

## Gender Equity and Sustainable Development

*"Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice".*

UN Millennium Declaration

Sustainable development requires the full and equal participation of women at all levels. *Women's rights are universal human rights* and are protected by international human rights conventions. Also, it is clearly inappropriate to try and address problems, to identify the appropriate strategies, or to implement the solutions if only half of the people concerned are involved in the process. Gender equity is an essential building block in sustainable development. Indeed, none of the three "pillars" of sustainable development can be achieved without solving the prevailing problem of gender inequity:

- **Environmental protection** requires a solid understanding of women's relationship to environmental resources, as well as their rights and roles in resource planning and management. It also requires acknowledgement and incorporation of women's knowledge of environmental matters, as well as an understanding of the gender specific impacts of environmental degradation and misuse;
- **Economic well-being** requires gender-sensitive strategies. 70 % of the world's estimated 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty are women. Segmentation of labour markets - horizontally and vertically - has only marginally improved. Economic well-being of any society cannot be achieved if one group is massively underprivileged compared to the other. Nor can an economy be called healthy without utilising the contributions and skills of all members of society;
- **Social equity** is fundamentally linked to gender equity. Sexism, racism, discrimination on the grounds of ethnic group, faith, political opinion, social status or sexual orientation are clear indicators of social inequity. No society can survive sustainably, or allow its members to live in dignity, if there is prejudice and discrimination of any social group.

It has also been pointed out that "*Gender issues are not the same as women's' issues. Understanding gender means understanding opportunities, constraints and the impacts of change as they affect both men and women*" (World Bank). Partnerships and equality between men and women are the basis of strong families and viable societies in a rapidly changing world. Yet misogynistic views lie at the heart of continued discrimination against women. Women have been consistently excluded from decision-making across history and societies. Indeed, in all social groups women are being systematically discriminated against within systems of governance that allow for the dominance of a few social groups to the expense of others. It is such power structures that cause further imbalance, marginalisation, suffering and conflict. Creating greater gender equity will contribute to building peaceful, democratic and prosperous societies.

### 2. The current situation

Global statistics place women behind men in relation to health, education, nutrition levels, political participation, legal rights, equal pay for equal work, amongst many other aspects of life (see Box 1). Gender inequity remains pervasive in all countries of the world. This is both of public concern but also tied to individual behaviour. Generally, the *obstacles to women's full participation in sustainable development and in public life* can be grouped into three categories (Agenda 21, Chapter 24.2.c):

# Gender Equity

## Briefing Paper



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- Constitutional factors, including legal and administrative areas
- Cultural, social, psychological and behavioural factors
- Economic factors, including access to and ownership of resources

Barriers of the first category particularly require government action, such as reviewing and changing policies and practices that discriminate against women as well as developing legislation and setting up institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women and girls. Obstacles of the second category are more complex. They can require fundamental changes in values, institutions and individual behaviour. Such changes can be initiated by governments - through legislation, educational curricula, public campaigns – but also require concerted efforts of all stakeholders. Economic barriers can be viewed as a result of the constitutional and social barriers. Again, a concerted effort by all stakeholders, including governments, is necessary to change political conditions and market economies.

Box 1. Bad News	
Issue	Trends
Poverty Elimination	<p><b>Population:</b> By mid 2000 the world population reached 6.06 billion, growing by 75 million people per year – 95% of this growth is in developing countries. Of the worlds near one billion adults, two-thirds are women.</p> <p><b>Poverty:</b> at least 1.3 billion people are living in absolute poverty and 70% of these are women. Extreme poverty, often associated with gender discrimination, is also causally linked to the deaths of millions of women and girls every year. The number of poverty stricken women in rural areas doubled in the last 20 years.</p> <p>Women are more threatened by poverty than men partly because more households are headed by women without a partner. Women who work in formal employment face greater discriminatory practices in the workplace: they earn less, work in the lowest paid jobs, receive fewer benefits, and make up the majority of employees in the informal sector.</p>
Health	<p><b>Life expectancy:</b> levels have improved in women faster than men.</p> <p><b>HIV/AIDS:</b> In 2000, 1.3 million women died of AIDS and over 16.4 million are currently living with HIV/AIDS. Of those infected with HIV live in Sub-Saharan Africa, 55% are women. In certain African countries 80% of women are unable to protect themselves from unsafe sex. Transmission of HIV is two times higher in women than men. Teenage girls are 5 times more likely to be infected than boys of the same age. Women are also the ones primarily affected as principal caregivers of those people dying of AIDS and of AIDS orphans.</p> <p><b>Tobacco:</b> The majority of the world's women and girls do not have the right to a clean and safe environment due to exposure to second-hand smoke. Also, as tobacco companies aggressively target girls and women, rates of tobacco use are soaring, particularly in developing countries. Lung cancer now outranks breast cancer in the United States as the leading cause of cancer deaths among women.</p> <p><b>Fertility and family planning:</b> Average fertility has dropped from 4.7 children (in 1970) to 3 (1990-1995). Over half of women of childbearing age use modern contraceptive methods. However, nearly 600,000 women die every year (over 1,600 every day) from complications with pregnancy or delivery, the vast majority in the developing world. Nearly 100,000 maternal deaths are the result of 20 million unsafe abortions that occur every year. 80 million pregnancies are unwanted or unplanned.</p> <p><b>Disease:</b> Sexually transmitted diseases are contracted 333 million times each year by women.</p>
Human rights	<p><b>Violence and discrimination:</b> continues unabated in many parts of the world. Thousands of “honour killings” take place every year, mainly in Western Asia, North Africa and South Asia. Thousands of women are also subjected to genital mutilation. Some 25,000 women are burned to death each year in India as a result of dowry disputes.</p> <p><b>Rape and physical abuse:</b> also on the increase, but many cases go unreported because of the shame and stigma attached. In the USA, one woman is battered every 15 seconds, usually by her intimate partner. Every year two million girls between 5 and 15 years old are introduced into the commercial sex market. Over 100 million girls suffer genital mutilation every year, resulting in at least 2 million deaths.</p> <p><b>Selective abortion:</b> elimination of female foetuses and infanticide of little girls continues. This is particularly true in parts of Asia where parents can now have pregnancies scanned. The results being that in parts of the world men can outnumber women 5-1. The Nobel-laureate economist Amartya Sen estimates that some 100 million women are lost from the world population as a result of such activities.</p> <p><b>Conflict:</b> 80% of the 80 million refugees in the world are women. Rape and sexual violence is increasingly used as a weapon of war.</p>
Education	<p><b>Literacy:</b> The disparity between the sexes fell by half between 1970 and 1990, from 54% to 74%. However, of the 880 million who are still illiterate 2/3rds are women and 1 out of every 3 adult women still cannot read or write.</p> <p><b>Enrolment:</b> Girls' enrolment in primary and secondary school has increased from 38% to 68% between 1970 and 1990. But girls account for 60% of the 130 million children without access to primary education. Levels of education are lower in rural areas. Even in industrialised countries we find differential treatment in the kinds of subjects that girls are able to study; they continue to be underrepresented in the scientific fields.</p> <p><b>Economic growth:</b> World Bank surveys in Kenya, for example, suggested that if women's education were raised to the same level as men, food crop yields would increase by 9-22%, and as much as 25% increase if they were guaranteed primary education.</p>
Finance for development	<p><b>Credit:</b> Women have less access to credit, particularly in developing countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean only 7-11% of women are beneficiaries of credit programmes. A study of 38 branches of major banks in India found that only 11% of the borrowers were women. In Zaire women made up only 14% of borrowers from commercial banks. Most banks in developing countries require that borrowers be wage earners or property owners who can provide acceptable collateral. In most countries such borrowers are men.</p> <p><b>Employment and selfemployment:</b> All too often women are denied positions of responsibility, especially in private sector. The majority of women earn an average of about three-quarters of the pay of males for the same work, outside the agricultural sector, in both developed and developing countries. In most countries, women work approximately twice the unpaid time men do. UNDP estimates on the basis of calculations of the value of women's unpaid and underpaid work, that women contribute \$11 trillion a year from “non-financial” activities that go unreflected by economic accounting.</p>
Political power	<p><b>Government:</b> The number of women ministers has doubled in past ten years. However, they make up just over 14% of the total number of government ministers, with 9.4 % in the legal area and less than 5% in economic, political and executive positions. Only 28 women have been elected heads of state and government in the last century. The total percentage of women in parliaments is 12.7%.</p>
Sources: World Bank 2001; Johnson 1999; UNFEM 2001; HDR 1995; Bruce & Dwyer 1988; Haq 1997	

