versus 3.2 percent for boys), and are more likely to have been hospitalised due to a work related injury (10.2 percent for girls versus 9.7 percent for boys).

Most children who work on commercial farms are paid something for their efforts, although they may receive less compensation than adult workers. Girls may be asked to help with household chores such as cleaning the farmhouse, cooking, feeding chickens and doing laundry. Children between the ages of 10 and 19 were more likely to be female while male farm workers tended to be older. This demographic difference may be due to the physical requirement for men to do heavy labour type tasks.

Children also participate in domestic work in both paid employment and as unpaid workers, often for extended family members. It is also quite common in Namibia for poor families in the rural areas to send one or two of their children to relatives in the urban areas so that these girls clean the house, wash clothes, cook the meals and mind the children while the relatives are at work. Sometimes the children are paid for their work, but more often than not, they are

given a place to stay, food and sometimes clothes as payment for their work. Young foreign girls doing domestic work sometimes earn little or no money because the employer knows that the children are illegal immigrants, usually from Angola or other neighbouring countries, and/or working illegally in Namibia and thus will not complain to the authorities when ill-treated.

Some children participate in informal sector employment including selling products for their parents as street vendors, working in family shops and selling *tombo* (homemade beer) in shebeens and *cuca* (informal drinking places) shops. Working in a family shop also appears to be done by females (72 percent) and/or by children (50 percent). Making baskets for sale is very clearly a female activity (91 percent), although children (17 percent), primarily girls, also participate in this income generating activity. Selling goods on the roadside is also a female task (70 percent) primarily reserved for older women, although children, usually daughters, also sell goods on the roadside (14 percent).

Agriculture and food security
Communal and commercial
agricultural sector

Agriculture (commercial and subsistence agriculture) accounts for the majority of economic activities in Namibia. In the commercial farming sector, production is primarily animal husbandry, while in most rural areas it is mixed crop and animal production. There are approximately 6,337 large commercial farms accounting for 32.3 million hectares or 73 percent of Namibia's farmland, while 100,000 communal farms account for 12.1 million hectares of farmland. Agriculture contributes



about nine percent to Namibia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and exhibits an overall average growth rate of two percent per annum. The average growth rate of the communal sector for 1999 was eight percent per annum compared to a negative growth rate in the commercial sector of three percent per annum. In 1999, 64 percent of the total cattle population were in communal farms while commercial farms had only 36 percent of the cattle. Conversely, commercial farms had 88 percent of the country's 2,160,635 head of sheep compared to only 12 percent for the communal farms. The 2001 Census indicates that 67 percent of Namibians live in the rural areas and do communal farming. Of those, 36 percent have no source of income other than subsistence agriculture.³⁴

Food security

Food security is a household's ability to acquire enough food to adequately feed all members of the household. Food insecurity occurs when households cannot provide for an adequate intake of food to ensure healthy members and can be a chronic or a transitory problem. In Namibia, which is prone to droughts, food insecurity in many regions is transitory due to variations in rainfall. Production and access to food at the individual household level are marginal in many regions of Namibia. Food insecurity has become a serious problem for many rural households due to variable rainfall, cycles of drought, environmental degradation and lack of alternative sources of income.

In addition to households producing their own food in the rural areas, most rural households supplement their food production with purchased food, while house-

holds in the urban areas depend almost entirely on purchased foods. The majority of households have access to food through private retail outlets.

Given that Namibia's agro-ecological base is primarily arid and semi-arid zones, it is not surprising that Namibia's climate is a fundamental constraint to agricultural production and persistent household food insecurity, especially in the rural areas. Drought, and hence household food insecurity could almost be considered the norm rather than the exception in Namibia, particularly since Namibia has experienced several devastating droughts in the last two decades (particularly bad in 1992-1993 and in 1996).

The Government has subsequently drawn up the 1997 National Drought Policy and Strategy which provides guidelines for dealing with drought-related issues such as its effect on natural resources and human suffering. The Drought policy provided for the establishment of a Drought Fund which deals with among other issues, food security.

Namibia also has a Food Security and Nutrition Development Programme which is implemented through an inter-ministerial sectoral committee and is coordinated by a Food Security and Nutrition Council. To date the programme has gone through planning, implementation and expansion phases. Throughout Namibia, drought relief resources are distributed in a broad-based national risk management strategy to protect rural households, although the new measures being put into place will mean more effective drought management and drought relief resources distribution in the future.

A recent survey found that about one-third of children under five years old suffer from malnu-

*Food insecurity
is a serious problem
for many rural
households...*

About one-third of households in Namibia are female-headed...

trition and that malnutrition and food insecurity are prevalent in Namibia.³⁵ The San, commercial farm workers, female-headed households, remote rural area dwellers and households in peri-urban areas are most vulnerable to food insecurity. About one-third of households in Namibia are female-headed and are more susceptible to food insecurity than male-headed households.

Over one-third (37.8 percent) of households can be classified as food insecure, with the situation worse in the rural (48.7 percent) rather than the urban (16.6 percent) areas. In addition, members of male-headed households are more likely to eat properly balanced diets while those in female-headed households are more likely to eat unbalanced diets on a regular basis. The Levels of Living Survey indicates that female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to serve two meals or less per day.

Qualitative data from Windhoek indicates that people most often get between two and three meals per day, although women are far more likely than men to have only two meals per day.

Research shows that most people, although typically getting food to eat most days, face a serious nutritional deficit. The daily diets consist mainly of starchy and fatty foods with few sources of vitamins.

Nutrition and micronutrients

Of importance to improving women and child nutritional statuses is improving health and household food security, while poverty and a lack of education are primary causes of hunger and under-nutrition.³⁶ Household food insecurity comes from a lack of resources, insufficient Knowledge Attitudes and

Practices (KAPs) and inadequate social services.

Poverty, food security and nutritional status are closely linked. Quantity and quality of food consumption are based on people's ability to secure sufficient income or to produce sufficient quantities of nutritious food. For reproductively active women, nutritional demands are higher. The DHS indicates that about 10 percent of pregnant women suffer from anaemia, primarily due to poor nutrition and illness and that 12 percent of all newborn babies have low birth weights (an indication of the poor nutritional health of the mothers). In addition, malnutrition is the third most common cause of deaths in children one to 12 months old (17 percent), and the most often cause of death in children one to four years old (19 percent).³⁷

In a society that identifies women primarily through their reproductive role, many of the health challenges women face are related to sexuality and child-bearing. Studies show that some pregnant women are at risk of health problems and many women give birth to premature babies because they lack nutritious food which lowers their bodies' immune system, allowing for other opportunistic diseases. However, poverty and cultural factors are often implicated in malnutrition for both mothers and their babies as they also affect women's ability to access food.

POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING

By 2002, 18 out of the 72 National Assembly members in the country were women. In Cabinet, there were only three women out of a total of 19 ministers and two of the three represented women in gender-stereotyped positions. In the National Assembly, women



constituted only 23 percent of the MPs. In the National Council, only two out of 26 members were women. However, after the May 2004 local government elections, women in local authorities constituted 46 percent of the councillors.

There have been campaigns, policies and programmes aimed at increasing women's position in political power-sharing and the number of women in political positions has increased, although women are far from having 50 percent representation in higher level decision-making positions.

National commitment - policies and programmes

The NGP acknowledges that an improvement in women's participation in politics and decision-making will assist in achieving transparency and accountability in government and bring new perspectives and experiences to political agendas. It notes that equality in political decision-making is also necessary for social and economic development. It further acknowledges that the low proportion of women in decision-making positions at the community, national and regional levels is a reflection of structural and attitudinal barriers hindering women. It advocates equal representation at all power-sharing levels, building capacity for women in management and leadership positions, changing negative attitudes towards gender-equality and increasing awareness.

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW) is also committed to promoting the greater participation of women in power sharing and decision-making within democratic processes. It also works to strengthen gender-related government policies, expose politicians to

gender issues, gender sensitise political parties and to assist aspiring women candidates. The MWACW is currently developing a programme to build capacity and strengthen understanding on gender issues among elected officials, be they men or women.

Perceptions of political power-sharing

Research was conducted in 2002 to determine community interest and understanding of political issues, including their attitudes towards women's participation in politics. Almost 75 percent of Namibians surveyed said that there is need for more women in positions of power. Women were slightly more likely than men to agree with this assessment.

The research also established that women and men are interested and participate in politics in almost equal numbers. This goes against the general perception that men are more interested in politics than women. The research indicates that there is no difference in attendance at political meetings and rallies between men and women. Neither is there a difference in levels of contact with elected representatives, or expressed interest in politics, although men were found to be only slightly more likely than women to regularly discuss issues of politics. However, areas of concern differ for men and women; with men being more interested in issues relating to war and national defence while women prefer to address children's issues.

Community members interviewed felt that male Members of Parliament (MPs) should deal with war and defence, crime, land reform, agriculture and water, international relations and employment or job creation while women MPs address children's rights, human rights and health

*Women and men
participate in
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equal numbers...*

All citizens, male and female, have a constitutional right to participate in the conduct of public affairs...

care. Community members' perceived gender division in the policy domain reflects the portfolios of ministers in Namibia, where women typically lead traditionally stereotyped ministries.

Elections and voting

Prior to independence, only the white population of Namibia could vote and all others were disenfranchised. However, after Independence, the Namibian Constitution guarantees that all citizens 18 years or older have the right to vote. The constitution further guarantees that all citizens, male and female, have a constitutional right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, whether directly or through freely chosen representatives. In addition, the Electoral Act (No. 24 of 1992) makes provisions for a quota system of elected representatives.

Women and men equally take part in the voting process. Research indicates that both men and women appreciate the need for all to vote. Both appreciate the essence of regular multi-party elections (83 percent of respondents) and 64 percent support the need for opposition parties in the political process. Women take part in the voting process in the country, although they are less likely to run for or be elected to public office.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) facilitates the election process by disseminating information on election and constituent rights through its regional offices and assisting in voter registration. It also promotes women focusing on gender issues in politics and providing youth with gender-sensitive information.

The electoral system

Namibia uses the proportional electoral system to elect members into local authorities and the National Assembly. In this system,

political parties draw a party list of candidates and leaders determine the ranking of nominations on the list. Voters do not vote for candidates, but for the party of their choice. Each party receives the percentage of seats equal to the percentage of votes received. This system is generally considered more beneficial for women who appear on their party's list because voters do not perceive that they are voting for a woman versus a man, but rather for the party. In addition, using the zebra style³⁸ lists that some political parties have, women on the lists assume the party's allocated seats.³⁹ Through this system, the local authorities elections of 2004 resulted in 46 percent women representation.

Alternatively, the plural electoral system is used to elect members of the regional councils and national council. Within this system, political parties put forth individual candidates to be elected in designated constituencies. It is less likely that women will be elected under this system because the constituency specifically votes for the candidate rather than a party of their choice.

A survey of people's opinions on the electoral system indicates that 48 percent of people surveyed think that political parties should be compelled to adopt a 50/50 style zebra list while 32 percent said that political parties should have a right to decide for themselves. Most wanted the number of female candidates to be increased, although there was no corresponding support for a quota system. People's attitudes towards women in political positions of power seem to be changing. A survey of voters attitudes during the 1992 elections showed that almost 25 percent of the respondents, men and women alike, said they would not vote for a woman candidate, the rea-



son given being that women are not suitable for public office.⁴⁰

Structural and institutional constraints are responsible for women's low rate of political participation. Barriers such as socialisation, family responsibilities, discriminatory cultural beliefs, harassment, lack of education and lack of solidarity among women voters and candidates all hamper women's full participation in the political arena. Women voters also do not know about women candidates, while men are unlikely to vote for them.

Women's participation in political party posts

Political parties have been active in advocating for women's rights, specifically in political power sharing. The ruling party has a SWAPO Party Women's Council (SPWC), which works towards the advancement of women. It envisions women's full participation in economic, cultural and social empowerment and is responsible for gender equality within the party.

The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) also has a Women's League which has an Executive Secretary. However, the DTA has yet to undertake gender activities within its organisation. The United Democratic Front (UDF), like the Congress of Democrats (CoD), does not have a functioning women's wing. However, its constitution provides for it and it encourages women's equal participation. Although SWAPO and the CoD both have clearly defined gender mandates, the situation of women in other political parties is not clear, and the DTA in particular, has been reported by its own members to undermine women's rights and status within the party.

The SWAPO party has advanced women's participation in politics and has progressively

worked towards its stated gender goals. For example, 47 percent of SWAPO party local authority councillors are women and members of the SPWC, all women ministers and deputy ministers as well as the Attorney General and the Prosecutor General are SPWC members, the majority of women in the National Assembly are SPWC members, there are two female National Council members including the Deputy Chair person, who are women and members of the SPWC and all women ambassadors are SPWC members.

The two women regional governors are SWAPO members and the party currently holds 55 seats in the National Assembly, 12 being held by women. The CoD has seven seats in the National Assembly; the CoD tied with the DTA in the number of seats won, making these two parties the front-runners behind SWAPO Party.

Three of the seven seats the CoD holds in the National Assembly are occupied by women. CoD members also serve as elected representatives at local and regional levels. The CoD also uses the zebra list system at the local level. The DTA has seven seats in the National Assembly, while the UDF holds two, of these, one DTA and one UDF seat each is occupied by a woman, while women from the DTA and UDF hold elected positions at local and regional levels.

NGO efforts

Several NGOs are promoting women's participation in power-sharing and decision-making. For example, the 50/50 Campaign is a global effort aimed at achieving gender-equality in political representation. It advocates for "zebra style" lists where political parties alternate women and men candidates for all elections.

Structural and institutional constraints hamper women's full participation in the political arena.

The Women's Manifesto, developed in 1999-2000 in collaboration with stakeholders, resulted in the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network which mobilised and trained women leaders for elections. The Network held workshops to raise awareness on women's political and human rights, and identified amendments to the Namibian electoral acts (currently referred to as the 50/50 Bill) which seek to ensure a gender balance in political power structures.⁴¹

Sister Namibia also publishes a quarterly magazine which focuses on, among others, gender issues, women in leadership and highlights the accomplishments of successful women in the public, private and civil sectors. Sister Namibia, in collaboration with stakeholders, also co-ordinates the Women's Manifesto Network and spearheads the 50/50 Campaign. The Namibian Women's Network, which consists of 11 rural groups from across Namibia, also provides advocacy, lobbying and voter education.

The Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) has been involved in gender law reform, and its programmes include addressing human rights issues and constitutional litigation activities, a paralegal training programme, juvenile justice, promotion of human rights and prevention of discrimination against people living with AIDS, and protecting land rights with a particular focus on women. LAC is also a member of the Election Support Consortium which prepares training materials and conducts training workshops to provide the public with voter education.

