

## THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Kenya is one of 4 African countries implementing the Millennium Development Goals Project (MDGs). The project is a conscious effort by the United Nations system in liaison with the implementing countries seeks to assess the intervention requirements needed to address MDGs by 2015. It thus entails ascertaining the current status of various policy areas relating to MDGs, evaluation of the targets and an assessment of the resources required to attain desired targets. The project, targets the following themes:

- Hunger
- Education
- Health
- Energy and Environment
- Infrastructure, including slum dwellings
- Water and sanitation, and
- Gender

MDGs are a useful tool to measure development progress but MDGs are not entirely sufficient as they lack the Beijing Platform for Action Themes and processes. Perhaps, if combined BPFA and MDG will greatly advance the cause of women.

The following is a listing of the main implementing partners:

- Ministry of Planning and National Development (MDG focal point)
- Ministry of Planning and Development (PRSP Secretariat)
- Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services
- Kenya Women Parliamentarian Association
- Central Bureau of Statistics
- Civil Societies

### **Reporting Period Results**

#### ***i) Gender and Community Poverty Dialogues***

Through partnerships, UNIFEM held 5 district level dialogues with women with over 800 attendances. Women shared their experiences around goals 1 – 7. They also gave suggestions and possible intervention areas on gender to be forwarded to the Consultant and Ministry of Planning and Development. The lists from Association of Media Women in Kenya covered events and reported as news and features in print and electronic media. The media linkage contributed to the visibility of women's issues in the MDG process.

Women participants also raised salient issues on: -

- Illiteracy – among women was noted as a root cause for poverty. Women are unable to undertake meaningful business ventures; employing young men to keep their books thereby cheating them. Lack of educational infrastructure was decried, in the North-Eastern Province there are only 4 girls secondary schools. One district (Ijara) has no girl's secondary school, yet the religion does not allow co-education in secondary schools.

Another factor leading to low development was identified as the UN classification of the area as security phase II. The women proposed that MDGs address (in) security as a prerequisite of meeting MDGs.

Lack of representation of women in parliament should be addressed. Although representation of women parliamentarians has doubled with the new government, this province does not have a woman parliamentarian.

Cultural beliefs mitigate against MDGs. Continued sensitization will be needed to eliminate retro-pressure practices such as female genital mutilation.

HIV/AIDS is also a set back to both the Beijing Platform and MDGs. Widow inheritance and sex-related issues continue to pose challenges.

UNIFEM held a meeting with Kenya Women Parliamentarians to brief them on MDG process. This was to seek MPs support in parliament to ensure gender issues are taken on board in needs assessment and costing process.

Non-governmental organizations are also involved and a key outcome is the development of a gender reflection tool that will be used to analyze the extent to which UN agencies have addressed gender in their programmes, especially in gender mainstreaming across the sectors.

In November 2004, the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services launched the National Gender Commission, while the Women's Bureau; formerly a division in the Ministry was elevated to a full department. The gender department will be responsible for policy formulation and the gender commission will ensure implementation of gender policies. These two related but different structures are strategic partners in advocating for the gender issues across all the goals.

A lot of gains have been made in the line of Beijing Platform but to ensure development, MDGs momentum must be maintained.