Within the UN Summit processes, the international community has, among others, identified the following priority issues, providing an important framework for achieving gender equality in sustainable development:

- Women's human rights and control over their lives;
- Poverty eradication;
- Women's access to, control and management of resources and services;
- The impacts of globalisation;
- Finance for development;
- Health, including reproductive and environmental health.

The international commitments made during the Summit meetings also defined a number of gender-related *International Development Targets*. These offer a significant test of how far we have progressed in terms of gender equity at the global level. Governments committed to a number of targets including a general target on gender equality, but also targets towards: elimination of gender disparity (in primary and secondary education); the empowerment of women; as well as assessment of commitments from past and ongoing international processes e.g. the Beijing Conference on Women and its follow-up, the CEDAW process (Convention Against the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women), and so on. Whilst these commitments suggest increased international recognition of the importance of gender equity, we are faced by continued inequity in all countries in a number of areas.

### 3. Challenges for gender equity and some solutions

This paper addresses a small number of gender-sensitive issues that need to be taken into account by policy-makers and stakeholders working on solutions to the urgent economic, political, social, and environmental problems we face. The range of women / gender and sustainable development issues is much wider; in fact, the majority of sustainable development issues need a gender mainstreaming approach.

#### 3.1 Human rights and conflict

*"Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace"* (UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 2001).

The rights to life, equality, dignity and freedom are human rights. They are not only supported in the UN Charter 1944 but also in agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which obliges governments to take action against discriminatory practices; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the Geneva Convention on Refugees (1951) together with its additional 1967 Protocol that protects displaced people who are forced to leave their homes in search for a better place. ICPD in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 also set specific goals in achieving women's rights and gender equity. Yet numerous factors continue to undermine women's rights and freedom.

Violence against women causes more deaths and disabilities among women aged 15 to 44 than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war (World Bank Discussion Paper No 255). Statistics on the numbers of abuses of women's rights do little to describe the terror that permeates the lives of women that survive situations of extreme poverty, conflict and violence, or the psychological abuse and degradation that comes with such experiences. Violence towards women is often greater in situations of conflict and displacement while it is more accepted in some cultures than in others. Being subjected to violence means that women are more at risk of contracting STDs, unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, psychological and physical problems, and persistent gynaecological difficulties.

#### Gender and human security

Perhaps the most significant area undermining human security is the impact of internal and cross-border conflicts. The consequences of conflict for communities are enormous, affecting women, children, the elderly and the disabled the most. Civilian victims, often outnumber casualties among combatants. Women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society. They suffer violence, displacement, loss of home and property, poverty, family separation, loss or involuntary disappearances of relatives, murder, and terrorism. Among the increasing numbers of refugees

and involuntary displaced people that are forced to migrate within and across counties, the majority are women, adolescent girls and children. Tactics of war include rape, forced prostitution and forced pregnancy. Lifelong social, economic and psychological trauma are common long-term consequences. The huge environmental impacts of conflict further destabilise communities and negatively impact the chances of long-term sustainability. People living in poverty, particularly women, are also heavily affected by military spending because it sucks vital human and financial resources away from pressing social, educational and alternative economic needs. Some US\$ 800 billion per year is spent globally to keep up with the arms race and increase military spending.

In its resolution on Women and peace and security (No. 1325, 2000) the UN Security Council has underlined the vital importance of gender issues in human security, conflict and conflict resolution,

and “invites the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations” (ibid). Women can indeed play a very positive role in conflict resolution, reconstruction and development. They become the sole managers of households, the sole parent, and caretaker of elderly or injured combatants. They also play a significant role in preserving social order in the midst of conflict. Refugee, internally displaced and migrant women often display extraordinary strength, endurance and resourcefulness whether in the country of origin or the country of settlement. Notwithstanding such contribution, women’s priorities, both in countries suffering from armed conflict and countries of settlement, continue to be largely marginalized. Male leaders tend to dominate negotiations seeking to end war and lay the foundations of peace and development. But women need to be appropriately involved in such decisions that affect them. They have begun to play an important role in conflict resolution, peace-keeping, reconstruction and development, defence and foreign affairs mechanisms.

- **Culture of peace:** Women’s advocacy groups are at the forefront of campaigning for a reduction in military spending and trading and an end to the arms race, as well as reducing the availability of armaments. At grassroots and community levels women have organized to resist militarisation, and to create space for dialogue and moderation. Women’s commitment to peace remains critical to ensuring the durability of peace and effective implementation of peace agreements.
- **International rule of law:** Conflict decreases gender equity but also prevents the conditions needed for building peace and justice, nor is it likely to lead to a path for sustainable development. The lives of women and their families have to be protected in situations of armed and other conflicts, and the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations must be reduced. This will require the international ratification and further implementation of agreements that regulate the arms race and that protect humanitarian rights. Amongst these are the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949), and its additional protocols (1977) that seeks to ensure women are especially protected against any attack on their honour, particularly against degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault; the International Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Against Women and the Geneva Convention on Refugees (1951) together with its additional Protocol (1967). As the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, 1995, decided; “*violations of human rights of women in situations of armed conflicts are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law.*”

#### Box 2: Men's activities towards gender equity: preventing violence against women

*"Indeed, men must work to confront what should be described as men's violence against women, and recognize and respect the equal role and rights of women. When it comes to violence against women, there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses"* (UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 20 November 2001).

One example of a male orientated initiative is the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC), WRC's goal is to sensitise and mobilise men and institutions against violence against women; to increase the understanding of male identity; and to educate young people. WRC encourages reflection and discussion that leads to personal and collective action among men. It urges men to take responsibility to work with women to end men's violence. They do educational work in schools, workplaces and communities; support local women's groups, including fund-raising; and raise money for national educational efforts.