The Women's Action for Development (WAD) has also formed 42 Women's Voice committees in seven regions as well as a national one. These committees are avenues for community outreach as well as for identify-

ing women leaders, including potential women political candidates at both the local and national levels. Women's Voice members address social problems such as education or health, drug abuse, alcoholism and AIDS awareness within communities, and work through community leaders and traditional authorities. The WAD, in collaboration with the LAC, trains paralegal advisors in the regions to assist rural people with their legal problems.

The political arena

Within the local authorities and regional councils, women are underrepresented in regional councils and as Mayors, but are better represented as Deputy Mayors and local authority councillors (see Table 4). However, this shows that again men hold the higher positions while women occupy sub-ordinate positions.

Recent research suggests that women adopt community and local rather than national level approaches to increasing women's participation in power sharing. This is because people do not view local level government as sites of power. As such, they are less resistant to women's participation at the local level; hoping that change at the local level might be better received by the public and that women could be more easily entrenched in the structures of government at that local level.

However, having more women political leaders does not necessarily translate into women moving gender issues forward. Women's increased political representation has not seen a corresponding increase in levels of political influence and in the quality of life for women. This could be because both women and men are obliged to their parties and therefore uphold the party stance rather

Members of National Council, 2001			Table 3
2001	National Council Members	Chair-person	Deputy
Total	26	1	1
Women	2	0	1
% Women	7.7%	0	100%

SOURCE: Iipinge and Mwandingi 2001:13

Members of Local Authorities and Regional Government, 2001 Table 4

2001	Regional	Mayor Councillors	Deputy Mayor	Local Authority Councillors (2004)
Total	101	30	30	226
Women	5	7	20	104
% Women	5%	23.3%	66.7%	46%

SOURCE: Iipinge and Mwandingi 2001:15

Executive Members of Parastatals, 2001 Table 6

2001	Chief Executives	Senior Managers	Middle Level Managers
Total	12	64	269
Women	1	7	42
% Women	8.3	10.9	15.6

SOURCE: Iipinge and Mwandingi 2001:19

Members of the Executive of Political Parties, 2001 Table 5

2001	Central Committee			National Executive Committee		
	Total	Women	% Women	Total	Women	% Women
Party						
SWAPO	83	19	22.9	15	4	30.8
DTA	32	6	18.8	26	5	19.2
CoD	19	9	47.3	13	4	13.0

SOURCE: Updated from Iipinge and Mwandingi 2001:17

than speak out. It could also be that parties deliberately avoid including effective women on their party lists for fear of them defying gender insensitive policies and practices. This could explain the fact that the quota system is only applied at the local level, which is a less contested power site. In addition, parties are still predominantly held by men and continue to maintain male patriarchy. Until such a critical mass is reached, women in political positions will not be very effective.

Parastatals as a site of power

Women are severely underrepresented in parastatals, with only one of the 12 parastatals in the country having a woman Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (Table 6). There are no women in top management positions in the Namibian Defence Force and Special Field Forces, and there is only one woman in a senior position within the Namibian police force. Educational institutions in Namibia seem to have a better record for gender parity; 34.4 per-

cent at UNAM, 38.7 percent at Polytechnic and 48.8 percent at the College of Education women are in management. At UNAM, overall administrative staff have almost a 50:50 gender balance. However, men dominate top management positions at all three institutions.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Kinship systems⁴²

Forms of tracing descent in Namibia often determine who has rights to which categories of property when death or divorce occur. There is basically patrilineal descent (Nama and Damara communities)⁴³ matrilineal (Ovambo and Kavango communities) and bifurcated descent (Herero communities). While the Caprivi people were matrilineal, they have had patrilineal influence, a situation referred to as "cognatic" descent. These descent patterns are important because they influence customary marriages and methods of inheritance and control of children. The Nama and people from the Khomas Region regard children as related to both sides of the

Polygamous marriages are illegal under civil law but legal under some customary laws.

family with the mother's side being more important.

The payment of *lobola* is generally perceived to give the husband and the husband's extended family rights of control over a woman's domestic production, fertility and offspring, often leading to wife and/or husband inheritance which is prevalent in most Namibian communities (with the exception of the Nama).

Rights of control over children are also linked to the payment of *lobola*. However, in matrilineal societies, in certain circumstances, this remains the responsibility of mother's brother (avuncular rule), since the children stay with the mother. Conversely, in patrilineal communities, the payment of *lobola* secures the father full rights of control and care of the children.

Marriage relations

Types of marriage

There are two kinds of marriage in Namibia: civil marriage and customary marriage. Civil marriages take place before a magistrate or church leader and are registered, and the couple receives a marriage certificate. Customary marriage takes place according to the customs of their community, without a marriage officer. Gay and lesbian couples may not marry in terms of Namibian law.

Customary marriages in most Namibian communities are potentially polygamous, and nine percent of Namibians are married traditionally. Polygamous marriages are illegal under civil law but legal under some customary laws. This discrepancy needs to be harmonised with the passing of the proposed Customary Marriages Bill. Although both civil and customary marriages are recognised in all Namibian communities, many, especially rural people, say that they still prefer customary marriages. Research indicates that

many people in Namibian communities have a "double" marriage; having a religious or civil ceremony and a customary one.

Civil laws concerning customary marriages discriminate based on race and sex. Customary marriages are automatically "out of community of property" for certain Africans, unless a declaration establishing another property regime was made to the marriage officer one month before the marriage took place. The theory behind the law seems to have been the protection of multiple wives in cases where one or more customary marriages took place before the civil marriage in question – the colonial authorities seem to have thought that an "out of community of property regime" would make it easier for these customary law wives to retain a share of her own as well as her husband's assets.

Divorce laws

There are four permissible grounds for divorce under civil marriage in Namibia:

- adultery;
- malicious desertion;
- imprisonment for at least five years of a spouse who has been declared a habitual criminal; and
- incurable insanity of a spouse which has lasted for at least seven years.

These, (with the exception of incurable insanity) are based on the outdated principle of fault – the idea that one spouse must be guilty of committing some type of wrong against the other. Unlike in most countries today, Namibian law does not allow divorce due to the marriage having broken down. Divorce is granted on the premise of "guilt" or "innocence."

In theory, if a couple married in community of property is divorced, the property would be



divided in half. But typically, a larger share of the communal assets is awarded to the “innocent” party, which frequently favours men as the aggrieved party. If the couple was married under customary law, the “native” authorities had the right to distribute property under “native law and custom”, which often benefited the husband or his kin. In extreme cases, all of the communal assets may be awarded to the “innocent” party, again usually when the “innocent” party is a man. The rationale for this is the attitude that it is the man who accumulates the communal assets, while another common attitude is that if something goes wrong in a marriage, it is the woman’s fault.

However, only about three percent of civil marriages in Namibia end in divorce. Divorces of civil marriages are granted only by the High Court in Windhoek. Magistrates’ courts do not have jurisdiction over divorce cases.

Under customary laws, divorce is accepted on several grounds, including:

- adultery by the wife;
- taking a second wife without the consent of the first;
- barrenness; and
- various forms of unacceptable behaviour including drunkenness, witchcraft or neglect of the children.⁴⁴

Most of these apply only to wives (adultery by the wife, barrenness and witchcraft), with only one directly applicable to the husband (the taking of an additional wife without the consent of the first). This probably violates Article 10(2) of the Constitution forbidding sex discrimination, as well as Article 14(1) which guarantees men and women equal rights to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

Access to children in cases of divorce or death is also linked to

the kinship system, but situations differ from culture to culture. In all cultures, children’s access to both the mother and father’s kin groups is paramount for the children’s ancestral claims and economic survival. Even in matrilineal societies, it is the father who names the children and they carry their father’s family name.

Representations of sexuality

Gender inequality also manifests at the intimate level; in sexual relationships. Women have little or no control over their own sexuality and this is the ultimate expression of powerlessness, while on the other hand, having control over another person’s sexuality is the ultimate expression of power.

The socially constructed roles of women dictate that they have little control over their own sexuality. Because women are assigned the role of reproduction, they are often forced to have unprotected sexual intercourse to fulfil their perceived role of motherhood. In some traditional Namibian societies, such as the Owambo, a woman who does not produce children can be divorced under customary law. In urban youth culture, men often tell their young sexual partners that they will only marry them once they have had a child “to prove their fertility.” Young girls comply out of economic necessity. However, once they become pregnant, the men often abandon them.

Apart from unwanted pregnancy, women are also at risk of getting STIs. Culturally, men decide on when, where and with whom to have sexual intercourse. Women who violate these sexual norms are generally considered promiscuous. Sexual intercourse is often semi-ritualistic and male driven. A variety of sexual taboos in most Namibian cultures are designed to control female sexuali-

Socially constructed roles of women dictate that they have little control over their own sexuality.

ty. For instance, many of the illnesses that result from breaking sexual taboos are thought to be caused by women's unsanctioned sexual behaviour.

Traditionally, it is acceptable for a man to have more than one sexual partner, but this is unacceptable when it's a woman. In some cultures, for a man to have only one sexual partner is interpreted as indicators of poverty, low social status and lack of "manhood". Given that men are the ones who also have control over whether or not condoms are used, men may have unprotected sex with multiple partners outside of their main relationship, and refuse to use condoms with their wives or main sexual partners, thus exposing them to STIs.

The practice of dry sex is emerging as an issue in many rural communities. Women place herbs inside their vaginas to absorb vaginal fluids during sexual intercourse. Many men prefer the sensation of dry sex and actively seek out women who use such herbs. Dry sex frequently causes cuts and abrasions inside of the vagina, increasing women's susceptibility to HIV infection.

The law in Namibia does not protect same sex unions. The Immoralities Act identifies sodomy, regardless of the sex of the actors, as being against the law, in essence outlawing male homosexuality. Hypothetically, because same-sex unions are not legally recognised, violence within such unions cannot be prosecuted as domestic violence and children of such unions may not be protected under this law.⁴⁵

Adolescent sexuality

There is a strong social stigma against premarital sexual activities in Namibia and yet youths in Namibia become sexually active at an early age. It is reported that 45.4

percent of women have begun childbearing by the age of 19 years, implying that at least one in two Namibian women experiences sexual intercourse in their teens, often without any contraceptives. A study conducted among secondary school students in urban Namibia shows that 73.1 percent of the respondents in Grade 12, and almost 50 percent of those in Grade 8, have had sexual intercourse, while 64 percent of respondents consider having sexual intercourse before the age of 20 years as inappropriate.

The commonsense of sexuality can be modified as adolescents interpret and recreate it to suit their needs. For example, marriage no longer means the beginning of sexual activity for many adolescents, not only because of the increase in the average age for marriage but also because of the decrease in the necessity (not to be confused with "importance") of marriage. Many girls in Grade 12 believe that the idea of sexual activity only within marriage is nonsense, because there is the possibility that they may never get married.

Adolescents are also being influenced by popular myths and rumours about sexuality such as the idea that the delay of sexual conduct by certain ages causes negative consequences including infertility and mental illness.⁴⁶ These myths and beliefs are generally about male sexuality, expressed as well as believed by male adolescents. For instance, the belief that "female sexual urges are controllable while male's are not." Interestingly, this myth is believed more by girls (75.7 percent) than boys (53.1 percent), as well as more by older respondents in Grade 12 (71.6 percent) than by younger respondents in Grade 8 (59.7 percent). Female adolescents also fear that men and boys might



leave them if they refuse to have sexual intercourse with them.

Lack of information on and knowledge about Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) are challenges. Health officers often refuse to provide young people with or criticise them for “bad” behaviour. There is need for youth-friendly programmes and teachers who are confident to discuss these issues as part of planned curriculum.

Masculinity and manhood are the major drives behind boys’ sexual behaviour. Although fertility is regarded an important indicator of womanhood, it is expressed as an emblem of manhood and proof of a man’s virility and status. Having sexual intercourse can be understood by adolescent males as the first step to prove such masculinity and manhood.⁴⁷

Sex workers

In Namibia, sex work takes two forms: the first is whereby one person has sex with another person who “pays” with food, clothes and other household support (referred to as exchange sex work) and the second is classic sex work whereby the person openly solicits sex in exchange for money. Exchange sex work is more common in Namibia than classic sex work and women and young girls participate in both forms of sex for pay.

Although both men and women engage in sex work (the majority, 94 percent are women), men are always the clients.⁴⁸ Children, both boys and girls are also increasingly engaging in sex work, primarily due to extreme poverty. During the research by the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), 26.1 percent reported clients who do not pay, 19.8 percent said clients abuse them and 7.7 percent reported problems with the police.

Sex workers also face a variety of other problems including AIDS (8.7 percent), clients who refuse to use condoms (5.3 percent), robbery (5.3 percent and negative public attitudes (3.9 percent). Many of the problems faced by sex workers are related to the illegal nature of their business. One solution would be to legalise sex work so that the sex workers can have legal recourse when their human rights have been violated.

The Combating of Immoral Practices Act (No. 21 of 1980) makes it a criminal offence to solicit or make immoral proposals to any other person in a public street or place, to exhibit oneself in an indecent dress or manner in public view, to commit any immoral act with another person in public, to keep a brothel which is used for the purpose of sex work, to “procure” any female to have “unlawful sexual intercourse” with another person; to entice a female to a brothel to knowingly live from the earnings of sex work; and to detain a female against her will in a brothel. The Act discriminates against women as it refers directly to ‘females’ as the objects of prostitution, but makes little provision for offences by clients – who are almost always males. The crime attracts a fine of not more than N\$2,000 or imprisonment of not more than two years, or both.

Sexual exploitation of the girl-child

Commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs but is rarely reported in the country. A few studies, as well as interviews, document children doing sex work. Poverty forces some parents to push their children into sex work to help support the family. A recent survey of sex-workers in Namibia indicates that child sex-workers are common

and that about 30 percent of those interviewed reported seeing children working on the streets and at clubs. Some young girls involved in sex work report having been sexually abused before they started having sex for pay. Children working on the streets have reported being victims of sexual abuse or have admitted to involvement in sex work.

Closely related to sex work is what some people have called the “sugar daddy” syndrome where older men exploit girls sexually in return for money or other gifts. In the south of Namibia, older male truck drivers entice young girls into commercial sex work, again with mothers sometimes encouraging the behaviour to advance the family. The practice was also reported in Ohangwena and Oshana regions. The recent case of a 17-year-old school girl who committed suicide because of her 45-year-old police “sugar daddy” has caused a stir in Namibia and has shed some light on the hazards of such relationships.

Policy measures currently in place in Namibia include the Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000) which sets the minimum age for consensual sex at 14 years (although the Combating of Immoral Practices Act sets the age at 16), in combination with the Combating of Immoral Practices Act (No. 21 of 1980) and the Children’s Act (No. 33 of 1960) which protects children from being used as sex workers, and makes it an offence for a parent, guardian or custodian of a child to cause a child to participate in sex work.

The Combating of Rape Act, Section 2 stipulates that the minimum age of consent for any case where a sexual act is committed with a person under the age of 14 by a perpetrator more than three years older is rape, even if the

sexual act was consensual or took place for payment. An amendment to the Combating of Immoral Practices Act gives additional protection to boys and girls under the age of 16, where there is sexual contact with someone more than three years older.

