

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



UNDP and Gender in Africa

Africa has made steady progress in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment over the last ten years. Gender parity in primary education is likely to be achieved by most countries and the proportion of women in parliaments has been increasing, from 15% in 2009 to 18.5% in 2010.

The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector has also improved, with near parity in countries such as Ethiopia (47%) and South Africa (44%). Overall, the number of countries that have mainstreamed gender in their national development plans has increased over the past five years.

However, major challenges remain, some of them stemming from deep structural inequalities. There has been little advancement in improving maternal mortality, for instance. In addition, while 85% of men are employed throughout the region, only 62.9% of women are. Finally, enormous challenges remain in the areas of violence against women and 58% of the 22.4 million living with HIV in Africa are women.

Women in Africa will continue to bear much of the consequences of external shocks such as climate change and the global economic crisis. They take overall responsibility for securing food, water and energy for their families and communities. Prioritizing women's health, education, political participation and access to paid work can have powerful spill-over effects on many MDG targets, including poverty reduction, food security, primary school education and HIV/AIDS.

UNDP in Action

UNDP works with governments and communities to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in 45 African countries, integrating them into four focus areas: poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery and environment and sustainable development.



• **We help integrate gender considerations in national plans and policies:** UNDP has been working with African countries to elevate the debate on gender to the national level, helping them to plan, budget and implement development strategies that take gender into account.

• In June 2010, **Uganda's** Makerere University launched Africa's first Master's Degree in Gender-Aware Economics, developed in collaboration with UNDP. The one-year programme will provide African policy-makers with the knowledge to incorporate gender in economic policy-making.

• Our technical support contributed to the adoption by a number of African countries of national visions and development strategies that take gender considerations fully into account (**Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia**). To date, 16 **Ghanaian** ministries have developed gender-responsive budgets with technical support from UNDP.

• We are collaborating with the UN Economic Commission for Africa to support regional institutions involved in gathering statistics that include gender-disaggregated data, such as the African Centre for Statistics. We are also directly working with 12 countries to help them analyze such data.

• We have been helping African countries to tackle gender as part of the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF), which helps them to identify bottlenecks and practical solutions on specific MDG targets. The MAF is now being

used in **Ghana** to reduce maternal mortality by 2015.

- UNDP works with programme countries to strengthen women's legal rights. In **Mozambique** for example, UNDP is supporting community land titling initiatives with special measures to protect land claims of vulnerable populations and women.

- **We help reduce poverty among women:** When men and women have equal opportunities and freedoms, economic growth accelerates and poverty rates drop more rapidly for everyone. We work to expand economic opportunities so that women can secure a better future.

- In **Kenya**, a joint programme between UNDP, Kenya's Equity Bank and the Ministry of Trade is promoting women business owners through entrepreneurship training programmes that provide access to specially tailored financial products offered by Kenya's Equity Bank. The programme has provided \$5.4 million worth of loans to 350 women business owners.

- UNDP works with women to prevent HIV/AIDS in communities around the region. In **Burkina Faso**, since January 2009, 175 women's groups have been involved in 1,345 educational sessions, reaching some 150,680 people, more than half of whom are women. 1,560 people have received HIV screening tests, and those who tested positive are currently receiving treatment. In **Zimbabwe**, we managed a \$12 million grant from the Global Fund that served to test 57,000 pregnant mothers.

- **We help women to take part in decision-making:** UNDP strives to ensure that African women have a real voice in all governance institutions, from the judiciary to civil society, so they can participate equally with men in decision-making.

- UNDP has been lobbying to instigate minimum quotas for the proportion of women participating in politics, leading to the adoption of laws on quotas by 15 countries. In **Burundi**, the proportion of women in parliament increased from 23% in 2005 to 34% in 2010.

- In **Liberia**, women's representation in local councils has increased from 10.9 percent in 2004 to 18.9% in 2009.

- In **Tanzania**, UNDP mobilized voters ahead of the elections of October 2010. A total of 800,000 booklets, three million posters and several TV spots targeting women, youth and persons with disabilities were disseminated throughout the year.

- **We foster peace and security, with and for women:** Conflict and natural disasters have a particular impact on women and children. Communities that address the needs

of men and women are better prepared to recover from crisis. Thus, we work to stop violence against women, support their livelihoods in times of crisis and involve them in peace processes and recovery plans.

- In collaboration with UNDP, **Liberia** has adopted a National Plan of Action to prevent gender-based violence. The country has established a professional police force within the Ministry of Justice to fight the problem.

- In **Cape Verde**, a gender violence network of Civil Society Organizations covering five of the country's 22 municipalities is providing health and education services to the victims.

- In **Eritrea**, 2,685 households of returnees from war-affected communities, most of them female-headed, have been given seeds, livestock, tractors and training so they could rebuild their future through agriculture.

- In **Nigeria**, UNDP forged a peace agreement mediated by women's groups after violent conflicts took place in the rural agrarian community of Agila in the state of Benue, in Central Nigeria.

- In **Burkina Faso** and **Benin**, following the 2009 floods, UNDP provided support in developing emergency recovery plans with a particular focus on women's needs.

- **We help women to access energy, build sustainable livelihoods and shield their communities from climate change:**

- In 12 West African countries, UNDP is assisting women in using diesel engines that mechanize their work, liberating an average of two to four hours a day so they can go to school, improve their health and develop businesses.

- In **Burkina Faso**, UNDP trained 2,000 small farmers, helping them to raise revenues from sustainable use of non-timber forest products. Producers' associations were connected with markets across Burkina Faso and wholesalers who export these products to Europe. Following the success of the project, the government set up a national agency to develop non-timber forest products, helping 4,652 farmers, 75% of which were women, to develop small businesses that sell organic beverages, food or traditional medicine.

- In the semi-arid areas of northern **Namibia**, women in are being trained to use and adopt climate adaptation measures that reduce their dependence on rain-fed agriculture. This community-based adaptation project promotes the use of dry land crops, natural resources, and livestock rearing to increase household nutrition and income levels.

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