**History:** Near the end of 1991, a handful of men in Ontario and Quebec decided they had a responsibility to urge men to speak out against violence against women. Crimes committed by other men should not only be of concern to women. They decided that a white ribbon - worn during the week leading up to the second anniversary of the massacre of 14 women at the Université de Montreal engineering school - would be a symbol of men's opposition to men's violence against women. After only six weeks preparation, without any organizational structure, perhaps as many as one hundred thousand men across Canada wore a white ribbon. In addition, hundreds of thousands of men were drawn into discussion and debate on the issue of men's violence. Since then, the WRC has become an ongoing campaign, and wearing a white ribbon is a personal pledge never to commit, condone nor remain silent about violence against women.

**Contact:** The White Ribbon Campaign. Men Working To End Men's Violence Against Women. 365 Bloor Street East, Suite 1600, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3L4. E-Mail: whiterib@idirect.com. European network at [www.eurowrc.org](http://www.eurowrc.org).

- **Participation, training and education:** Women's full participation in peace keeping, military power structures, conflict resolution, reconstruction and development is crucial. Also, peace and human rights education should start at an early age and be integrated into all educational systems, to foster a culture of peace that upholds justice, tolerance and sustainable development. Programmes that strengthen the leadership and peace-making skills of women should be promoted, such as UNIFEM's regional project on "*Women for Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in the Southern Caucasus*" funded by the UN Foundation. The project supports women's efforts to transform conflict to peace-building by enabling women's vision, strategies and skills to be reflected in the peace and sustainable human development process, as well as sharing of knowledge at the grassroots level. Capacity building of women and NGOs, particularly those working on refugee women's issues, to influence peace negotiations at community and national levels, and the networking and dialogue among women leaders should also be supported. Furthermore, it is essential to support refugee, migrant and internally displaced women in their efforts to build their lives and those of their communities in both countries of origin and settlement. It is also crucial for the cultivation of a culture that embraces social diversity to fund research and introduce educational programmes, training of public officials and public awareness campaigns on the positive role of refugee, migrant and internally displaced women in sustainable development.
- **Mainstreaming gender:** A gender perspective is needed in all policies and programmes for peace building, relief and rehabilitation programmes. Before military and peace-keeping decisions are taken, analyses should be made of the differing impacts on women and men respectively. The relationship between the social and physical consequences of conflicts should receive direct attention from national and international levels and amongst the military system. The role that women play in maintaining social security at community level, and in contributing positively to regions or countries of resettlement or to their countries of origin on their return, should be internationally recognized. Sources: Women's Action Agenda for a Health and Peaceful Planet 2002-2015, 1<sup>st</sup> Draft, October 2001; UNIFEM 2000; International Working Group on Women Refugees and Sustainable Development.

### 3.2. Poverty and Development

The Human Development Report (HDR) in 1995 said that *poverty has a women's face*, indeed looking at the 1.3 billion people living in poverty, 70% are women (Haq 1997). However, when one looks at domestic and international architecture for development we find that economic inequality between men and women is widening. And whilst globalisation has brought some women greater economic opportunities and autonomy, it has further marginalized others. Institutions need to do substantially more to meet these problems. As the HDR precisely explained "*Human development, if not engendered, is endangered*".

#### Gender and work

Women make essential contributions to economic development, household income, and otherwise in the world of work. Research has shown that with independent income of women improves gender relations as much as it helps ensure survival in cases of male migration, separation or widowhood. However, all too often women go under-recognised, under-paid, face poor conditions and face limited opportunities for improvement. They are also shouldering the double burden of work hours outside and inside the home. A study of the household division of labour in Bangladeshi villages found on average women worked almost 12 hours a day, as compared to 8 – 10 hours for men in the same villages. In many regions, women spend up to 5 hours a day collecting fuel-wood and water, and up to 4 hours preparing food. In Africa and Asia, women work about 13 hours more than men each week. In Southeast Asia, women provide up to 90 % of the labour for rice cultivation. In Africa, women do 90 % of the work of gathering water and wood, for the household and for food preparation. In the world's least developed countries, 23 % of rural households are headed by women (FAO 2001). Box 3 indicates some of the current trends in different sectors but the picture is similar.

Women remain the invisible workforce in global production chains, where they dominate as house-workers and temporary labour. Up to 90% of house-workers are women. They machine garments, weave cloth, solder electronics, process food, make parts for cars, or pack goods. Two incomes are often vital to pull a family out of poverty. Women turn to home-based work precisely because it is flexible, it can be combined with childcare and/or agricultural work. For women with young children it is often the only option of income generation. However, international competition on producers also increases the pressure to cut costs and take advantage of such flexible workers. Women are typically denied basic working rights, such as including minimum wages, regular work. To tackle such issues, the private sector, domestically and internationally, needs to further acknowledge the existence of flexible and home workers in terms of the contribution they make to production, including:

- Supporting home-based workers' organisations and ensuring they are consulted in the development of codes of practice;

- Ensuring such codes incorporate the home workers' entitlement to basic employment rights;
- Ensuring that women home workers, the poorest of all, do not lose out due to moves that aim to improve conditions in global production chains;
- Supporting independent women's collectives who can market their own products, reducing consumer dependence on large wholesalers, traders and merchants;
- Establishing appropriate facilities e.g. child care facilities;
- Ensuring adequate education and training for women (and men) to aid employment opportunities;
- Increasing the number of qualified women in growing sectors, such as Information Technologies, by investing in accessible education and training for women;
- Increasing women employees' and associations' access to credit.