So, taking the two pieces of legislation together, the age of consent for sexual activity in Namibia is 16, when the other party to the encounter is at least three years older. Sexual assaults on children, not specifically defined as rape, can still be prosecuted as indecent assault. This criminal offence covers any “indecent or immoral act” as well as the more intimate sexual acts which would constitute rape. This is a less serious offence than rape with no minimum sentences attached.

Although there are no statistics on the number of young people involved in either exchange or classic forms of sex work, the former appears to be a wide spread practice in Namibia and has been reported by various researchers throughout the country.

Socialisation **Culturally based gender discrimination**

Culture is often represented as a static ideology that cannot be changed because “it has always been this way”, therefore – the argument goes – patriarchy should not be changed because it is part of the prevailing culture. All ethnic groups in the country exhibit gender inequality in the form of patriarchy. Women are viewed at best as second-class citizens, and at worst as the property of men. Cultural attitudes about gender in different Namibian groups vary from relative equality to rigid inequality. For example, although pre-colonial Bushmen⁴⁹ concepts of egali-



tarianism were altered by colonial influence, Bushmen men and women today still have relatively equal gender roles. However, in Owambo societies, women are and have always been subordinate to men in all spheres of public and private life. Cultural attitudes about gender also vary by urban and rural location. For example, urban Afrikaner women have a far more egalitarian position vis-à-vis men compared to rural Afrikaner women who are typically farm wives.

Cultural definitions of women's roles

Women are generally responsible for most household chores across the major cultural communities in the country and have no decision-making power either within the household or within the community women are treated like perpetual minors under the tutelage of men. The Herero define a woman as "the mother of the nation" emphasising her reproductive role. Although Herero men and women sometimes make joint decisions about the household, men still have the final say in all household matters.

The Nama, like the Herero, emphasise the woman's reproductive role; "mother creator" and sister. The Damara on the other hand elevate the woman's role of house keeping; "keeper of the house," and "the keeper of the cooking fire." Unlike the Herero, they are allowed to make decisions about matters relating to the household only.

While men acknowledge that some customs discriminate against women, they do not think that patriarchy based on culture is wrong. Owambo women and men identify customs that discriminate against women, but many men do not want these customs changed.

Gender and religion

Many religious organisations offer counselling for the youth and married couples with problems. However, the counselling offered is typically in line with Christian doctrine including that youths should abstain from premarital sexual activities and divorce is not an option for married couples.

Sometimes religious movements oppose gender-related legal reforms on the basis of moral ideology. For example, most religious leaders took a public stand against a proposed Abortion and Sterilisation Bill in the country. There was debate based on the "pro-life/pro-choice" controversy. "Pro-life" issues were raised by religious groups, while the "pro-choice" position was supported by most women's organisations which assert that the Bill would further empower women. It was due to these debates that the Bill was never presented before Parliament.

Some religious groups have also used their doctrines as opposition to education on AIDS and liberalisation of family planning, although many have had to loosen their stance about condoms due to the large numbers of AIDS related deaths.

Many Christian programmes have a clear gender bias, as well as taking a paternalist approach to helping women in trouble, rather than attempting to promote gender-equality to solve women's problems. Most religious organisations do not support social mechanisms women have at their disposal to improve their status, such as divorce from an abusive husband, the use of condoms within marriage, abortion and family planning, and therefore help to maintain women in a lower social status.

Gender-based violence

The reported incidence of violence against women and children in Namibia continues to increase. This may be due to increased incidents or increase in awareness and reporting. In contemporary Namibia, rape and domestic violence are serious problems that affect the lives of many women. More than 90 percent of convicted perpetrators of violence are men between 21 and 39 years of age and that most rapists in prison are under the age of 21.⁵⁰

There are several pieces of legislation in Namibia which offer protection against gender-based violence. The Namibian Constitution, the Combating of Domestic Violence Act (No. 4 of 2003) and the Combating of Rape Act (No. 8 of 2000) are important law reform measures aimed at reducing the incidence of violence against women. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) launched, in 1996, the Multi-Media Campaign on Violence Against Women and Children (MMC VAWC), which has been particularly influential in reducing violence against women and children, as well as informing and educating people about gender-related issues.

Rape

Table 7 indicates that between 1996/7 and 1999 there were consistently about 600 cases of rape and 150 cases of attempted rape reported to the Namibian police nationwide. However, in 2000 this figure rose to 705, an increase over the previous year of 17 percent, although the figures dropped

again for subsequent years. Rape is a common problem in Namibia, and in most cases, perpetrators of rape are known to their vic-

tims. Despite the fact that most rapes are committed by someone the victim knows, they are less likely to be reported to the police than rape by a stranger due to the victim's fear of reprisal and embarrassment. However, many women are also raped by strangers. In most rape cases reported in Namibia, acts of violence including murder of the victim is a common feature.

Rape is not only perpetrated against women, but children as well. There has been an increase in reported rape cases of children, some as young as 17 months old. Although some cases of child rape are perpetrated by strangers, many of the victims know the perpetrator (or perpetrators). The majority are family members including fathers, uncles and brothers.

The UNDP reports that all women live with the knowledge that they could be victims of rape. This report⁵¹ contends that, "There is no greater prison for women, than a world where rapists roam free and the movements of women are restricted (to cars, homes, work places, etc.). This makes women victims of rape even when they have never been raped. They are victims of the fear of rape, the fear of men; the fear of being a victim".

Marital rape – its now against the law

Rape in a marriage was not viewed previously as a crime and the Combating of Rape Act identifies marital rape as a criminal offence. Many men – at all levels of society – still cling to the belief that rape cannot happen between married people. Data collected on domestic violence show that many women report that they were either raped, sexually assaulted or sexually harassed by their own husbands.

There are an average of 2,000 cases of domestic violence report-

Reported Rape Cases, 1995 to 2002 Table 7

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
601	642	598	583	543	705	411	666

SOURCE: WCPU data sheet, 2003



ed to the Namibia police each year, of these, 86 percent are female while only 14 percent are male. Conversely, 93 percent of these cases are committed by men while only seven percent of these are committed by women. This indicates that domestic violence is a gender-based crime where men are the perpetrators and females are the survivors.

A recent UNDP report⁵² identifies a range of social, cultural and economic factors that place women at risk of violence within the home, including patriarchy, alcohol abuse, women's lower economic status vis-à-vis men and social patterns of using violence to resolve conflict. Excessive alcohol consumption is always a scapegoat for all forms of violence in Namibia. Although more research is required to determine the relationship between gender-based violence and alcohol abuse, the fact remains that many men drink large quantities of alcohol, get drunk, and do NOT abuse or rape their family members. Therefore, alcohol abuse alone cannot account for widespread incidences of gender-based violence within society. In addition, domestic violence is inherent in several forms of harmful cultural and traditional practices that undermine women's status at every level of society.

Many women report that state provided support systems do not work and frequently force women back into abusive situations. One of the problems in addressing issues of violence against women and children through the law enforcement and judiciary systems is the delay in getting justice. In a few instances magistrates and judges have criticised police officers in court for having to postpone court cases on account of the lack of follow-up, a lack of proper investigative procedures and not obtaining the required evidence.

However, only about 26 percent of domestic violence cases reported to the police go to a completed trial, compared to 35 percent for other violent crime cases. Although sentencing patterns for domestic violence and other types of violent crimes are about the same, in cases where a sentence is imposed, it is more likely to be suspended in the domestic violence case. Hubbard concludes that domestic violence cases are more likely to be treated somewhat more lightly than other forms of violent crimes.

Women and the media

Portrayal of women in the media

The portrayal of women in the media depends on the source, editor and journalists involved. Economics and business are the most widely covered topics in all media although the pattern of coverage of other topics varies greatly between the various media. As in the past, the media continues to portray women negatively. The Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) of 2003 done by Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA)/Gender Links found that only 19 percent of news source pertain to women and women are typically portrayed as victims, objects of beauty or in unusual stories rather than as spokespersons. Although this is two percent better than the regional and one percent better than the global average, women's voices are still grossly underrepresented in the Namibian media.

The media are strongly biased towards Windhoek in their coverage. More than 40 percent of their stories are about the Khomas Region – a figure that rises to nearly 60 percent when national stories are included although the majority of the population, especially women, are concentrated in the rural areas.

The coverage of women's and gender issues has increased in recent years. One of the best media sources for women's issues, as well as a gender forum, continues to be the magazine *Sister Namibia*, which is often distributed free with the Namibian newspaper and can be found in many rural areas of Namibia. The magazine provides women activists with a forum for reporting on the status of women's issues and informing the general public of events pertaining to women.

Conversely, the weekly, *The Windhoek Observer*, continues to have sensational stories of divorces, suicides and murders. But worst of all, the paper continues to print pictures of nude or half nude women on the back page, reinforcing the stereotype of women as sex objects.

MISA found that proportionally far more "ordinary" women (14.2 percent) are quoted than "ordinary" men (4.2 percent). A paradox is, that despite some efforts to feature women, the media still gives little insight into women's contribution to the development process. Mostly, the media focus on challenges women face such as rape, violence and poverty, but fail to recognise that in spite of challenges, women still play crucial roles in society that are also news worthy. Therefore, many stories about women portray them as victims in need of help, not as shapers of their own destinies.

Also, within most media, women are more likely than men to be defined by their relationships such as "wife of", "mother of", "girlfriend of" – indicating that women are often framed within a borrowed identity and not their own. However, there has been an effort from some of the various media organisations to

give space to women's issues, make an effort to be gender sensitive, and present important articles on women's empowerment.

Access to and control over media

Women are still underrepresented in management positions within the media. As of 2002, the NBC had two women on the Board of Directors and only three out of the eight management level personnel were women, although NBC mid-level management had a fair representation of women. However, the GMBS reports that the Namibian media industry employs a high percentage of women as reporters and presenters. Women constituted about half of television reporters (47 percent) and presenters (53 percent). Furthermore, 21 percent of all radio and print reporters are women, which is only one percent less than global averages.

Women are more likely to be employed in the electronic media, especially as television presenters, but have a limited employment time span; based on their visual appearance rather than their skills.

Although it is difficult to determine the influence female reporters and presenters have on the representation of women in the media; one woman editor for the national daily newspaper, *The Namibian*, exerts significant influence over gender-related stories in the paper, which often features articles aimed at informing the public about gender issues. Although there are a fair number of women working in the media in Namibia, women are underrepresented in decision-making positions. There is a growing trend for women to have more control over the making of the news. The challenge posed by the GMBS is for equal numbers of women and men at all levels of decision-making, giving equal voice.



EDUCATION

Primary and secondary education

School enrolment⁵³ rates throughout the mainstream education, Grade 1 through to Grade 12, in 2001 show an eight percent increase from the 1997 figures, and over 43 percent since independence. Of the 526 829 learners in 2001, 51.1 percent were female. Figures for girls have remained comparatively constant across all grades since 1997. However, a recent UNICEF-sponsored school fees study conducted by the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU), shows that free education is not a reality in the country, with some children being excluded from education for lack of school fees. This means that children from poor families become even further marginalized, and girls are disproportionately affected.

Namibia spends approximately 32 percent of its Gross National Product (GNP) on education. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC), in conjunction with the Office of the President, have identified children in need of special support services and established in 1996 the Inter-sectoral Task Force for Educationally Marginalised Children (ITFEMC). In 2000, a National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children was also developed targeting children at risk of not getting an appropriate education.

A new government policy on pregnancy among learners in school was also developed to allow girls to return to school after their babies are one year old. However, most schoolgirls who fall pregnant are expelled from school for a period of one to two years, and thereafter, she might be allowed to resume her studies in a different school. If she is rejected, she has no recourse for

re-admittance to school and must join informal education classes. The schoolboys or teachers who impregnate the girls seldom face any consequences, and only a few schools take action against them.

Despite limited research, it is clear that teenage pregnancy and family demands significantly impact girls. It could be postulated that the percentage of female learners in Grade 10 (16 year olds) and above, could in fact, be two percent to three percent higher, if it were not for teenage pregnancy.

Although overall school enrolment is higher for girls (75 percent) compared to boys (72 percent), boys (56.2 percent) are more likely than girls (42 percent) to pass from junior to senior secondary school.

HIV and AIDS, OVC and the educational sector

By the year 2010, about 130 000 children, (and about one-fourth of those 10 to 14 years old), may have lost their mother due to AIDS. Orphans are at greater risk of dropping out of school, are susceptible to erratic attendance and poor concentration as well as emotional and behavioural disturbances. In addition, teachers, principals and other school staff are also being infected and affected by AIDS, thus affecting the quality of education the children receive.

Educational staff such as teachers, principals and hostel caretakers are being infected and affected by AIDS. Teachers seem particularly at risk of HIV infection, and rates are thought to be about one in seven and as high as one in four for some areas of the country. Some of the line ministries involved in Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVC) programmes and assistance to OVC include the MWACW, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) and MBESC. In addition,

UNICEF has also committed itself to increasing support for OVC through funding the OVC programme which is housed in the MWACW and has begun to register OVC so that they become eligible for grants to assist them with school fee exemptions and the purchase of school uniforms.

Students with special needs

The total number of learners with special needs in all special schools has gradually increased since 1997. Interestingly, there has been a complete reversal in male/female percentage since 1997, whereby in 2001 57 percent of learners with special needs were female, while in 1997, 59 percent were male (see Table 8).

Enrolment in Special Schools by Sex						Table 8
	Female (%)		Male (%)		Total No.	
	1997	2001	1997	2001	1997	2001
All special school	41	57	59	43	1 748	2 129
Special classes	69	37	31	63	621	727
Mentally challenged	51	40	49	60	118	151

SOURCE: MBESC 1998:29-30; MBESC 2002a: 33

Again, this is most likely due, not to a reduction of male learners, but rather an increase in the number of females encouraged into the education system despite any disability they may have.

Unlike most developed countries where learners with special needs are incorporated in some way into mainstream education, those with special needs in Namibia typically rely on alternative systems of education. There are several organisations (such as ClaSH Association for Children with Speech and Hearing Impairment, the Directorate for Special Education and the Directorate for Special Education, Service Centre for the Visually Impaired, Eluwa Special School, Klein Aub Special School, and

Pioneer Boys' School) that cater for such children. However, most of these special schools are centred in Windhoek or the north, marginalizing those in other parts of the country.

The impact disabilities have on school attendance is not clearly known and neither has there been research on the gender dimensions of disability in the country. A pilot study in 2001 reported that a nominal gender difference was found with 48.7 percent of disabled people being female. Furthermore, it is reported that the proportion of people who have never attended school is more than three times higher among people with disabilities as compared to people who are not disabled.

It is noted that visually impaired students are not allowed to enrol at a number of higher educational institutions, including Ongwediva College of Education and the Polytechnic of Namibia, while UNAM only began admitting such students as of 2003. Nevertheless, the special needs in terms of education, and indeed all the needs of such disadvantaged groups, require further research.