**Box 3. Women at work: an overview of different sectors**

Sector	Overview
<b>Agriculture; plantations; other rural sectors</b>	Women make up 51% of the agricultural labour force worldwide but in many countries, women's extensive contribution to agricultural output remains largely unrecorded. The regional distribution of the economically active population in agriculture is dominated by Asia, which accounts for almost 80% of the world's total followed by Africa with 14%. In Sub-Saharan Africa 80% of economically active women are working in the agricultural sector. The share of female agricultural labourers is rising rapidly in all countries, save in Eastern and Central Europe where high levels are falling.
<b>Forestry; wood; pulp and paper</b>	Total forestry employment represents about 1% of total world employment. While waged employment is largely a male domain, with women rarely exceeding 10% of the workforce, subsistence employment is dominated by women in many developing countries.
<b>Mining (coal + other)</b>	Upwards of 13 million people engage in small-scale mining, including significant numbers of women and children, and affects the livelihoods of 80-100 million people. Non-fatal accident rates are routinely 6 – 7 times higher than in larger operations, even in industrialized countries. To improve this situation the ILO held a tripartite meeting on social and labour issues in small-scale mining in May 1999. The meeting's report "Social and labour issues in small-scale mines" contains a chapter focused on women in small-scale mining.
<b>Textiles; clothing; leather; footwear</b>	International competition has led to pressures on the formal sector to replace full-time permanent contracts with fixed-term, part-time and temporary ones. Subcontracts with smaller firms, often from the informal sector, are growing as small enterprises have recourse to home workers who offer optimal flexibility. However, these factors make employment more precarious, especially among women workers who constitute the bulk of unskilled workers and home workers. These groups (mainly women) face increasing pressure to accept poor working conditions and lower wages in order to maintain their jobs.
<b>Transport Equipment (TE) manufacture</b>	The TE industries are increasingly shifting to flexible work times and rules. Rising shares of part-time and temporary jobs, held mainly by women, characterize the TE sector workforce, particularly in industrialized countries. The percentage of women in the TE workforce has grown significantly, but in lower paid jobs than those held by men. In several OECD countries and some upper-middle-income countries, workers have made concessions on earnings in order to preserve a measure of job security.
<b>Food; drink; tobacco</b>	Women make up a large proportion of low-skilled and low-paid jobs in these industries, and there has been little progress in this regard in many countries. Rapid technological changes have affected the jobs of many workers, a large majority of them being women. These workers need training and retraining to keep up with changing skill requirements. Women are widely subject to discriminatory treatment in remuneration and conditions of employment, including opportunities for training and promotion.
<b>Hotels; tourism; catering</b>	In many countries, greater numbers and new forms of tourism are emerging, offering increasing numbers of jobs. However, working conditions are often not up to standard, especially for unskilled labour, which mostly includes women, children and casual labour. Even in formal areas of the profession women tend to receive lower remuneration and less prestigious jobs.
<b>Health services</b>	In many countries the workforce of the health sector is predominantly female. However, women remain at the bottom of hierarchies in terms of authority, remuneration, and qualification. Though legally accorded equal treatment in many countries, most women tend to work in lower-paying jobs, requiring lower qualifications, e.g. the nursing professions rather than medical doctors' positions, and in the same professions they tend to receive lower remuneration and less prestigious jobs.
<b>Postal and other Communication services</b>	Privatisation and restructuring are in fact often accompanied by staff retrenchment and redeployment. The decline of employment in telecommunications is largely seen in traditional activities such as building, installation, repair, and maintenance of central office switching equipment, as well as cable and line jobs. The employment of women has been particularly endangered by technological change, as many of them are telephone operators and clerical workers.
<b>Public service</b>	Many governments claim there is no gender discrimination in public services, and indeed the public sector is the largest employer of women. However, most women work in clerical jobs and few enter middle or top-management positions. Promotion in the public service depends mainly on seniority, to the detriment of workers with family responsibilities who need career breaks. This has led to the introduction of quotas and revision of gender-biased selection procedures. Contrarily, the fact that the public service can offer better employment opportunities to women than the private sector, has made women more vulnerable to public spending cuts. Women may also receive unequal access to compensatory programmes, such as retraining and job placement. More positively the trend towards decentralization in many countries may benefit women who are often more numerous in local, rather than central, government.
<b>Commerce</b>	Employment and working conditions can be highly precarious, due mainly to the predominance of small firms in commerce, with cost-cutting and flexibility-seeking strategies. There is a high incidence of non-remunerated and part-time work, uncertain working times, high mobility and casual work, low training and retraining, and high participation of youth and women used for flexible labour. In the European Union, over a quarter of retail workers have part-time jobs, and nearly 60% are women. Women accumulate the disadvantages since they tend to be concentrated in retail, lower status and lower-paid, casual jobs.
<b>Education</b>	Women teachers and trainers make up the majority in primary and secondary education. Where they are in the minority (Africa and South Asia, and in technical education everywhere) increased recruitment of female teachers has a direct bearing on female access to education and career development.

Source: ILO 2001

Governments could also undertake greater steps to improve gender equity at work. They have a strong role in formulating and implementing legislation but also they are major employers. They thus have a powerful role of leading by example. Particular activities include the following areas:

- **Legislation:** The ILO conventions and principles also talk about a key government role in ensuring minimum labour standards for women. ILO standards include aspects relating to training, promotion, wages, family and maternity rights, as well as against discrimination in the work place (see conventions link). However, many of these principles continue to lack adequate resources and capacity to be effectively implemented, monitored and regulated, and this needs to be substantially enhanced by the international community in developing, transitional and industrial countries alike.
- **Education, training and capacity building:** Women constitute two-thirds of the world's illiterates. However, studies repeatedly show that educating women and girls not only raises their employability but also benefits every development index. Denying them education slows growth. Access to information, education and training improves gender equity and benefits women's economic opportunities. Promoting girls' self esteem should be part of education for girls and boys, as a healthy feeling of self worth is the basis of individual initiative in the family, in the community, and at the workplace. As mothers, women are in most cases the first educators of their children who will benefit from the literacy and high education of their mothers. Economic returns on investment in women's education also outweigh those benefits for men. Education increases their opportunities to engage in development but furthermore the health gains from education include reduced fertility and improvements to maternal mortality. Learning needs to be a life long process and therefore requires a range of formal and informal modes of education across all age groups.

### Development assistance programmes and structural adjustment

*"We know there can be no enduring peace without development. We also know there can be no development unless women play their full part"* (UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 06 March 2000).

Multi-lateral and bilateral programmes designed to provide development assistance need to adopt a gender mainstreaming approach. This is not only because women have a right to be a part of the process but also because better integration of gender concerns bears considerable economic and developmental benefits (see Box 4). Whilst development can assist gender equity through improvements to infrastructure (water, energy, transport), economic growth in itself will not eliminate gender inequalities. Societies need to actively promote women's rights and gender equality along with growth.

Gender mainstreaming should include a package of components, including use of assessments, training, gender disaggregated data, as well as gender-targeted strategies and action. Assessments of the respective impacts on women and men will assist policy makers when formulating development strategies, and help minimise the negative impacts of widening power and resource gaps between women and men. For example, cutting back of public services through progressive privatisation has been shown to have particularly negative impacts on women (eg Tsikata 1995). The World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), should also address their gender impact. Since PRSs require

#### Box 4. Benefits of gender equity and costs of inequity

**Working wages:** In agricultural production, it's estimated from studies in Kenya that greater financial support to women farmers as well as men would increase their yields by more than 20%. In Latin America raising women's wage to the same as their male counterparts would increase national output by 5 %.

**Health care and diet:** as much as 30% of economic growth may be attributable to better health and nutrition. Cuts in health services affect the poor most acutely and as the heaviest users of these services women are impacted most greatly. According to UNAIDS, the HIV/AIDS pandemic will cost an estimated \$1 billion a year in prevention and care alone. Increased female mortality represents more than a personal and family tragedy, it has significant economic and social consequences. The WHO estimates that by 2020, there will be 8.4 million deaths per year, 70 percent of which will occur in developing countries. Tobacco-related diseases and deaths contribute to the impoverishment of families. Women's early deaths are damaging their children's education and hamper the father's ability to hold the family together.

**Reproductive health:** The Asian 'Tiger States' benefited from early investments in health and education, especially for women. Fertility fell rapidly in 1980's and many countries were able to reap a "demographic bonus". Some analyses suggest 30% of the economic growth in the region during this period was attributable to changes in mortality and fertility.

**Violence:** Sexual assault and violence take away almost one in five years of "healthy" life from women (15-44 years of age). In the US employers pay an estimated \$4 billion a year in absenteeism, increased health care expenses, higher turnover and lower productivity. Other costs include policing, compensation for criminal injury, victim assistance, counselling costs, and income assistance to affected families.

**Education:** In countries where the ratio of female to male primary or secondary education is less than 0.75, GNP per capita is found to be roughly 25% lower than in countries where the ratio is higher. Economic returns on investment in women's education are found to be greater than for men. A 1% increase in female secondary education can result in a 0.3% increase in economic growth.