Teacher training

Primary and Secondary school teachers in Namibia receive training from many different institutions. There are four Colleges of Education. Year 2002 figures show that there are almost equal numbers of male and female students (49 percent versus 51 percent, respectively). The only significant difference is at Caprivi College where 55 percent of students are male. The geographic location of the college arguably means that these figures also agree with the higher proportion of male teachers in this region. In 2001, 46.5 percent of the 660 graduates who achieved their Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) were women.



Approximately 11 percent of the 18,117 teachers throughout Namibia do not have formal teacher training. About 61 percent of the teaching staff are women, with this percentage generally the same across all regions, with the exception of Caprivi and Kavango regions where only 40 percent of the teaching staff are women.

Approximately 69 percent of the teaching staff with formal teacher training are women and 60 percent of the 9,214 staff that have more than two years tertiary education also being women. This supports the fact that teaching is stereotyped as a woman's profession. In 2001, nationally, 77.1 percent of the female secondary teachers were qualified to teach compared to 69.7 percent for men. This percentage difference is generally uniform across all regions.

Tertiary education

Women's enrolment in tertiary educational institutions has shown a marked improvement over the last few years. This includes customary institutions such as colleges of education, discussed in the previous section, Vocational Education and Training (VET), University of Namibia (UNAM), Polytechnic of Namibia and a number of smaller institutions providing specialised training. Colleges of Agriculture, National Health Training Centre and Namibian Institute of Mining and Technology (NIMT) provide specialised training.

Limited gender data pertaining to these specialised educational institutions is available. However, much of the training is perceived as benefiting men due to the history of unbalanced gender relationships. Academic institutes such as the UNAM have detailed annual reports that provide gender-based statistics that affirm the enrolment of a significant number of women and their encouraging

academic achievements. On a disturbing note, these statistics indicate that there is a growing disparity in enrolment rates by sex for UNAM, with males becoming less likely to enrol.

University enrolment

Full-time enrolments of students at UNAM are summarised in Table 9, which indicates that the total student enrolment for 2002 at UNAM was 8 907, an almost 150 percent increase over the 1997 figure. Females comprised 62 percent of this enrolment, and as previously mentioned, continue a growing trend since 1997 of higher rates of enrolment.

Full-time Enrolment by Sex and Course at UNAM, 1997 and 2002 Table 9

	1997			2002		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Total Enrolment	2045	1469	3514	5536	3371	8907
Humanities and Social Science	51%	49%	390	62%	38%	904
Medical and Health services	81%	19%	533	76%	24%	468
Economics and Management						
Science	46%	54%	651	49%	51%	1289
Education	52%	48%	780	59%	41%	1183
Science	37%	63%	298	39%	61%	632
Law	45%	55%	98	46%	54%	326
Agriculture	36%	64%	69	39%	61%	211
Centre for External Studies (CES)	75%	25%	726	73%	27%	3894

SOURCE: DWA 1999:28; UNAM 2002:12.

Courses such as Agriculture and Science, traditionally taken by males, still have a higher percentage of male enrolments. However, this percentage has been steadily declining as more females are enrolling for these courses. Similarly, courses once considered an exclusive female domain, such as Medical and Health Services (which primarily consists of nursing) has seen a gradual decline in not only the total number of students taking it up, but also an increase in male enrolment. These figures suggest that not only are more females enrolling at tertiary institutions such as UNAM, but they are also making significant inroads into historically male stereotyped academic tracks.

A considerable increase in student enrolments is evident in distance education, which now, accounts for 44 percent of the total student population. UNAM remains very proactive in this regard as it recognises distance education as a viable, cost-effective and acceptable mode of learning. Approximately three-quarters of the students enrolled for distant learning are women, primarily because UNAM offers distance education in nursing and teacher training. This percentage has remained constant over the last five years.

An analysis of the completion figures for these students is not available, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the distant learning programme. However, a summary of the 2002 figures for the number of students who completed the various programmes shows that of the 1,045 students who completed various diplomas and degrees, only 16 percent were from distant learning, which since 1997 has made up over 25 percent of the enrolments. These figures show that 87 percent of those taking distant learning that successfully completed the programme are female, a success rate considerably higher than for males.

Table 10 summarises the gender differentiation of academic staff in the main tertiary learning institutions. The relatively consistent 60 percent male to 40 percent female ratio of academic staff at

UNAM changed slightly in 2002, with 43 percent of the academic staff being female. It is early to speculate on whether or not this is beginning to show a trend of more parity between male and female academic staff. UNAM faces problems because of the high turnover (26 percent) of academic staff, due to low salaries and poor conditions of employment. Despite this, UNAM continues to invest in staff development, supporting the government's affirmative action policy, which is affirmed by the fact that academic staff undertaking studies are more likely to be female (42 percent) than male (33 percent).

Vocational education and training

Approximately 32 percent of enrolments in training institutions are women, and 68 percent are men. This gender disparity is due to the fact that the majority of courses being offered by these institutions are in stereotypically male trades, such as boiler making, diesel mechanics, bricklaying and plumbing. While there has been some increase in women's enrolment in these subjects, exact figures are not available and women at these institutions are predominantly enrolled in female stereotyped courses mentioned previously.

Non-formal education

A number of institutions throughout the country offer informal training courses of varying duration. An example of this is the eight Community Skills Development Centres (COSDEC). All courses run by COSDEC are not gender biased, and are open to both sexes. The total number of women (49 percent) attending these centres throughout Namibia is almost the same as for men (51 percent). However, as has been found in other learning institutions, courses historically considered male

Academic Staff by Sex

Table 10

Institution	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
UNAM Academic	202	60	133	40	335	100
Polytechnic	110	63	66	37	176	100
Colleges of Education	83	51	79	49	162	100
School Administration	1677	60	1192	40	2869	100

SOURCE: DWA 1999:57-580



stereotyped remain so. For example, 142 women took needlework/dressmaking, compared with two men, while 25 women and five men in Ondangwa took jam production courses.

Conversely, 35 men took motor mechanics, accompanied by one solitary woman. The benefit of becoming computer literate and familiar with the modern office environment has caused changes in recent years with men taking these courses (21 percent), once considered the traditional domain of women. On the other hand, women now make up 44 percent of business/entrepreneurial course students, an area once considered the domain of men. As can be expected, due to the nature of the courses and for reasons previously discussed, there is a significant gender imbalance in the training staff at COSDEC, with 32 percent of the total 46 staff being women. It is unlikely that this disparity will significantly improve unless curricula change.

Adult education and literacy programmes

There are still some disparities between adult literacy levels for men (83.4 percent) and women (81.9 percent). Although male enrolment in these programmes has increased, figures still reflect that nationally, significantly more women enrol for these programmes than men. For example, in 2001, 69.5 percent of the 11 405 people tested in Stage 3 of the programme were women, slightly lower than the 1997 figure of 70.8 percent⁵⁴. Of interest, however, is that in the far north (Rundu and Katima Mulilo) the percentage of women enrolled in literacy programmes is as high as 79 percent, significantly higher than those enrolled throughout the rest of the country (averages of 44 percent to 53 percent).

HEALTH

Generally, Namibia has made strides in improving the health of the population with lower fertility rates and improved infant/child mortality rates. The age structure for Namibia has shifted significantly between 1991 and 2001 in that there are fewer children in the 0-4 year old age group than in the 5-9-year age group. This shift is due to a significant decline in fertility rates, but also due to the AIDS pandemic (due to the birth of HIV-positive babies to HIV-positive parents). It is estimated that the rate of transmission of HIV from parent to child is about 33 percent.

Life expectancy for females has dropped from 63 years in 1991 to 50 years in 2001, while male life expectancy has declined from 59 years to 48 years for the same period – due to AIDS. Additional data on adult mortality indicate that 24 percent of households in Namibia have children under 15 years who have lost one parent, with three percent of households with children who have lost both parents. There are four percent of children under 15 years who have been orphaned by their mother, nine percent orphaned by their fathers and one percent with no parents alive as of 2001. The AIDS pandemic continues to take its toll, with women and children being disproportionately affected. Poverty will worsen as AIDS impacts the country.

Access to health services

In 1991, there were about 324 doctors in Namibia and in 2001 this figure had risen to 600, with about 350 of these in private practice. There are about 10,000 people employed by the MoHSS, with about 3,000 trained health care workers. There are about 7,500 people per public service doctor and 950 per registered

nurse. There were also 249 clinics, 37 health centres and 46 hospitals in Namibia as of 2001. Of this figure there were 317 public health facilities in 2001, compared to 98 in 1981. Nationally, there are about 271 people per hospital bed, with the vast majority of hospital wards showing a medium to high bed occupancy rate. The area of health care coverage has grown from about 23,300 square kilometres in 1981 to about 71,200 square kilometres in 2001. An important aspect of improved coverage is better access to primary health care for a greater percentage of the Namibian population, with about 80 percent of people living within a 10-km radius of a healthcare facility and 20 percent of mostly remote rural dwellers living further than 10 kilometres from a health care facility.

HIV and AIDS

AIDS has become the biggest health threat to humanity in this century and there are many hidden dimensions to the disease. AIDS has increased dramatically from 1,261 in 1991 to 14,866 reported new infections in 1999, up from a total of 12,701 in 1998, bringing the total of HIV-positive diagnoses to 68,196 by the end of 1999.⁵⁵ In 2000, there were a total of 14,691 new cases of HIV reported and 7,522 new cases reported between January and June 2001, bringing the total of cases of HIV reported in Namibia as of June 2001 to 90,409.

Women and HIV and AIDS

The percentage of young women living with HIV is 29 percent compared to only eight percent for young men. It is a fact that women are physiologically more vulnerable to HIV infection because of the biology of sexual intercourse, although biology alone does not account for the significant sex dif-

ferential in the above-mentioned statistics. Unequal power relations between women and men put women at greater risk of HIV infection. Consequences of gender inequality and patriarchy, such as gender-based violence, women in poverty and their lack of access to social and economic resources, place them at particular risk of HIV infection. Women who die from AIDS are an average of five to 10 years younger than men. Women also account for most deaths in the 30-34 year age group compared to men in the same age group.

Women are also diagnosed at a younger age than men, given that the median age of HIV diagnosis is 30 years for women and 35 years for men. In addition, young women between the ages of 15-24 have an overall infection rate of between 18.8 and 20.8 percent, compared to 7.9 and 10.4 percent, the corresponding estimates for young men. Given this age/sex differential in HIV infection and AIDS rates, it is not surprising that women are less likely to survive to age 40 than their male counterparts, and women have a life expectancy at birth that has dropped more dramatically than that of men.

Based on the most recent HIV sentinel survey of pregnant women, Namibia has an estimated HIV prevalence rate of 22.3 percent for the childbearing population. The country currently ranks seventh amongst the most infected countries in the world. However, on a positive note, HIV infections have declined at six out of 21 testing sites between 2000 and 2002, with a decline in infection rates from 12 percent in 2000 to 11 percent in 2002 for those between 15 and 19 years old.

Adolescents and HIV and AIDS

Teenagers in Namibia are generally well aware of HIV and AIDS

because it is taught in school as part of sexual health issues, in addition to the national level campaign concerning the AIDS pandemic. However, this implies a lesser level of knowledge about the issue among out-of-school teenagers.

Teenagers in Namibia regard condoms as effective for protection from sexual health risks including HIV infection. The majority of secondary school respondents (86 percent) show positive attitudes toward constant condom use for their age group. Unfortunately, positive attitudes towards condom-use do not always translate into actual use. Among respondents who had had sexual experience, 59 percent reported that they always used condoms when they had sexual intercourse, while others indicated they used condoms only sometimes or never. This percentage is quite high and may not reflect the reality.

Male teenagers shun condoms more than female teenagers. More female (93.3 percent) than male (81.8 percent) teenagers say that they feel happy when their partners suggest condom use. However, male respondents are significantly more likely than females to feel that women should not ask for condom use. Only 5.4 percent of Grade 12 respondents believe in the connection between condoms and prostitutes, while 28.9 percent of Grade 8 respondents believe a myth that only prostitutes use condoms. In addition, more male and younger respondents feel embarrassed to talk about condoms with their partners.

Girls tend to become infected earlier than boys due to their lower social and economic status. In addition, many of the girls are exposed to infection by their male cohorts who consider sexual

intercourse a necessary part of dating, and the girls fearing rejection, give-in to the boys' demands.

Rape and HIV

Sexual violence, for many girls, begins with the dating process and lasts throughout their entire lives. Many young girls indicate that if they have a relationship with boys their own age and do not agree to sexual intercourse, the boys become angry and sometimes beat them.

Although the government has announced its intentions to provide PEP to all rape survivors, Namibia currently has neither the infrastructure nor the finances to provide PEP to all survivors of rape, thereby significantly increasing their chances of HIV infection. Since there is currently no law which requires convicted rapists to have HIV testing, victims of rape must wait six months before they can be tested to determine if the rapist has given them HIV.

Although the mandatory testing of suspected rape perpetrators could both give the rape survivor more information about her status and allow the HIV-positive suspected perpetrator to be charged with additional crimes, some researchers argue that the test may not be accurate because the perpetrator could have been infected within the last six months, thereby giving a false negative result. There are other forms of HIV testing which can be done on rape survivors which will give quicker, more accurate information. Although rape survivors would argue that the suspected perpetrator has given up his rights to privacy, mandatory testing could compromise the rights of an accused perpetrator, given that he is still innocent until convicted, a process which could take years.

There is increased awareness about family planning methods...

In addition, a positive result for the perpetrator would also increase the trauma of the survivor. The survivor may be required to prove that she contracted HIV from the rape and not prior to the event. This is double victimisation; the woman having to defend her previous sexual behaviour. In addition, if a perpetrator of rape tested positive, but had not infected the survivor, the survivor and the family could experience the additional trauma of uncertainty about the survivor's HIV status. Although the fear of HIV infection adds to the trauma of surviving a rape, there seems no easy solution to help rape victim's address this issue.

Reproductive health

There is increased awareness about family planning methods, especially increased knowledge of the male condom (71 percent in 1992 to 92 percent in 2000), IUDs (41 percent to 56 percent) and injectables (85 percent to 96 percent). The use of contraceptives has increased from 29 percent in 1999 to 44 percent in 2000. Women who live in urban areas, and have higher levels of education are most likely to use a modern method of contraception. The use of male condoms as a contraceptive method has increased from .04 percent in 1992 to 5.2 percent for 2000. The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) indicates that 67 percent of women surveyed have heard of female condoms, however, accessibility and affordability to female condoms in comparison to male condoms is still a disconcerting challenge given Namibia's ever-growing rate of HIV infections. Although only .01 percent of women say they have used female condoms, the highest rate of female condom use is with women 20-24 years old.

Women's maternal health has also improved since 1992 with indicators such as better antenatal coverage, more deliveries at health facilities and increased medically assisted deliveries. For women who were pregnant within the previous five years to the DHS, 85 percent had a tetanus toxoid injection and 90 percent received antenatal care, although only 13 percent saw a doctor and 78 percent saw a nurse for their antenatal care. Most women who gave birth had the assistance of trained personnel, 65.7 percent were assisted by a nurse or midwife, while only .09 percent said they had no one to assist them. The DHS indicates that women with higher levels of education and those in urban areas are most likely to have used antenatal care. While access and availability of women's reproductive health services have improved since independence, urban women still have greater access to reproductive health care than rural women.

Teenage pregnancy

Teenage mothers contribute to over nine percent of total fertility in Namibia, with urban girls more likely to become pregnant than rural girls. Girls between the ages of 12 and 14 had 577 babies with 58 of these being born in the 12 months preceding the Census, while those 15-19 years old had 15,762 babies with 3,901 of these born in the 12 months prior to the Census.

There are several myths about pregnancy among teenagers, including that girls do not become pregnant if it is their first time to have sexual intercourse and that girls do not become pregnant after menstruation. Approximately one in four secondary school students believe the first myth, but the percentage of those who believe this myth declines in inverse proportion to educational level (36.8 per-



cent in grade 8, 21 percent in Grade 10, and only 8.6 percent in Grade 12). A slightly smaller proportion of respondents believe the second myth. Many teenagers believe that boys under the age of 17 cannot impregnate a girl, while girls under the age of 15 cannot get pregnant. There is a strong need to give teenagers information about sexual health issues as well as making them aware of how to avoid pregnancy.

There seems to be a conventional belief that regards pregnancy as solely a woman's problem. Girls do not get financial support, especially if their partners are also students. Yet, girls have to take responsibility for their pregnancy and their babies regardless of their social status as a student or their financial situation. Boys are allowed to use their status as an excuse for not taking responsibility over the baby and most continue with their education while the pregnant girls dropout.

Pregnant teenagers also suffer low levels of self-esteem and high levels of depression. Teenage girls who become pregnant feel shame, guilty, fear and loneliness. In most cases, they receive neither emotional nor financial support.

Teenage pregnancy and abortion

The consequences of pregnancy for many teenage girls are devastating. In addition to a loss of education, many girls attempt illegal abortions and risk injury or death, while other girls hide their pregnancy and "dump" (abandon) their babies in fields, dustbins and toilets after birth.³⁶ The majority of these babies die due to exposure (although there have been cases of girls who kill the baby by strangulation or suffocation). The girls are often charged with murder, (there is no specific law identified as infanticide) which can mean a five to 10-year jail sentence.

In the Karas region both adolescents and youths stated that induced abortion is not common in their communities, but they have heard of some cases. While in the Ohangwena region informants acknowledged that abortion is prevalent in their community. Because abortion is illegal in Namibia, there is an unmet need for poor girls who cannot go to South Africa for abortions to have access to safe, legal methods of terminating unwanted pregnancies.

The right of women to choose whether or not to have children is fundamental to raising the status of women in Namibia. Without it, women cannot claim to be equal partners with men in society. Legalising abortion simply means making it more hygienic and safe. However, religion has a major influence on making such decisions. More than 70 percent of the women indicate that women should make their own decision as to whether or not they want to have an abortion, while more than 60 percent believe that the infanticide rate would decrease if abortions became legal. As of 2004, the MWACW was in the process of planning a study to examine the causes of "baby dumping" and infanticide.

Aging

According to the Census, older people (identified as 60 years and older) comprise seven percent of Namibia's population. Population distribution by age group reflects 11.2 percent urban of which 3.9 percent are 60+ years; and 14.2 percent rural dwellers of which eight percent are 60+ years respectively. Grandchildren of a household head account for 16 percent of the total household composition (six percent for urban households compared to 21 percent in rural households). This reflects the high number of grandparents car-

The right of women to choose whether or not to have children is fundamental...

ing for grandchildren, particularly in rural households.

Economic and living conditions of elderly people remain poorer than for the rest of the Namibian population. Elderly people, primarily women, are increasingly experiencing hardships caused by AIDS due to the burden of caring for their sick adult children and then raising their orphaned grandchildren. The Census also shows that because women live longer than men and tend to live in the rural areas, there are a disproportional number of older women living in impoverished conditions. Women over 59 years of age tend to have lower literacy rates than their male cohorts and are more likely than men to still be working (12 percent versus 10 percent).

There is no comprehensive information on conditions of elderly people in all areas of Namibia but steps are being taken to address the situation. The MoHSS launched a national survey in 2003 on the status and living conditions of older people in Namibia. The survey will assess the quality of service provision and make recommendations for future strategy and policy on older people. Following the UN Declaration of the International Year for Older People in 1999, The National Council for Older Persons in Namibia was formed and registered with the MoHSS as a welfare organisation. The council aims to promote the interests of older people in the country and is also an umbrella body charged with co-ordinating the activities of all organisations involved in elderly welfare.

LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Housing

The Namibian Census statistics indicate that the average household size in Namibia is five persons per household with an aver-

age of two people per room.⁵⁷ In the urban areas 66.6 percent of housing units are detached or semi-detached units, while in the rural areas 66.4 percent are traditional dwellings. However, 9.2 percent of Namibian households live in impoverished housing (shacks) with 17.6 percent in the urban and 3.7 percent in the rural areas. Most people own their dwellings without a mortgage (60.2 percent) although three-fourths of these are rural dwellings. Over half of all housing has a roof made from corrugated iron sheets, but 35.9 percent (primarily in the rural areas) have roofs of thatch, while 37.9 percent of housing have cement walls and an addition 20.8 percent are wooden, stick and pole construction.⁵⁸

Although the Census statistics is not currently disaggregated by sex, the Levels of Living Survey 2001 indicates that female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to live in traditional dwellings (44 percent versus 32 percent), while male-headed households are more likely than female-headed to live in semi-detached or detached houses (49 percent versus 42 percent), shacks (12 percent male-headed versus 10 percent female-headed) and singles quarters (five percent male-headed versus one percent female-headed). These housing patterns represent women who stay in the rural areas, while their male counterparts migrate to towns in search of employment.

Water

Namibia is a country with a large land mass, a small population and very little rainfall. This combination means that the government faces many challenges in providing Namibians, especially those living in the rural areas,



with accessible and affordable water supplies. The government's stated objectives for the near future are to increase rural access to water supplies, improve the quality of water provided and reduce walking distances to a maximum of 2.5 kilometres.

The Census data indicate that 87 percent of all households in 2001 (80 percent rural and 98.4 percent urban) had access to clean potable water for drinking and cooking, compared to only 65 percent of households in 1991. Over half (52.7 percent) of households have water piped into their homes (considered to be reliable, safe and adequate), although 78 percent of these households are in the urban areas, while rural household also use communal tapes (33.3 percent), safe boreholes (10.6 percent) and rivers, dams or water canals (10.6 percent).

Although the Census currently does not disaggregate water source data by household head sex, given that female-headed households are more likely to be found in the rural areas, it can be assumed that they will also be less likely to have access to potable water. The National Gender Study⁵⁹ found that for urban areas, female-headed-households are less likely than male-headed-households to have piped water inside the house (20.8 percent versus 33.7 percent), while for rural areas female-headed-households are more likely to use free public water tapes (27.7 percent compared to 16.8 percent) and boreholes (9.8 percent compared to 5.4 percent).

Approximately one-third (33.6 percent) of rural households live between one and 500 metres from their water source, with an addition 31.3 percent living further away (12.7 percent live a kilometre away and 15 percent live more

than one kilometre away). Girls and women therefore spend substantial energy and time collecting water.

Development projects providing water points might decrease water collection times. However, conversely, this may result in an increase in household water consumption, thus increasing time spent in such tasks. Seven percent of households get their water from public piped sources for which they must pay. In addition, given that alternative water sources appear to be used more during the wet season (when they are available), it would seem that paying for piped water is a less desirable option. Increasing the number of "for pay" water points could reduce consumption, and thus reduce the workload on women and girls. However, a minimal amount of free water is a basic human right.

Sanitation

The Census data indicate that 54 percent of all households in 2001 (17.4 percent urban and 78.3 percent rural) did not have adequate toilet facilities (they used the bush), compared to 61 percent of households in 1991. Over 70 percent of urban households have flush toilets, while rural households primarily depend on the bush (78 percent) and long drop pit toilets (8.1 percent). Overall, 30.9 percent of households in Namibia have regular rubbish removal, although 65 percent of urban versus only 8.4 percent of rural households have this facility available. Most rural households burn their rubbish (27.9 percent) or dispose of it into pits (28 percent).

Given that female-headed households are more likely to be found in the rural areas, it can be assumed that they will also be less likely to have access to adequate sanitation facilities.

Energy

Currently, most energy consumed at the household level is either electricity or “traditional fuels” such as wood, charcoal and animal waste, with about 60 percent of Namibians using traditional fuel sources. The Namibian Census indicates that 32 percent of all households in 2001 (9.5 percent rural and 67.6 percent urban) used electricity for lighting, compared to 24 percent of households in 1991. However, 23.9 percent of urban households use candles for lighting, while rural households are more likely to use candles (41.5 percent), wood (21.8 percent) and paraffin (21.1 percent) for lighting their homes.

Overall, 62 percent of all households in 2001 (89.1 percent rural and 19.6 percent urban) used wood or charcoal for cooking, compared to 74 percent of households in 1991. Only one fifth of urban households use wood or charcoal and 12.4 percent use gas for cooking, while rural households almost exclusively use wood or charcoal for cooking. Although 34.2 percent of Namibian households do not heat their homes (40.9 percent urban versus 29.8 percent rural), of those that do heat their homes, urban households are more likely to use electricity (41.6 percent) while rural households also depend on wood or charcoal (61.3 percent) for heat.

Female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to cook without electricity (64 percent compared to 58 percent) and they are also more likely to light without electricity (66 percent compared to 57 percent). Female-headed-households are less likely to have access to electricity from a grid and more likely to use fuel sources such as dung for cooking.

These energy consumption patterns represent the impover-

ished nature of female-headed houses as well as their predominance in the rural areas.

Transport

The majority of people in Namibia walk to the nearest facility such as a school (80 percent), health facility (56 percent), police station (44 percent), post office (46 percent) or shop (72 percent). Rural people are far more likely to walk, hike or use a car, while urban people are more likely to use a car or take a taxi. Overall walking times are greater for rural (average of 60 minutes) than for urban (average of 30 minutes) people.⁶⁰ Data from 1991 indicates that on average, women take about 40 minutes to travel to a health facility in Namibia.

People in female-headed households are more likely than people in male-headed households to walk to school (89 percent compared to 75 percent), a health facility (65 percent versus 52 percent), the police station (51 percent versus 41 percent), the post office (54 percent versus 41 percent) and shops (79 percent versus 68 percent), however, people in male-headed households (between 15 and 29 percent) are significantly more likely than those female-headed households (between three and nine percent) to use their own or a company car to get to the abovementioned facilities.

People from male-headed households are more likely than those from female-headed households to have to walk longer than 60 minutes to facilities. The 1993/1994 data indicate that people in female-headed households are more likely than those in male-headed households to have a 30 to 60 minute walk to a clinic, more likely to have a 15 to 60 walk to a public transport point, more likely to have a 15 to 60 minute walk to a local shop, and



more likely to have a 15 to 60 minute walk to a primary school. The trend for people in female-headed households having longer walk times to facilities has not changed over time.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Namibia had 64 mainline telephones per 1 000 people in 2001, compared to 39 per 1 000 people in 1990. In addition, there were 55 cellular subscribers and 24.6 internet users per 1 000 population in 2001, while these services were not available in 1990. The Census data indicate that 80 percent of all households in 2001 (84.5 percent urban and 76.6 percent rural) had access to radio, compared to 59 percent of households in 1991. In addition, 36.5 percent had access to television, 18 percent had access to a daily newspaper, 38.6 percent had access to a telephone and 7.2 percent had access to a computer. However, with the growing tendency towards community radio, its relevancy to the rural population will increase.

While female-headed households have less access than male-headed households to telephones (66 percent compared to 74 percent), radios (85 percent versus 89 percent) and televisions (45 percent versus 52 percent). The National Gender Study also reveals that male-headed households are more likely to have “entertainment” equipment such as tape recorders, hi-fis, personal computers and motor vehicles, while female-headed households are more likely to have “house-keeping” equipment such as sewing machines and washing machines.

The government and independent NGO initiatives are working to provide access and computer training to many schools, with an emphasis on rural schools that have been provided with electricity through the Rural Electrification Programme. However, these efforts are hampered by limited infrastructure factors such as the provision of electricity and the wiring of schools which previously did not have access to electricity.

Millennium Development Goals

Box 4

There are eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For each goal one or more targets have been set, most for 2015, using 1990 as a benchmark.

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Targets 2015 Halve the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day, and Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

Achieve universal primary education

Target 2015 Ensure that all girls and boys will be able to complete primary school.

Promote gender equality and empower women

Targets 2005, 2015 Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

Reduce child mortality

Target 2015 Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate of children under five.

Improve maternal health

Target 2015 Reduce by three-quarters the ratio of women dying in childbirth.

Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases

Target 2015 Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS, and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Ensure environmental sustainability

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.

Target 2015 Reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water.

Target 2020 Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Develop a global partnership for development

Develop an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system that includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction – nationally and internationally.

Address the special needs of the least developed countries, and landlocked and small island developing states.

Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries.

Develop decent and productive work for youth.

In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.

In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies – especially information and communications technologies.

SOURCE: www.undp.org



PART II

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES⁶¹**NGP and NGPA**

Namibia has two national documents that guide gender policy: the National Gender Policy (NGP) and the National Gender Plan of Action (NGPA).

The NGP, which was approved by Cabinet in 1997 and adopted by Parliament in 1999, seeks to recognise and address the priority needs of women, to identify targets and actions that will increase women's access to resources and facilities, and to ensure growth in participation of women in decision-making. The NGP identifies 10 critical areas of concern whose improvement have been identified as national gender goals, in an effort to maximise gender-equality and also serve as a guide to eliminating gender inequalities and discriminatory practices based on sex, while focusing mainly on women due to their past disadvantage position.

The NGP also has a list of priority areas for law reform such as maintenance, rape customary laws on marriage and inheritance, children's rights, divorce, domestic violence, affirmative action and abortion.