Source: World Bank 2001

the participation of stakeholders in their formulation and are meant to be designed at the national level, one would expect women to be well represented. However, representation requires active encouragement and thorough assessment to ensure it does indeed take place in the PRS process. This means:

- **Stating realistic programme expectations** – to avoid frustration and cynicism among participants;
- **Sufficient time** to ensure proper participation or consultation;
- **Adequate dissemination** of information, in an accessible style and language;
- **Representation** - transparency over the selection criteria for participants, ensuring that the poorest and most marginalized groups are represented;
- **Follow-up and feedback** - and allowing the process to go through to its conclusion.

Other tools that can be applied include gender training. Gender trainers can help to transform the attitudes of both women and men resistant to gender equity in public and private contexts, as well as improve the skills of women to participate more effectively in development programmes and policy formulation (IDS 2001). It should also be noted that PRSs are targeted at the heavily indebted and least developed countries, gender-mainstreaming strategies also needs to be commonly applied in other development processes.

### Sources of finance

Women need credit, but the amount and form in which they need it must be deconstructed and understood in the context of their lack of basic property rights as individuals. Lack of monetary income, land, and other property in their own name, alongside limited education prevents women from accessing credit. Numerous groups of women across the globe have begun to form organizations not only to increase their ability to obtain credit but also to obtain land as corporate bodies. The positive impact of microcredit through women's associations demonstrates the benefits of enabling women to have access to resources and control over their lives. The Grameen Bank (founder: Mohammed Yunus, Bangladesh) has proven to work in this way for women. Although not without problems, the banks provide access to credit without the need for collateral – guarantees are principally based on groups pledging for all group members. Over 90 % of micro-credit goes to women, and the payback averages around 98%.

Private business and banks, both domestic and international, can actively promote investment, credit and venture capital financing of gender-based development activities. Also NGO's and CBO's can assist the allocation of fund to women's groups and associations of women as well as training of women's in sound financial management practices. Governments, international and bilateral donors can do a significant amount by investing in essential public services that improve gender equity, including funds for reproductive health care, life long learning and training, access to credit, tax relief and grant-based projects and programmes. Legislation regarding property rights and inheritance also needs to be made equitable. New techniques, such as *gender budget analysis*, would provide a means of assessing the contribution of government finance to gender equity in all countries, and across government departments, and it would aid strategic and long term budget planning which is targets improvements on gender equity (see Glossary). Fundamentally, they need to tackle poverty head on through cancellation of debt in the most indebted countries, substantial increases in Official Development Assistance to ensure that the basic needs of the poorest, particularly women at met, as well as seeking greater and new forms of development finance.

### 3.3 Health

A key driver for sustainable development is the maintenance of good health. However, women in developing countries and poor communities are often the last to receive necessary care and attention. In terms of reproductive health, social attitudes and behaviour have increased the risk of infections and death. Women are typically infected by their partner and someone they know, and in many parts of the world it remains unacceptable for women to say 'No' to sex. Also, transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can be greater in women, e.g. the risk of infection from HIV is twice as high in women than men. Misconceptions around infection lead to even further risk. For example, some communities believe that virginity will cure HIV, resulting in younger and younger girls being forced into unsafe sex with infected men. Recent cases have been reported of baby girls as young as 18 months old being used in this way. Social stigma of rape, physical violence and sex trafficking all put women at further risk. Key activities to improve reproductive health and health in general include:

- **Universal rights and access to care:** More equal power relations between men and women and the fundamental respect for reproductive rights, combined with increased access to good reproductive health care would save the lives of hundreds of thou-

sands of women. Universal access to sexual and reproductive health care is a central aim of the ICPD programme of action, and indeed many countries have expanded their services to meet broader women and men's health need. Other priorities are preventing unwanted pregnancies, preventing, detecting and treating breast, cervical and ovarian cancer, osteoporosis and STDs, through improved family planning, sexual and nutritional health, tobacco quitting programmes for parents, education and better access to contraception. Effective post-abortion care would reduce maternal mortality by more than 1/5<sup>th</sup> in low-income countries.

- **Partnerships in reproductive health:** Cooperation such as between local governments, NGOs and CBOs can bring about major shifts in population and development programmes, working for gender equality and engaging in advocacy and policy formulation. In Bangladesh, for example, 25% of the reproductive health activities are carried out by NGOs. This support is particularly significant where public sector investment in health is limited.
- **Education:** Research indicates that one third of the increase in male and female life expectancy between 1960 and 1990 are attributable to improvements in education for women. The wide gains obtained from investing in health education clearly outweigh the financial costs and therefore require concerted domestic and international efforts to build up health related educational programmes and facilities. NGOs and the private health sector also have a key role to play in building public awareness. (Sources: UNIFEM; UNFPA)

### 3.4 Gender and Environment

Many of the links between gender and environment are tied to production and consumption patterns, which in turn are linked to access and control of resources. As women are poorer than men in most societies, they are suffering most from a lack of basic necessities. Moreover, the lower the income of women the less rights they tend to have as consumers, in terms of access to essential goods, choice, safety, information, representation, redress, consumer education and a healthy environment (see Box 5). Poor women are less likely to be literate and therefore especially limited in their consumption choices, making them vulnerable to unethical practices such as higher prices and fraudulent services.

#### Environmental equity

Environmental degradation tends to be concentrated in the poorest regions. For example, deforestation is concentrated in developing countries (HDR 1998; World Energy Assessment 2000). Although processes at international and national levels cause such over-consumption, it is poor women in developing countries who bear the heaviest burden of environmental degradation (eg Dankelman & Davidson 1988). These women typically lack access to essential resources but at the same time they are responsible for food, fuel and safe water supply. Environmental loss and degradation considerably increase women's workloads in obtaining these essential resources. This increased pressure also places heavy emotional and psychological burdens on women and family relationships. The increase in time and energy required to carry out essential tasks further limits women's development opportunities means they can dedicate significantly less of resources toward educational and income generating activities. Lack of access to modern cooking and heating technologies can also force women into unsustainable use of natural resources.

Property rights over key resources, such as women's access, control and management of land, are crucial drivers of sustainable development. Better management of these resources contribute to ecological diversity, productivity for human sustenance, as well as economic growth. However, women and men's relationship to these resources has historically differed. For example, in most parts of the world, patrilineal inheritance customs mean that private control of land falls into the ownership of men. Women are further disadvantaged because the land can produce capital, e.g. land title deeds are used to secure loans and credit. To tackle this, international agreements targeting gender equity, adequate shelter and land rights, such as in the Beijing Platform for Action, the Habitat Agenda and its review (Istanbul+5), the 1997 and 1998 resolutions of the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, still need to be fully implemented. Governments need to realize their promises, develop appropriate policies and allocate sufficient resources. Developing countries should receive assistance to carry this out, in the form of official development aid and further debt relief. Governments and NGOs should also collaborate in building support networks for grassroots women on equal land rights. Both women and men should be involved in the grassroots campaigns for equal gender rights, to overcome historical inequities through a reflective social process. Best practices of women's equal access to and control of land and other resources should be collected and disseminated. The training of paralegal advisers on women's land rights should be supported and extended.