The NGPA, which was adopted in 1998, is a five-year plan for implementing the NGP. It identifies each of the critical areas of concern with NGP goals as well as objectives, planned activities, role players and expected outputs for reaching these goals. Some of the strategies include:

- Taking action to move towards the goal of gender balance in all government bodies;
- Ensuring that there are more women in regional councils;

- Encouraging political parties to include women as candidates;
- Encouraging women's recruitment into decision-making positions in ministries, private sector and other organisations;
- and

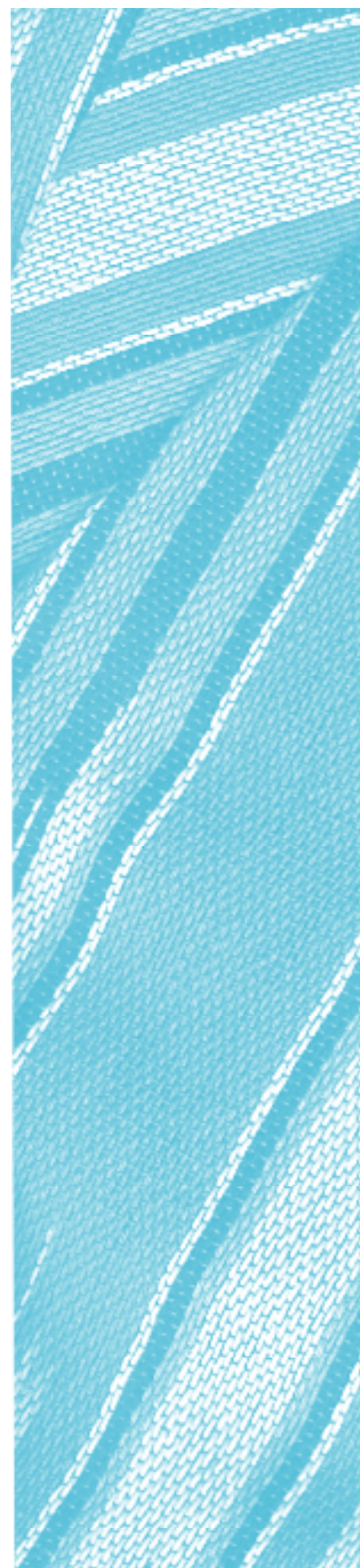
- Monitoring government policies for their impact on gender before they are implemented.

The NGPA's goal is "to promote gender-equality by empowering women through the dissemination of information, co-ordination and networking with all stakeholders, mainstreaming of gender issues, promotion of law and policy reform, and monitoring of progress to ensure that women, men, children and people with disabilities have full and equal participation in the political, economic, social and cultural development of the nation".

In addition to the NGP and the NGPA, there are several national documents that define the government's gender aims and objectives. Namibia has a Second National Development Plan (NDP2) for the period 2001/2002 until 2005/2006 which identifies gender and development as a cross-sectoral issue that encompasses all dimensions of the country's economic and social fabric. Specific areas identified include selected features of women's situation, early childhood development including the girl-child, community development and government commitment.

Namibia Vision 2030

The Namibia Vision 2030 policy identifies a framework for long-



term national development. Vision 2030 has as its stated objective “to mainstream gender in development, to ensure that women and men are equally heard and given equal opportunities and treatment in exercising their skills and abilities in all aspects of life”. This objective is to be met by establishing gender monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, involving traditional authorities in gender sensitisation, addressing misconceptions about gender, intensifying the implementation of gender policies, undertaking proper gender analysis of data and building capacity of researchers, trainers and planners in gender research.⁶²

Of significance, the Namibia Vision 2030 identifies differences between men and women in the areas of access to resources and decision-making as a serious area for redress. The Vision 2030 further recognises that that “before independence, women were poorly represented in all positions of influence. Only two women occupied senior positions in civil service” and calls on government as well as civil society to embark on a plan to address imbalances between men and women in decision-making positions.⁶³ The document indicates that policies should focus on:

- Ensuring equitable access to social services, including education and health;
- Ensuring equitable access to services and resources with the removal of limitations and barriers;
- Implementing gender-related policies; and
- Discouraging domestic violence.

Namibia Second National Development Plan

Namibia’s Second National Development Plan (NDP2), for

2001/2002 until 2005/2006, identifies gender and development as a cross-sectoral issue that encompasses all dimensions of Namibia’s economic and social fabric. Specific areas identified include selected women’s situations, early childhood development, including the girl-child and community development. The NDP2 recognises women’s socio-economic disadvantaged position in Namibia as well as women’s unequal status vis-à-vis men in areas such as rural areas, education, commerce, industrial activities and politics and decision-making. One of the government’s major objectives in both medium and long-term planning is to make optimal use of the country’s human resources in order to achieve social and economic development. Optimal use of human resources can only imply the integration of women into the whole range of socio-economic development activities.

To this end, the NDP2 lays out specific sectoral objectives which include law reform, poverty reduction and rural development, improving reproductive health, obtaining a gender balance in education and training, creating gendered economic empowerment, improving gendered management of the environment, improving access to information and education, obtaining a gender balance in politics and decision-making and improving the situation of the girl-child.

The objectives of the NDP2 are to be achieved through awareness raising activities as an ongoing activity; informing people about the Constitutional provisions of gender-equality and the role of women as equal participants in the development process, as well as the production of reference documents and



exchange programmes. Gender-sensitisation and awareness raising has been an ongoing process for several ministries. NGOs, parastatals, political parties and the private sector contribute to gender-sensitisation, as well as training in gender concepts, budgeting, planning and analysis workshops nationwide.

The NDP2 stipulates that gender-related objectives are to be met through advocacy campaigns that will include training and strengthening links with the parliamentarian women's caucus, legal reforms, the judicial system to be more gender sensitive, more women in law enforcement, OVC protection, human rights education and promotion, a "critical mass" of women's in politics, alliances between stakeholders, positive representation of women in the media, and removing gender biases and stereotypes in education. Institutional capacity building is also necessary to strengthen existing structures and institutions to promote gender-equality.⁶⁴

MWACW SWOT Analysis

The MWACW has utilised technical assistance from outside agencies and has drawn up a gender-mainstreaming plan of action. This exercise resulted in:

- a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis which assessed the capacity for gender mainstreaming;
- prioritised key issues in gender mainstreaming; and
- proposed recommendations.

The results of the SWOT analysis showed clearly that although there is commitment to women's advancement and gender-equality and equity, this commitment has yet to translate into tangible results. The analysis further showed that in order to ensure effective gender main-

streaming in programmes, plans and policies, at all levels in Namibia, there must be:

- Systematic and consistent capacity building for gender mainstreaming at all levels in both the public and private institutions;
- Institutional transformation and adequate resource allocation for gender mainstreaming;
- Systematic gender-focused research to provide data that would enhance the relevance of development planning to national gender-equality and equity commitment;
- Effective and systematic empowerment of women, in order to expedite their advancement as a strategy for achieving the national vision of gender-equality and equity by the year 2030; and
- An effective Gender Management System put in place.

National Gender Machinery Analysis

Namibia is fortunate because it has substantial political will, although limited resources are available dedicated to gender programmes and policies. The following are some of the major findings of the National Gender Machinery (NGM) analysis.⁶⁵

Training and capacity-building

Most personnel working within MWACW and other stakeholder organisations do not have adequate gender training to effectively carry out the task of mainstreaming gender at all levels of Namibian society. Most staff in the MWACW and other ministries have inadequate skills and knowledge on gender issues. It is highly recommended that current staff of all MWACW and other stakeholders be considered for and funding sought

for bursaries for postgraduate studies in gender. These bursaries should stipulate that the recipient currently be working in the field of gender, be Namibian, study within the SADC region and conduct their research in Namibia. The Gender Training and Research Programme (GTRP) at UNAM could also offer Master's level training by distance education if there is a need for such training by some staff located outside Windhoek. All staff supported with postgraduate education should be bound to an agreement to continue to work in gender for the sending ministry to avoid staff turnover and resultant brain drain. Promotions for adequately trained staff should be considered to keep staff in the ministries.

Many of the Gender Focal Points (GFPs) have little gender training, primarily obtained through sporadic workshops of short duration. GFPs should be more carefully screened to ensure that their position is compatible with the goal of gender mainstreaming. GFPs also need more in-depth training in gender theory and gender mainstreaming techniques. GFPs should be encouraged to enrol in gender courses, as well as obtain higher educational degrees such as Bachelor or Master's.

With the possible exception of UNAM, there appears to be no GFPs within parastatal organisations. When GFPs were being appointed and trained by the MWACW, parastatals were invited to send representative, but with the exception of UNAM no parastatals sent representatives. Due to the lack of GFPs within parastatals, there is little or no gender sensitisation. Some parastatals assume that line ministries' GFPs are responsible for gender mainstreaming in their organisa-

tion, but GFPs within line ministries do not have the resources for such activities. GFPs should be selected from current staff at all parastatals and trained in gender mainstreaming for their organisations.

Many political decision-makers are still not gender-sensitive. Parliamentarians often make gender insensitive statements when debating legislation, while heads of government departments and directors of parastatals often do not implement gender mainstreaming. Because of a lack of gender-sensitisation, gender budgets are inadequate to meet the goals of the MWACW. Parliamentarians, heads of government departments and directors of parastatals need intensive gender sensitisation training. Given the lack of awareness and understanding concerning gender issues, a national training manual on gender issues should be developed by the GTRP at the UNAM and distributed to all staff in stakeholder organisations.

Finances

Unlike the MWACW, most stakeholders face challenges in mainstreaming gender due to financial constraints. The MWACW is well funded and enjoys increasing budgetary allocations. The MWACW is not lacking in technical resources such as computers and access to the internet/email, as is the case with other stakeholders. But because staff are not qualified in gender, they fail to formulate programmes. There is need for a review and reporting of infrastructure support needs for all NGM stakeholders.

Several NGOs indicate that because donors do not fund office space and salaries, it is difficult to run organisations. Donors should be asked to review their policy; otherwise, alternative sources of



funding should be explored for these under-funded organisations.

Some NGOs and women's wings of political parties face resource challenges due to donors' policies of not funding organisations that they deem to have political affiliations. Donors should review their policies in this regard.

Human resources

NGM stakeholders also identified several human resource challenges. Some of these challenges arise from the lack of adequate funding, while others arise from the structure of the NGM.

The MWACW is significantly understaffed. Many personnel are in charge of more than one division and cannot focus on any particular issue. In addition, the structure of the MWACW is still not finalised to effectively deal with gender issues in the country. As it develops, additional staffing needs must be considered.

The GFPs lack adequate influence on decision-making. They are neither appointed by nor accountable to the MWACW, thus there is no enforcement mechanism for ensuring gender is mainstreamed in the relevant ministries. They should be key players involved in gender mainstreaming on a day-to-day basis and come from management positions within their respective ministries and be accountable to the MWACW.

Conversely, the MWACW should monitor and evaluate GFPs' progress through regular meetings between the MWACW and all GFPs. The GFP positions should be formalised, with national guidelines and terms of reference as well as job descriptions. There needs to be continuous capacity building for them so that they can be used as gender trainers. Ministerial personnel

should be informed of the status and functioning of GFPs. Part of the formalisation process should include budgets within each ministry to fund GFP activities.

The Women and Child Protection Units (WCPUs) are currently housed under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) and are answerable to three different ministries (MoHA, MoHSS and MWACW). The location of the WCPUs, as well as their divided loyalties, has caused challenges of conflicting directives and misunderstandings about priority areas and channels of communication. There is debate on the correct line ministry for overseeing the WCPUs. Some stakeholders feel that the MWACW is the correct place to house WCPUs, given MWACW's mandate to co-ordinate all efforts on behalf of women and children. These stakeholders suggest that the functioning, budget and co-ordination for the WCPUs be moved from the MoHA to the MWACW.

Conversely, other stakeholders feel that gender, as a crosscutting issue, implies that some facilities should be located outside of the MWACW. In addition, given that the MWACW is already overburdened, housing the WCPUs outside of the MWACW would distribute the workload and budgetary constraints. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to determine the correct ministerial placement of institutions that deal with women's and children's issues.

There is currently no adequately functioning NGO co-ordinating body in Namibia. Consequently, there is no co-ordination and facilitation of NGOs activities, often resulting in duplication of efforts. There should be a functioning NGO co-ordinating body which should, in the case of

NGOs working within the NGM, report directly to the proposed National Gender Commission. Given that some NGOs have adequately gender-trained staff, co-ordination efforts could also ensure that the gender-trained staff from one organisation will train others.

Other national policies and programmes

Education

Article 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia combined with the Education Act (No. 16 of 2001) and the “Towards Education for All” policy of 1993 guarantee that all children have a right to education. The Education Act (No. 16 of 2001) and the Commencement of the Education Act (No. 186 of 2002) supplement the Constitution. The Education Act (Article 53) makes it compulsory for every child of seven years to attend school until they complete primary education. The Act, (Article 38.1) provides free tuition for primary and special education in state schools, including all schoolbooks, educational materials and other related requisites. In addition, the MBESC policy targets provision of “Education for All” and Universal basic education.

The first stage of the programme is universal primary education (Grades 1-7), which is to be extended to include junior secondary education (Grades 8-10) and finally senior secondary education (Grades 11 and 12) for all.

An intersectoral Task Force was created to advise the government on developing and implementing a national policy to meet the educational and learning needs of educationally marginalised children. The policy identifies poverty and negative attitudes towards disadvantaged groups as the underlying causes

of educational marginalisation. In addition, the MBESC provides mobile school units and has concentrated on building schools in remote rural areas.

UNICEF supports a programme for Children and Women in Especially Difficult Circumstances aimed at strengthening the capacity of government ministries and institutions responsible for providing education. Some of UNICEF’s programmes have included capacity building in government and civil society, strengthening and improving access to services, and improving the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAPs) of parents and caregivers.

Health

The MoHSS policy since Independence has been to follow worldwide trends in focusing on better preventative and more immediate curative health care services. Namibia has expanded its PHC Programme, and has developed programmes to address health issues including HIV and AIDS, safe motherhood, TB and malaria. Namibia’s current health policies include the promotion of health education, the continued decentralisation of health care provision, supporting a Food Security Network, increasing the training of health care personnel, continuing to improve access to health care facilities, continue the fight against HIV and AIDS and strengthen family and reproductive health care programmes.⁶⁶ Several NGOs are also involved in advancing the health of women in Namibia. Their policies and programmes supplement efforts by the government.

Reproductive health

The reproductive health and family planning programme has been introduced in Namibia with the

overall objective of “promoting, protecting and improving the health of family members, especially women and children”. The objectives of the programmes are to reduce maternal and infant mortality, improve contraceptive use, and improve access to reproductive health services. Namibia’s population policy, which was articulated in 1997 by the NPC, is also aimed at alleviating poverty, promoting sustainable development, enabling people to make rational family planning choices through education, reducing levels of fertility through the use of modern family planning methods, promoting human resource development, reducing the overall growth rate from over three percent annually to two percent by 2025 and reducing total fertility to 3.5 live births per mother by 2015.

HIV and AIDS

The MoHSS, in conjunction with several Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), donors and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have formed the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) which co-ordinates nationwide efforts to deal with the social and economic consequences of the AIDS pandemic, as well as to educate the general public about preventative measures. The NACP has had intensive efforts to ensure widespread distribution of condoms free to the general public. All hospitals, clinics and other health facilities have condoms available, as well as condoms at other distribution points such as cuca shops and schools.