## Freshwater

In developing countries, women are responsible for supplying freshwater for the household and agricultural activities of their families and communities, as a result of traditional gender roles. The impact of increasing freshwater scarcity has obliged women and girls to travel longer distances and spend many hours waiting to fill their water buckets. Since reproductive tasks go hand in hand with family health care, women also take the necessary environmental control measures to deal with water-borne diseases (e.g. boiling or chlorinating water). Women deal with utilising and conserving water resources on a daily basis and have considerable expertise and experience regarding water management. Despite this, in many cases, women are not in control nor participate in decision-making structures relating to water systems.

Environmental policies and programmes in areas such as freshwater resources management have differential gender impacts. In addition, contaminated water has resulted in reproductive health problems including birth defects and lack of food for women and their families, particularly affecting poor women living in under-served urban areas. UNICEF water-related programmes involving women have achieved positive health results. The neglect of the sanitation needs

of young female students leads to girls dropping out from school, while exclusion of women from education opportunities and from managerial and administrative functions has often resulted in the installation of facilities that do not suit their requirements or take advantage of their potential as managers and operators.

Although often overlooked by policymakers, women have been involved in planning and decision-making for management of freshwater resources, frequently at the forefront of implementing programmes designed to get authorities to solve problems with water services. Women in the Ukraine, Bangladesh, Russia, as well as in Mexico, other Latin American and African countries, for example women have fought for equitable water and sanitation provision in urban and rural areas. They have banded together and in some cases mobilized communities and resources to highlight urgent problems at industrial hot spots as well as help conserve and protect their supplies of clean, accessible water.

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) 1998 Report contends that "gender-inequitable governance

### Box 5. Women, environment and health: pesticides

UNEP estimates accidental poisoning from exposure to pesticides causes 20,000 deaths and 1 million illnesses worldwide every year. Pesticide use and exposure among women is a central issue for a sustainable future. To understand the gender implications it is helpful to consider:

- the differential use of pesticide between men and women during agricultural production
- the unique health impacts to women
- the extent of information about pesticides available to each gender

Women farmers and workers are frequently exposed to dangerous pesticides directly when working as pesticide applicators – ILO reports show that agricultural workers run two times of the risk of dying on the job than other workers. Pesticides threaten not only women agricultural workers but also excessive domestic exposure can be widespread. Studies in the US show 75% of homes contain the pesticide - Chlordane - in the breathable air. Impacts to women in terms of reproductive health include greater incidences of miscarriages, stillbirths and delayed pregnancy, increased incidence of birth defects. Other effects include potential carcinogenic effects – to breast, brain, prostate, testes and ovaries. One extreme example is DDT, once widely used for controlling insect pests on agricultural crops. DDT is highly persistent in the natural environment. It accumulates through the food chain and has been proven to cause cancer in laboratory animals. It also increases the risk of breast cancer and an infant feeding on breast milk can receive up to 12 times the acceptable limit of DDT. DDT is now illegal in many countries but it is still used in certain countries as it is a cheaper than less persistent alternatives. Key problems, which increase the potential risks from pesticide use, includes the storage of pesticides in homes. Also women pesticide applicators may be unable to read instructions and so fail to carry out basic precautions, such as wearing protective clothing. Basic means of safety and hygiene protection, such as washing facilities may seem costly measures to introduce. There are even reports in some countries of pesticide containers being re-used for storing and transporting crops. Also agriculture is often excluded from national labour laws and not subject to any international standards.

Chapter 14 of Agenda 21 recommends increased awareness of sustainable agriculture methods in women's groups. In particular, governments should disseminate more information to farming households encouraging "reduced use of agricultural chemicals", as well as train women's groups, farmers and other agents in alternative non-chemical ways of controlling pests. Wider use of traditional practices for pest control should not be overlooked. Research and training of farmers to reduce pesticides have been successful in a number of countries e.g. In Indonesia a programme reduced pesticide use in rice by 65% while yields increased 12%. Women's networks and associations can further encourage the use of Integrated Pest Management systems, that seek to both reduce pesticide use and increase profitability of agricultural production e.g. throughout Asia "Field Schools" help farmers to develop integrated skills and do much to encourage women's participation. NGOs, like the Environment and Development Action Network (ENDA) in Africa and "Mama 86" in Ukraine, research into natural methods to protect crops and farmers as well as the environment, and work directly with women's groups to encourage these practices. The new Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPS) also seeks to eliminate the most environmentally unsound chemicals from pesticide production, however once legislative frameworks are in place at the national level, they need to be properly enforced. Policy recommendations:

- Further research into the impacts of pesticides on women and men
- Further outreach, training and education of women's organisations on pesticide use and alternative methods
- Strengthening local organisations to continue support work on integrated farming and pest management programmes
- Occupational health and safety should be upper-most priorities, alongside addressing environmental health issues in the private sphere, such as indoor air pollution, second-hand smoke, etc.
- Further research is needed into the impact of globalization on increased exposure of women and girls, such as bidi workers, to pesticides during processing/manufacture of agriculture produce.
- Further implementation and enforcement of key international agreements (e.g. POPs)

Source: WEDO 2000

and decision-making structures do not produce the most effective and sustainable solutions to the water crisis". It successfully integrates a gender perspective into many of its recommendations to governments, the international community and stakeholders such as industry. The Ministerial Declaration of The Hague on Water Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century (March 2000) emphasised the need to empower women, use their skills and respond to their needs in water resources management. At the Second World Water Forum in The Hague, the Gender and Water Workshop, attended by 500 people, agreed to establish a Gender and Water Alliance. The Alliance, comprising a large membership from NGOs, women's groups, governments, intergovernmental bodies, and other stakeholders is now active, and representing women & water concerns in various fora, such as at the International Freshwater Conference, Bonn, December 2001 (Coordinator: Jennifer Francis, Francis@IRC.NL). Recommendations developed by women in various fora include:

- Water should be managed in a way that reflects its economic, social, environmental and cultural values for all its uses, and countries should move towards pricing water services to reflect the cost of their provision. Special attention should be paid to the poor, to the role, skills and needs of women and to vulnerable areas such as small island states, landlocked countries and desertified areas.
- Sustainable integrated water resources management must be based on gender balanced, transparent and accountable decision-making structures at all levels representing all stakeholders, and take full account of the special roles, responsibilities and burdens of women, in particular in ensuring household food security.
- "Listening centres" should be established to engage the public in discussions about water: access, price, quantity and quality, and transmit their views of participatory decision-making structures.
- Support should be given to those governments that do not have statistical information on the percentage of their population without access to safe water.
- Gender analysis must be incorporated into all research, problem diagnosis, information and monitoring networks and formulation of solutions and actions at all levels.
- Investments should be made in improved data collection on public health, including more long-term epidemiological studies and more dissemination of clear and useful information about the environmental links to health problems.
- The approach to problem-solving has to be participatory and community based, so that new technology and management systems to alleviate the workload of women supplying water, do not lead to further diminishing the status of women in the family and the community.
- Knowledgeable local women should fully participate in developing and implementing education programmes and information services on water management. Equal access for women and girls to education and training programs must be ensured. A gender and age-sensitive approach should be used to train local health officials about specific substances to which the local population has been or is likely to be exposed through their freshwater supplies.
- Systems of corporate accountability must be introduced at national and international levels to reduce and finally eliminate release of dangerous pollutants that contaminate freshwater supplies by production units in all economically active sectors. As stated in the Hague Declaration, "*the effectiveness of pollution control strategies (must be increased) based on polluter pays principles and ...appropriate rules and procedures (considered) in the fields of liability and compensation for damage resulting from activities dangerous to water resources.*"

### Energy consumption

Cross-country data show clear linkages between level and type of energy consumption and distribution of income - per capita energy consumption increases with GDP per capita. Reliance on biomass fuel is greater in lower income countries, countries with higher disparities in income distributions, and in countries with relatively small urban populations. In such countries women and children face enormous burdens gathering fuel wood and fetching water, including serious health implications. For example, women and girls are typically responsible for food preparation and are therefore exposed to greater levels of indoor air pollution, resulting in respiratory diseases and eye infections. The other side of the 'inequity coin' in relation to energy is the over-consumption of energy in the Northern countries. The production and use of luxurious goods, including energy-intensive electric household appliances (alarm systems, communication and entertainment systems, Jacuzzis, saunas, dryers, etc.), require excessive individual levels of energy use. Gender differences in access to these goods usually only become apparent when differentiating within households by income and examining consumer decisions about income use. Transport is one of the few issues, which have attracted more research in recent years (see Box 6 below), but for many of these goods, research is sketchy at best.

### Environmental protection policies

Even more challenging are recent studies, which suggest, as Charkiewicz (1998) argues, that because of the unequal gender division of labour, some policies that promote environmental sustainability may increase the already heavy work-

loads of women. The promotion of sustainable activities such as labour-intensive organic agriculture, reforestation, household recycling and segregation of waste create additional demands on the time of women. Similarly, Eie (1995) argues that control measures such as eco-labelling place responsibilities on the individual consumers. This can increase women's workload, as they are the main shoppers. Policies, new technologies and measures that aim to promote sustainability must seek to recognise and incorporate the already heavy workload that women shoulder. Services and facilities should be put into place at local community level to help consumers integrate re-cycling, re-use and other responsible practices into their daily routine.

### 3.5 Governance

Good governance systems are built on (1): Participation as the foundation of legitimacy in all democratic systems; transparency; accountability; effectiveness and efficiency; responsiveness to the need of all stakeholders (2); The rule of law; and gender equity. Good governance puts people first. It is indispensable for building peaceful, prosperous and democratic societies. However, it is not gender-neutral, *"the discourse, procedures, structures and functions of governance remain heavily skewed in favour of men in general, and certain groups of men in particular"* (Ashworth 1996).

### Participation

*"There's no doubt that any society that does not bring into the centre the full participation of women, is a loser"* (UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 5 June 2002). However, increasing women's participation has not been a priority in many countries. It has remained limited to a minority of women who hold decision-making positions. In several international agreements governments have pledged to ensure that women's empowerment and gender equity were priorities. The UN has designated 30 % as the "critical mass" required to maintain the impetus towards equal, 50/50 representation. Women's participation in sustainable development cannot be divorced from the necessary advances in women's participation in governance processes generally. It is a critical element of Chapter 24 of Agenda 21, where governments are called:

- Increase the proportion of women involved in decision-making for sustainable development;
- Strengthen governmental institutions to systematically bring a gender perspective into government policy making;
- Strengthen NGO capacity;
- Strengthen gender sensitive approaches to research, data collection and dissemination.

Illiteracy and poverty are fundamental barriers to women's full engagement in civic participation, but there are other conditions, such as childcare needs, hours of meetings, access to transportation, which further limit women's participation, even in industrialised countries. Addressing the structural barriers to the lack of women's equal participation and representation will be a key factor for achieving gender equality. Affirmative action and quota systems have often been the most successful strategies to gain the 'critical mass' that will create the chance to equitable representation.

### Box 6. Women and Transport

Mobility and travel are essential to carry out daily activities and just as women's roles vary between societies, classes, rural/urban location and ethnic groups, so do their travel patterns. There are, however, many common features that extend across both developed and developing societies. Even in societies where the need for gender equality is legally recognised, men and women travel very differently. Women are still predominately responsible for childcare and the household. Findings on women's travel patterns show that:

- Women make the vast majority of household trips (shopping, taking children to school, doctors and childcare). Countries where the car is the commonest mode of transport for women's travel, e.g. USA, concerns have been raised about women's potentially larger contribution to global emissions of greenhouse gases, however this is not necessarily true as described below.
- Employed women make shorter work trips than men, and lower-income women tend to be less mobile than men in the same socio-economic groups.
- Car ownership in developing countries is very low. Even in car-owning households women have less access to transport resources available to families.
- In developing country urban areas, the hardships of travelling in congested urban areas falls disproportionately on women, responsible for the essential family business trips.
- Women spend more time than men engaged in transport activities in rural areas of developing countries. They are more likely to use their own energy to transport materials due to an absence of transport services. Having to walk reduces a women's ability to engage in development processes.

Another study of travel in different social groups (Linden 1999, see Hemmati 2000b): Elderly people, persons with low income and women generally travel less extensively and use less energy. Women's lower transport use is related to domestic responsibilities and choice of employment. Typically women rear young children and abstain from working outside the home. When they do work outside home, they often choose to work nearby. Also, women's employment is commonly within care and service sectors, located in the centre of cities along major public transport routes. Middle-aged people, high-income groups and men travel more and consume most energy for travelling. More men than women have driving licenses and they have different preferences in relation to leisure activities. Women spend more leisure time locally, while men travel further for leisure activities. Income level is also an important influence on the amount of travel done for work and leisure. In conclusion, the study highlights that large differences exist even in seemingly homogeneous and egalitarian societies such as Sweden. It also helps identify groups whose lifestyles are less sustainable than others and thus aids development of targeted policies, e.g. toward men, middle-aged and high-income groups. The researchers recommend that policies targeting consumption should be accompanied by infrastructure improvements and an increased variety in modes of transport.

**Multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs)**

In general, participation in political decision-making needs to be founded on clearly defined principles of (transparency, collaboration, learning, equity, flexibility), ground rules (for communication, procedures, agenda and issues of process, facilitation, reporting) and objectives (outputs such as reports, action plans, (inter)governmental processes). Meaningful participation of all parties also requires active supportive role from the coordinating/facilitating body, particularly to ensure equitable access to: information (including policy-based, technical and scientific data); justice; funds; capacity building and training, in addition to creating the space for participation in decision-making and implementing.

MSPs are emerging as an important tool in participation. They are processes that aim to bring together those principle groups who have a "stake" in a particular issue, in new forms of communication, decision finding, decision-making and implementation. MSPs recognise the unique perspectives and contributions of all stakeholders, seeking to involve equitable representation and utilize democratic principles of transparency and accountability. They aim to develop coherent partnerships and strengthen networks within and between stakeholders. MSPs cover a wide spectrum of structures and levels of engagement. There are increasing examples of such processes at all levels of decision-making. Multi-stakeholder processes should be further developed and defined through experimentation, sharing and analysis of experiences. They could provide an appropriate format, if properly managed and resourced. However, to be effective, existing imbalances in power structures need to be overcome, for example:

- Governments and intergovernmental bodies need to operate on the basis of a consistent, predictable, and transparent framework
- Participation of women as a distinct stakeholder group needs to be ensured, based on a critical analysis of the gender aspects of the issues addressed.
- Training and adequate resources are essential to ensure meaningful participation of all stakeholders.