There are several information campaigns that have been undertaken by the NACP, many of which are aimed at changing sexual behaviour of the youth. One important campaign for youth is the “My Future is My Choice”

programme which has made impressive advances in informing and changing young people’s sexual KAPs. The NACP, according to its Guidelines for Anti-Retroviral Therapy of 2003.⁶⁷ is also supposed to roll-out an anti-retroviral drug treatment programme, but thus far, the programme has not been able to provide drugs to a large number of HIV-positive people. Factors inhibiting the provision of these necessary drugs include: the requirement that the patient must take all of the drugs, everyday at the prescribed time and the lack of facilities to provide support services. The NACP has also developed Guidelines for Home Based Care. Although the MoHSS does not provide intensive home based care, it supports services for persons providing such care. It has also produced a Handbook for Home Based Care providers.

Many AIDS-related organisations and NGOs have also intensified counselling, care and support services to those infected and affected by AIDS. The government offers pre and post-test counselling services at hospitals and health care facilities, as well as many NGOs, which offer community-based counselling for social workers and community liaison officers. The Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN), as well as several other faith-based organisations, have been particularly active in care and support for AIDS affected households and individuals. However, most NGOs depend heavily on volunteer workers, who tend to be women, adding an additional burden to women who have already been disproportionately affected by the AIDS pandemic.

Aging

Eldercare is administered under the Older Persons Act of 1967, but

this Act is inappropriate in independent Namibia because it was designed for the minority white population, and has therefore been reviewed. A new Bill on the rights, protection and care of older people was in the process of being tabled in parliament during 2003-2004. The new Bill reflects a philosophy change towards eldercare; from a predominantly institutional approach towards community care with the family and community forming the core of support systems. Legislation for protection of older people against abuse is also provided for in the Bill. The current social assistance system caters for elderly people through payment of social pensions, a funeral benefit scheme, provision of special accommodation, payment of subsidies to Old Age Homes (OAHs) and a foster parent allowance.

Namibia was one of the few countries in Africa which pays out a universal social pension to citizens at the age of 60 years, administered through the National Pensions Act (No. 10 of 1992). Payment of social pensions was privatised and currently covers 108,423 pensioners. However small, social pensions provide the only source of income for the majority of elderly people, and form the main source of income for 11 percent of all households in the country.

The Government funeral scheme, in the amount of N\$2,000 per elderly person, is paid by the state to cover funeral expenses upon an elderly person's death – to buy a coffin for up to N\$700, and pay for transport and burial costs. Special accommodation at reduced cost and subsidised utility costs (sub-economic housing) are also provided to able-bodied elderly, but this is limited to the city of Windhoek and four other towns. The state also pays subsi-

dies to OAHs that meet government criteria. Further, older people, caring for orphaned grandchildren, can claim a foster parent care allowance, administered under the Children's Act (No. 33 of 1960).

Housing

Namibia has identified housing as one of its priority development areas. The National Housing Policy, approved by Cabinet in 1991, guarantees people the right to housing, especially for people from previously disadvantaged groups. The overall policy goals are to facilitate access to adequate and affordable shelter for all people throughout Namibia. With the assistance of UNDP and United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS) the Ministry of Regional and Local Government and Housing (MRLG&H) has implemented the Build Together Programme which focuses on helping low-income people to afford and build their own houses as well as helping people access credit to facilitate the building of housing.

The government's main partners in the provision of low-cost housing are the National Housing Enterprise (NHE), the Namibia Housing Action Group (NHAG) and the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN). The government's objectives for the near future are to make accessible adequate housing to 60 percent of the low-income population by 2006 and to put into place revolving credit funding by 2005.

Water

There is a Water and Sanitation Policy (approved by Cabinet in 1993), which aims to make water supply affordable and available to all Namibians, allow local communities to have a reasonable say in their own water resource man-



agement and to facilitate environmentally sustainable water utilisation. The Directorate of Rural Water Supply is responsible for water point provision in the rural areas, while Namwater is responsible for bulk water supply. Not only is water provision for human domestic and livestock consumption a development priority, but also given Namibia's arid environment, water resource management and conservation are top priorities for the Directorate of Resource Management (DRM) in the Department of Water Affairs and Rural Development within the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD). The DRM is tasked with managing water resources, monitoring surface and groundwater levels and water allocation planning.

Sanitation

Namibia's Water and Sanitation Policy (promulgated in 1997) aims to make adequate sanitation affordable and available to all; achieve equitable service provision to all communities and allow communities to determine which solutions and service levels are acceptable to them. The government's policies include continuing sanitation and hygiene promotion programmes focused on the stimulation of household demand for sanitation and addressing the link between sanitation, hygiene and health. In addition, the government is working on an Environmental Management and Pollution Control Bill which will, among other things, require towns to dispose of solid waste in a systematic and hygienic manner. The government's objectives for the near future are to increase rural households' access to adequate sanitation to 50 percent, to maintain the existing coverage levels in the

urban areas and to make adequate sanitation facilities available to all by 2006.

Energy

Nampower is the national energy provider and has been aggressively pursuing rural electrification schemes. Rural areas accounted for 24 percent of electricity consumption compared to less than eight percent in 1993. The Namibian Electricity Supply Industry restructuring programme was started in 1998 with the aim of improving efficiency and promoting growth in the electricity industry. The government policy on renewable energy use indicates that solar or wind power is preferred but has an insignificant share of total energy consumption (less than one percent). The government's stated objectives for the near future are to provide 20 percent of the rural population with electricity and install 6,823 solar energy systems during 2001-2006.

Agriculture and food security

The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development introduced the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) of 1995 which emphasizes as its primary aim "to maintain and increase levels of agricultural productivity and to increase real farm incomes and national and household food security." The NAP indicates that the role of the government is to facilitate development of the sector rather than to provide direct services. It makes a number of references to the need to address severe gender imbalances in rural Namibia, with specific reference to the use of gender sensitive programmes and policies, indicating the government's awareness of the heavy work burden women bear in communal agricultural production.

The NAP states that not only do female-headed households in the rural areas face constraints and discrimination, but also the crucial role of women in agricultural development needs to be re-emphasised. The policy also indicates the government's willingness to assist women to overcome such obstacles as limited access to land, a lack of security of land tenure, and poor access to services and financing. It also notes that women's control over land and other resources, as well as their ability to utilise services needs to be enhanced.

Nutrition

A vitamin A supplement programme has been introduced whereby expectant women receive vitamin A supplements within four weeks of delivery, and food producers are encour-

aged to produce basic foods stuffs such as maize meal and *omahangu* fortified with vitamin A. A resource book for health workers on best nutritional practices for people living with HIV and AIDS has been produced in six different languages.

Information and Communications Technology

The government's stated objectives for the near future are to transform telecommunications into a competitive industry, to provide telephone services to remote rural areas and to target the growth of cellular phone users. The Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) is also a government owned parastatal under the MIB. The Namibian Information Policy adopted in 1999 governs media in Namibia to ensure freedom of the press.



PART III

THE WAY FORWARD

As a way forward, the national consultative workshop with stakeholders for this publication recommended the following measures.

Legal affairs

There is an urgent need for legislation on divorce, inheritance and marital property rights, recognition of customary marriages, and a review of the Combating of Immoral Practices Act (No. 21 of 1980), as well as completion of law reform efforts on the Labour Bill, Children's Status Bill, and Child Care and Protection Bill. Review existing legislation to determine shortcoming and areas for revision;

Given the short amount of time many gender-related pieces of legislation have been in existence, there needs to be mechanisms in place to monitor the implementation of policies and programmes, as well as to evaluate impact at community level;

Research needs to be conducted to determine what impact law reform is having on community level practices;

Laws need to be simplified and translated into local languages for ease of access by community members as to the actual content of new gender-related laws;

Information dissemination mechanisms need to be put into place which penetrate the rural areas;

Administrative procedures in accessing laws need to be simplified for ease of access by community members;

There is an urgent need for a Gender Act which will have powers of enforcement for gender-related policies and programmes;

The proposed Gender Commission to be instituted;

Research needs to be conducted to determine the impact of the NGP and the NGPA to determine the form for the new NGP, with support from a national Gender Act; and

Awareness-raising activities among communities.

Poverty and rural development

The most devastating transformation in the rural areas is the impact of AIDS on households and families. There is a need to focus on addressing the AIDS pandemic in the rural areas;

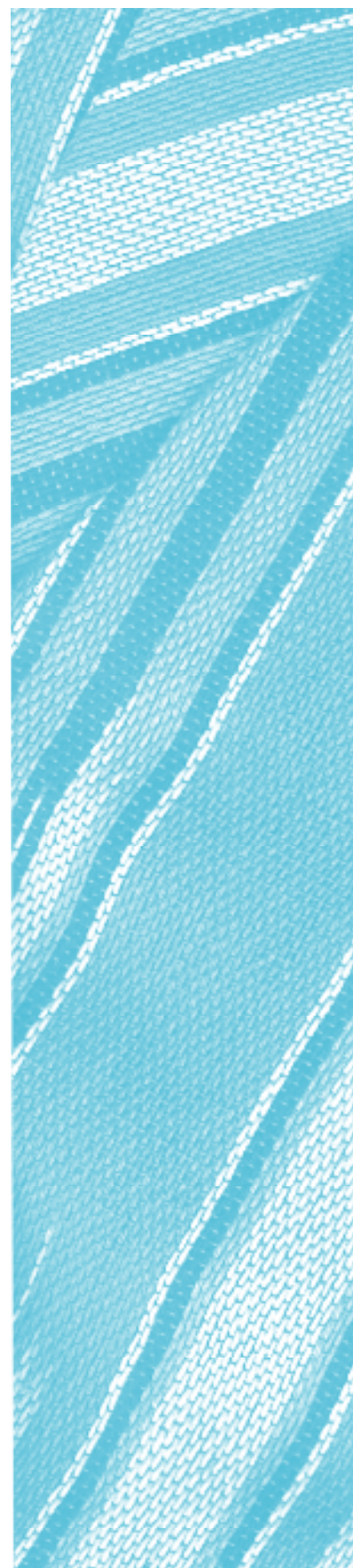
There is a pressing need for research to assess the impact of AIDS on rural household productive and reproductive activities and to determine ways of strengthening household food security;

There is a growing need for counseling services for those affected and infected by AIDS, for the caregivers, children traumatised by watching their parents die, orphans and patients;

Children should be connected to services and providers prior to the loss of their parents;

Caregiver support needs strengthen, as well as support to people caring for orphans;

HIV positive parents should be encouraged to register their children for support



services as part of an overall planning process that includes psycho-social issues;

HIV positive people and AIDS patients should be encouraged to participate in income-generating activities and projects to support families;

Children should be educated about HIV and AIDS as to best practices in relation to prevention and also to the care of the sick;

There is an urgent need for support services (such as through Social Welfare Services, social workers and agricultural support services) to children through local church-programmes, day-care and after-school activities, supplementary feeding schemes, etc;

Caregivers need to be supported with income-generating and other supplemental supports so that they, in turn, can help the children for whom they are caring. Traditional community caring mechanisms should be supported whenever possible;

There is a need for emphasis on empowering women through more gender equality in customary family structures, as well as efforts to build women's assertiveness and confidence (which will assist with sexual negotiation and in discouraging the "sugar daddy" syndrome).

Reproductive health

Given the high rates of HIV among girls and young women, there is an urgent need to end the "sugar daddy" syndrome by educating young girls and their parents about the negative impacts of such practices,

educating older men as to the legal position and problems of such practices, and high profile prosecution of older men who contravene Namibian laws against such practices which constitute rape;

Informational and educational campaigns, as well as SRH resources should target the youth in "youth friendly" environments such as Multi-Purpose Youth Resource Centres, peer educators and Adolescent Friendly Health Services;

Information dissemination campaigns on sexual and reproductive health need to be expanded and should utilise existing structures and include community level mediums such as radio as well as taking advantage of the growing trend for community radio stations;

Other more interpersonal structures should be utilised such as the LAC para-legal advisors and community activists;

Traditional power structures should be targeted for information and education campaigns on SRH as well as to sensitise them to issues of gender equality; and

Pressing areas for policy and programmes include addressing the issue of "baby dumping" as a SRH issue, not a criminal offence, changing negative attitudes of health care providers; addressing the "sugar daddy" syndrome; and stemming the increasing rate of HIV infections among young girls.

There is an urgent need to address the issue of exemptions from school fees, the free education promised by the constitution has not yet

become a reality, as the exemption policy is not being implemented at the community level.

Education and training

More students, especially men, should be encouraged to study social work given the growing need for counselling to people affected by AIDS;

The education curriculum is still heavily gender-biased and needs to be reformed to be gender neutral. In this case, best practices for other Southern African countries can be examined;

There needs to be additional emphasis placed on the education of the girl-child, especially in a non-gender stereotyped curriculum; and Bursaries should be offered by government, donors, bilateral partners and public sector to encourage students to take non-traditionally gendered courses of study (for example offering bursaries to males who study social work and bursaries to females who study agriculture).

Economic empowerment

Income generating activities, especially in the rural areas, needs to be increased, with an emphasis on non-gender stereotyped income generating activities which could produce a higher rate of return;

Savings clubs, such as those started by WAD need to be encouraged and supported;

Women need greater access to non-traditional forms of credit; Given the growing income from tourism, community-based tourism activities should be encouraged with

gender equality being mandated through organisational constitutions;

Women, through legislative reform as well as social and cultural education campaigns should be given greater access to, control over and ownership of property (especially land); and

In general women's lower socio-economic status vis-à-vis men needs to be addressed as a matter of national urgency.

The environment

Local conservancies in which women are equal stakeholders should be encouraged and given advantage in the acquisition of public land and public environmental assets such as at the auction of wildlife. As in other parts of Africa, the farming with wildlife, as opposed to cattle, might yield a higher profit on investments and efforts;

Any reforms in property regimes should also encourage greater accumulation of property women can customarily own (such as goats and some cattle) as well as women's greater rights of control over the property which they own;

In the rural areas, women's lack of access to communal land in their own right is a significant cultural impediment to greater gender equality because women are dependent on men to access their main means of production. Traditional leaders who control communal land should be encouraged to distribute communal land to women as well as men;

The practice of widow inheritance is degrading to women and makes them vulnerable

to physical abuse at the hands of the inheriting husband. Spousal inheritance should be discouraged through information campaigns and possibly addressed through legislative reform; and There is the need to monitor implementation of Communal Land Reform Act to see if mechanisms for the protection of a widow's right to remain on land are being observed in practice.

Information, education and communication

General information campaigns need to target orphans and other vulnerable groups to afford them better access to social grants and other social supports for those affected by HIV and AIDS;

Information and education campaigns, especially in the rural areas should focus on sensitising relatives to the needs of orphans and encouraging them to register the children;

There is a need to continue to simplify laws, translate them into local languages, and widely distribute information on what the laws say and how to access these newly acquired legal rights;

Information campaigns should specifically target men in traditional power structures to educate them about new laws and government policies, so they can pass this information on to their community members, as well as educate them about contemporary social issues such as HIV and AIDS and "sugar daddies" so they can talk with their community members about such problems;

Information campaigns should specifically target men

in an effort to educate them as to the social and economic consequences of women not having the ability to inherit property and how this impacts on the life's circumstances of their wife and children.