In the run up to and beyond the World Summit on Sustainable Development, multi-stakeholder processes could be a key tool in ensuring equitable participation, ownership of the process and effective long-term outcome. Key recommendations in relation to this include:

- Eminent persons, ambassadors to the Summit process, advisory panels and other groups of representatives should include an equal number of women;
- Development of a common yet flexible framework of stakeholder participation in intergovernmental processes by 2004;
- Earth Summit 2002 to agree a process for review and further development of participation resulting in options put to the UN General Assembly;
- Integration of stakeholder participation in all mechanisms of implementation that Earth Summit 2002 (eg a "global compact / partnership" for implementing the Millennium Declaration targets, as advocated by RSA Minister Valli Moosa, Sept 2001);
- Creation of a trust fund to ensure meaningful participation of all stakeholders in activities that arise from Earth Summit 2002, particularly to support women and those from developing countries.

**Gender mainstreaming**

Gender mainstreaming policies and procedural rules need to be integrated into the work of all government departments, and adequate monitoring mechanisms should be established. Strategies to encourage gender balance in governance and sustainable development include:

- full and equal participation of women in the formulation of all policies and decision-making;
- evaluating institutions for gender balance and action on gender issues;
- overcoming women's apathy and lack of understanding of government processes with innovative types of outreach, including awareness-raising, capacity-building, education and training of women and men; and of all people in decision-making positions in all sectors and at all levels (incl. changing curricula; public campaigns; developing gender sensitivity training; guidelines for gender mainstreaming, etc);
- institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women e.g. legislation (CEDAW, national legislation);
- making gender disaggregated information available and supporting relevant research;
- guiding young women towards careers as decision-makers in sustainable development;
- establishing joint women & environment task forces;
- collecting and sharing good practices at local, national and international levels; including peer group review of (good) practice and promoting successful strategies;
- All such efforts must be backed by adequate funding and support, and should be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness and replicability.

Table 1: Gender Equality Index

Area of concern	Indicator(s)
Autonomy of the body	Legal protection against and incidence of gender-based violence Control over sexuality Control over reproduction
Autonomy within the family and household	Freedom to marry and divorce Right to custody of children in case of divorce Decision-making power and access to assets within the household
Political power	Decision-making in supra-household levels (municipalities, unions, government, parliament) Proportion of women in high managerial positions
Social resources	Access to health Access to education
Material resources	Access to land Access to houses Access to credit
Employment and income	Distribution of paid and unpaid labour Wage differentials for men and women Division of formal and informal labour by gender
Time	Relative access to leisure and sleep
Gender identity	Rigidity of sexual division of labour

Source: Wieringa, 1999

### Gender analysis & gender-sensitive indicators

Effective gender analysis to monitor progress on gender equity and sustainable development requires good gender-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive research and indicators. However, there is a severe lack of adequate data available. For example, in work assessment, caring activities are still categorised as leisure, and few gender-disaggregated environment & health indicators exist. Gender expertise also needs to be further integrated into research, eg through scientific advisory bodies and environmental impact assessments (EIA's), and through participation of women and women's NGOs in the development of social-environmental information systems. Integrating social and environmental monitoring is another important strategy.

At the international level a gender review of the current CSD set of sustainability indicators should be carried out and a revised version should be produced. A consistent comparable reporting methodology could be instituted within the UN system to track progress of women in decision-making roles for sustainable development in countries worldwide. Such mechanisms should be promoted among national governments and stakeholders. Progress would be reviewed within the sustainable development process every 5 years, using a common framework. Existing examples of sets of gender indicators includes the Gender Development Index (GDI) of the HDR, which differentiates the traditional human development index of countries by gender. Also the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) looks at the number of women with a seat in parliament, the proportion of administrators and managers who are women; proportion of professional and technical workers who are women; women's share of earned income. The Gender Equality Index, developed by the International Statistical Unit, is the perhaps the most comprehensive (see Table 1).

### 4. The Way Forward

Throughout international agreements pertaining to women / gender and sustainable development, a number of common strategies and tools have been identified. Particular priorities are:

- the need for access to gender justice in economic, political, social and environmental matters,
- the protection of human rights, and
- the use of adequate tools for gender mainstreaming.

The complexity of the issues as well as rapid development of the world's political, social, economic and environmental state have led to several parallel processes all of which address gender issues and women's participation. The necessary re-integration of this work is essential towards sustainable development. The Earth Summit 2002 process offers an opportunity for such re-integration and for effective gender mainstreaming in sustainable development.

Women played an historic role at UNCED and successfully shaped the final document, Agenda 21, gaining 172 references to women (up from 2 references in the first draft), a strong chapter on women and the recognition of women as one of the major groups. The Women's Environment and Development Organisation (WEDO) and the Network for Human

Development (REDEH) are currently coordinating a global women's advocacy platform: the Women's Action Agenda For A Healthy and Peaceful Planet 2002-2015. An international working group was established to prepare a draft and engage in a global consultation process. The document will present priority concerns and recommendations from women around the world, and will be used to raise women's voices effectively in the Summit process. Academics, the wider women's movement, the human rights movement, and other stakeholders worldwide are also planning a series of activities. The high number and diversity of activities will reflect the myriad of points of view and approaches that are indeed necessary to address the issues of gender equality and equity. It will be crucial to support women's NGOs to enable them to participate and deliver their share of expertise, experience, and enthusiasm to the Earth Summit 2002 process. Relevant data and material has been gathered for the recent review efforts such as Beijing+5, WSSD+5, and Istanbul+5. Linkages with the CSW 2002 meeting (focusing on poverty; and natural disasters) will also be crucial.

The 2002 process is an opportunity to review progress made, to look forward and to address urgent and emerging issues. It needs to take a strong focus on people-centred development and on the challenge of integrating the three pillars of sustainability. The 'chain of blame' regarding the lack of implementation of the sustainable development agreements can only be broken by a joint, concerted effort of us all.

*"We must build partnerships among all actors - governments, non-governmental organizations, community groups and the private sector - to bring more women to the negotiating table and into decision-making positions"* (UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, 26 Feb 2001).

There has been a general emphasis on government actions for changing conditions. While governments are indeed determining the framework for individual, business and other stakeholder action, government action and changes in government structure have a limited impact. Governments will continue to have a main responsibility for achieving progress on women's / gender issues, but they need to build stronger links with women's NGOs and civil society in general, local public bodies and trade unions, as well as the private sector. More profound, cultural changes will be necessary, not just in laws or government structures. For this to happen, we need concerted efforts of all stakeholders. We need the awareness of all citizens and the majority of people to embrace the necessary changes towards gender equity if we want our societies to prosper and sustainable development become a reality.

*"You know, for every dollar a man makes, a woman makes 63 cents.  
Fifty years ago, that was 62 cents.  
So, with that kind of luck, it'll be the year 3848 before we make a buck."  
Laurie Anderson: Beautiful Red Dress, 1998*



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