Gender-based violence

Data needs to be collected at regular intervals to measure the impact of gender-related laws on the incidence of gender-based violence;

Mechanisms need to be put into place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender-related law reform efforts;

The impact of gender-based violence laws on non-traditional relationships (such as different forms of cohabitation and same sex partnerships) needs to be determined; and

Education and information campaigns should target men and boys about the new gender-based laws and women's and girl's rights to be free from such violence.

Power-sharing and decision-making

There is an urgent need for a Gender Act which enforces current gender policies and programmes;

Collaboration between all gender stakeholders should be encouraged and a coordinating body should be instituted to guide gender-related activities;

As mentioned under the section on Legal Affairs, there is a need to evaluate the impact of the NGP and NGPA and determine the form for the NGPA;

The GFPs have experienced several challenges since



implementation, including the need for them to have more time to perform their gender-related tasks, having more power to enforce gender issues (it has been suggested that GFP come from higher level management), periodic meetings of GFPs, gender training for GFP and GFP positions should not 'rotate' within personnel but should be assigned to one dedicated individual;

There is a greater need for political commitment to 50/50 and zebra-style lists for elections;

The election laws should be amended to have a provision for a quota of men and women at both the regional and national levels; and

Government should require parastatals to institute gender policies and have a quota of women in top level positions of power; and

Private businesses and companies should be urged to review their gender policies and programmes, with government incentives for companies who institute gender policies and training programmes for women.

The girl child

Several organisation have come into existence to further the position of the girl child in Namibian society. The NAWA has as its mandate to implement affirmative action for the girl child through its sister organisation Namibian Girl Child Organisation (NGCO), and aims to facilitate the process of achieving equal rights and opportunities for women (Iipinge *et al* 2003). In addition, the National Early Childhood Development (NECD) programme is aimed at raising awareness about the

needs of children, including the girl child. UNICEF has an aggressive policy for assisting with development of children in Namibia, especially OVC and the girl-child.

Given that the girls of this country will one day be the women who lead it, emphasis should be placed on the protection, improvement and education of the girl child. The following recommendations are derived from the national consultative workshop with stakeholders for this publication:

There is an urgent need for research into the impact of AIDS on the girl child.

Policies and programmes need to be put into place to protect girls from exploitation such as excessive household work, loss of education and sexual exploitation if they become AIDS orphans;

Educational programmes should target children to inform them of equality between the sexes, so as not to raise yet another generation of disadvantaged women;

Girls should be encouraged to study non-traditional fields such as science, technology and computing;

Given the higher rate of HIV infection among girls and young women, the girl child needs to be specifically targeted for education campaigns for the prevention of HIV transmission, such as delaying sexual debut and refraining from relationships with older men; and

Men should be encouraged to study courses that will help them work with children (as social workers, teachers and early childhood development specialists) to provide role models for boys.

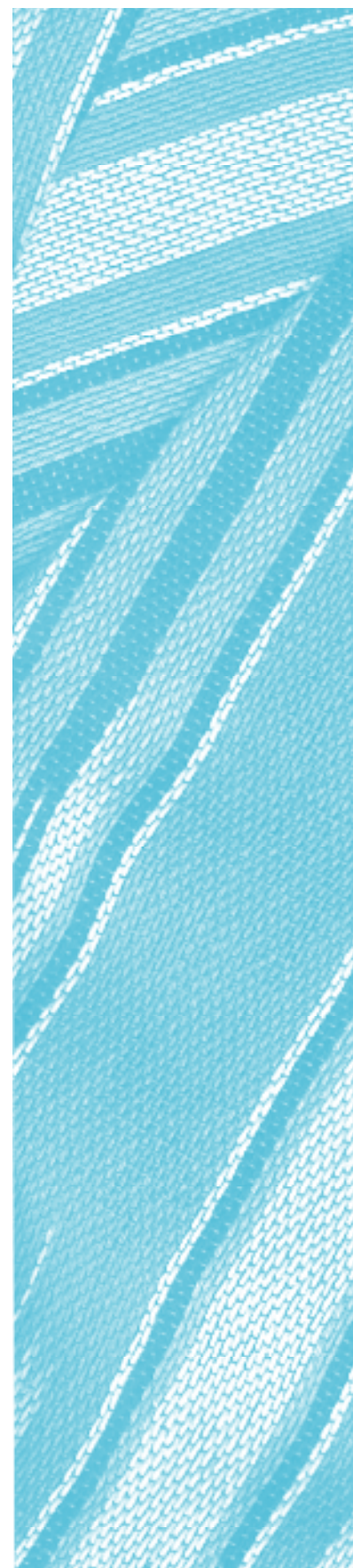


PART IV

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Endnotes

- 1 Sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females.
- 2 NPC 2001:618
- 3 Tadria 2003:5
- 4 GRN1990:Article 66
- 5 UNDP 2001:141
- 6 LeBeau et. al. (2004:16).
- 7 Tapscott and Hubbard 1991:4
- 8 LAC 2004:4
- 9 LeBeau 2004:40
- 10 cf. EEC 2002.
- 11 Okupa 1997:5.11
- 12 Hubbard 2000a: 12
- 13 www.parliament.gov.na
- 14 Becker 1993:67
- 15 Several traditional African societies in Namibia had women chiefs in the pre-colonial era; however, only two did so at independence. Although the actual prevalence of female chiefs differs from society to society, female chiefs in traditional African societies are the exception rather than the rule.
- 16 Patriarchy is a dynamic system of male dominance over women that manifests itself in, among other ways, male dominance over women's economic, sexual and social lives (Ipinge and LeBeau 1997:47). Patriarchy depends upon differential access to power and resources. Therefore, patriarchy is socially, not biologically, derived. Patriarchy has different implications for women in each society in that women who enjoy certain legal rights in one aspect of life may lack legal capacity in other aspects of life at the same time. Therefore, power and control of women differ radically from one society to the next. However, patriarchy manifests itself as social and ideological power of men over women.
- 17 Much of this section is derived from Ipinge et. al. 2003 and is utilised with the authors' full consent. Some information comes from consultative meetings, key informant interviews and a questionnaire for a report on the National Gender Machinery (NGM) prepared for the MWACW by Ipinge et. al. 2003.
- 18 .Niiikondo 2001a:6-7
- 19 Ipinge et. al. 2003:16
- 20 MHETEC 2002:9
- 21 NANAWO 1993:3-4
- 22 .MWACW 2000:20
- 23 DWA 1999a:30-31
- 24 SIAPAC 1999:4
- 25 The Namibian Gini coefficient of .71 is the highest in the SADC region
- 26 DWA 1994:59
- 27 UNDP 2003:324
- 28 CSO 2001:74
- 29 HPI is an index that measures longevity, knowledge and standard of living. The higher the HPI score, the worse off the indicator. HDI measures a long and healthy life, knowledge and decent standard of living (UNDP 2002:265). The lower the score the worse off the indicator.
- 30 Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) survey, 2002
- 31 IPPR survey, 2002
- 32 LeBeau and Ipinge 2003
- 33 Much of this section is derived from LeBeau and Ipinge 2003, and is utilised with the authors' full consent.
- 34 .NPC 2001:184
- 35 SIAPAC:ES1
- 36 MWACW 2000:18
- 37 el Obeid et. al. (2001:36)
- 38 "Zebra style" lists where political parties alternate women and men candidates for all elections.
- 39 SWAPO Party, 2001
- 40 Survey by Ipinge and LeBeau 1997
- 41 .Khaxas and Frank 2003:5-6
- 42 Much of this section is derived from LeBeau et. al. 2004, and is utilised with the authors' full consent.
- 43 In this section the words "community" and "society" refer to various ethnic groups in Namibia.
- 44 cf. Okupa 1997:5.11; Bennett 1996:111.
- 45 Liz Frank, pers. comm.
- 46 In Yamakawa (2001:148), secondary school teacher explains myths and rumours that their students talk to each other about. Teachers' examples of some of these myths include, "If I don't have sex until I'm 24, then I will not know how to have sex, I will be infertile or I will not produce sperm anymore" and "by the age of 20 ... if the boy has not yet been indulging in sex, people will say, 'you will get mad,' so every boy will try to avoid that."
- 47 For example, the vast majority of respondents (87 percent) in the study, support competitiveness among boys who try to experience sexual intercourse as early as possible (Yamakawa 2001:196).
- 48 Research by the LAC, 2002
- 49 The term "Bushmen" refers to a group of ethnically and linguistically related people who have been called by various terms such as "San," "Bushmen" and "!Kung." None of these terms are satisfactory and even the people themselves disagree on a single term. However, for reference purposes the term "Bushmen" shall be used. Similarly, the terms Owambo, Kavango, Caprivi and Herero are used to refer to related language groups generally known by these terms.
- 50 UNDP report 2001



- 51 UNDP 2001:98
- 52 UNDP, 2001
- 53 School phases are comprised of primary, lower and upper primary and secondary, junior and senior secondary.
- 54 The literacy programme is run for illiterate adults and focuses on three stages: Stage 1 provides literacy in the mother tongue with basic numeracy skills; Stage 2 reinforces and extends basic literacy with greater numeracy skills and Stage 3 introduces literacy in English and further develops numeracy skills. The completion of the three stages is equivalent to Grade 4 formal education (MBEC 1997:11).
- 55 UNDP 2001:7-8
- 56 In Namibia, many young girls hide their pregnancy and then abandon the baby after it is born. Many of these babies die due to exposure. However, whether the girl abandoned the baby or killed it first, if the baby dies the girl is charged with the death of the child.
- 57 NPC 2003:49-51
- 58 NPC 2003:54
- 59 Iipinge et. al. 2000:75
- 60 CSO, 2001:53
- 61 Parts of this Policies and Programmes Section are derived from Iipinge et. al. 2003 and are utilised with the authors' full consent. Some information comes from consultative meetings, key informant interviews and a questionnaire for a report on the National Gender Machinery (NGM) prepared for the MWACW by Iipinge et. al. 2003.
- 62 Office of the President 2003:63-64.
- 63 Office of the President 2003:61
- 64 NPC 2001:633.
- 65 Iipinge et. al. 2003's assessment of the Namibia's National Gender Machinery (NGM).
- 66 Office of the President 2003:34-35
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GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

A Declaration by Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

PREAMBLE

WE, the Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community,

A. NOTING THAT:

- i) Member States undertook in the SADC Treaty and in the Declaration to the Treaty, and in the Protocol on Immunities and Privileges, SADC not to discriminate against any person on the grounds of gender, among others;
- ii) All SADC member states have signed and ratified or acceded to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), or are in the final stages of doing so.

B. CONVINCED THAT:

- i) Gender equality is a fundamental human right;
- ii) Gender is an area in which considerable agreement already exists and where there are substantial benefits to be gained from closer regional co-operation and collective action;
- iii) The integration and mainstreaming of gender issues into the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative is key to the sustainable development of the SADC region.

C. DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT:

- i) While some SADC member states have made some progress towards gender equality and gender mainstreaming, disparities between women and men still exist in the areas of legal rights, power-sharing and decision-making, access to and control over productive resources, education and health among others;
- ii) Women constitute the majority of the poor;
- iii) Efforts to integrate gender considerations in SADC sectoral programmes and projects have not sufficiently mainstreamed gender in a co-ordinated and comprehensive manner.

D. RECOGNISING THAT:

- i) The SADC Council of Ministers in 1990 mandated the SADC Secretariat to explore the best ways to incorporate gender issues in the SADC Programme of Work, and approved in 1996 gender issues at the regional level to be co-ordinated by the Secretariat;
- ii) In execution of this mandate, the SADC Secretariat has developed and maintained working relations with key stakeholders in the area of gender, which resulted in the approval and adoption of the SADC Gender Programme by the SADC Council of Ministers in February 1997.

WE THEREFORE:

E. REAFFIRM our commitment to the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies, the Africa Platform of Action and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

F. ENDORSE the decision of Council on:

- i) The establishment of a policy framework for mainstreaming gender in all SADC activities, and in strengthening the efforts by member countries to achieve gender equality;
- ii) Putting into place an institutional framework for advancing gender equality consistent with that established for other areas of co-oper-

ation, but which ensures that gender is routinely taken into account in all sectors;

- iii) The establishment of a Standing Committee of Ministers responsible for Gender Affairs in the region;
- iv) The adoption of the existing Advisory Committee consisting of one representative from Government and one member from the Non-Governmental Organisations in each member state whose task is to advise the Standing Committee of Ministers and other Sectoral Committees of Ministers on gender issues;
- v) The establishment of Gender Focal points whose task would be to ensure that gender is taken into account in all sectoral initiatives, and is placed on the agenda of all ministerial meetings;
- vi) The establishment of a Gender Unit in the SADC Secretariat consisting of at least two officers at a senior level.

G. RESOLVE THAT:

As leaders, we should spearhead the implementation of these undertakings and ensure the eradication of all gender inequalities in the region;

AND

H. COMMIT ourselves and our respective countries to, inter alia,

- i) Placing gender firmly on the agenda of the SADC Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative;
- ii) Ensuring the equal representation of women and men in the decision-making of member states and SADC structures at all levels, and the achievement of at least 30 percent target of women in political and decision-making structures by year 2005;
- iii) Promoting women's full access to, and control over productive resources such as land, livestock, markets, credit, modern technology, formal employment, and a good quality of life in order to reduce the level of poverty among women;
- iv) Repealing and reforming all laws, amending constitutions and changing social practices which still subject women to discrimination, and enacting empowering gender-sensitive laws;
- v) Enhancing access to quality education by women and men, and removing gender stereotyping in the curriculum, career choices and professions;
- vi) Making quality reproductive and other health services more accessible to women and men;
- vii) Protecting and promoting the human rights of women and children;
- viii) Recognising, protecting and promoting the reproductive and sexual rights of women and the girl child;
- ix) Taking urgent measures to prevent and deal with the increasing levels of violence against women and children;
- x) Encouraging the mass media to disseminate information and materials in respect of the human rights of women and children.

APPENDIX 1

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, We, the Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community, HAVE SIGNED THIS DECLARATION.

DONE at Blantyre on this 8th day of September 1997, in two original texts, in the English and Portuguese languages, both texts being equality authentic.

Republic of Angola
 Republic of Botswana
 Kingdom of Lesotho
 Republic of Malawi
 Republic of Mauritius
 Republic of Mozambique
 Republic of Namibia
 Republic of South Africa
 Kingdom of Swaziland
 United Republic of Tanzania
 Republic of Zambia
 Republic of Zimbabwe

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF NATIONAL PARTNERS AND CONTACTS IN 12 SADC COUNTRIES

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