



**RESPONSE TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
QUESTIONNAIRE  
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING  
PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

**Prepared by  
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**PART I**    *Overview of trends in Achieving Gender equality and Women's Advancement in Zambia*

- 1.1 The Beijing Platform of Action and Declaration could not be implemented without the participation of the women and men of Zambia at all levels. Government Ministries, Churches and civil society participated in the formulation of the Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women in Zambia (SPAW): 1997 - 2001, the National Action Plan for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.
- 1.2 The Major Achievements in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action include: -
- The formulation of the Draft National Gender Policy. The draft Policy document is currently receiving active consideration by higher authorities;
  - The strengthening and elevation of the Women In Development Department at the National Commission for Development Planning to the Gender In Development Division at Cabinet Office as the National Machinery;
  - The appointment of Gender Focal Points in sector ministries, provincial administration and specialised agencies;
  - The establishment of the Victim Support Unit within the Police Service to deal with cases of gender violence and related crimes in all Police Stations in the Country;
  - The introduction of the Programme for the Advancement of Girl's Education (PAGE) in schools;
  - The revision of the National Population Policy to incorporate gender, reproductive health and other concerns;
  - Reorientation of the health sector which is taking gender into account; and
  - The formulation of the Social Action Programme whose objectives are to cushion the impact of the Structural Adjustment Programme on the vulnerable groups, especially women.
- 1.3 The achievement of gender equality is one of the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Zambia. In this regard, the General Policy Framework which provides the guiding principles for national development calls on all government ministries to ensure that gender

is mainstreamed in their various policies, programmes, plans and projects. At the same time, government has put in place measures to making the National Budget gender responsive and to ensure that gender and development activities are budgeted for.

1.4 Zambia's priority areas of concern are: -

- The persistent and growing burden of poverty on women and their unequal access to resources and participation in economic structures and policies;
- Inequality in access to and opportunities in education, skills development and training;
- Women's unequal access to health and related services;
- Inequality between women and men in the sharing of power and decision-making; and
- The rights of the Girl Child.

1.5 The National Plan of Action only identified five areas of concern because previous strategy documents could not be implemented in large part because they covered too many areas with no indication as to what should be given priority. One of the guiding principles in selecting the areas of concern was that they must have a multiplier effect and lead to consequential changes in other areas. Further, it was considered important that the National Action Plan be practical and manageable.

1.6 Gender mainstreaming has been most successful in the education sector while considerable success has been achieved in the area of population, health and legal reform. Some of the best practices include:

- The introduction of the 25 percent Bursaries Scheme at University for female students;
- Establishment of the Women's Legal Clinic under the Law Association of Zambia, Women's Committee which also provides legal advice and counselling to women who are unable to afford legal fees;
- Re-admission of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancies;
- Formulation of the Zambian Women Parliamentary Caucus;

- Affirmative action in the area of science and technology to encourage the participation of female students;
- The enactment of the Interstate Succession Act;
- Establishment of the Victim Support Unit;
- Establishment of Drop-in Centers and counselling services for victims and perpetrators of gender violence by the Young Women Christian Association of Zambia;
- Re-orientation of Traditional Birth Attendants and provision of health kits;

## **PART II *Financial and Institutional measures***

- 2.1 The Budget Office at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) and the Gender In Development Division at Cabinet Office have been engaged in activities aimed at developing modalities for engendering the National Budget. This objective of this initiative is to contribute towards ensuring those development policies, programmes, projects and activities are gender responsive.
- 2.2 In order to institutionalise the implementation of the Beijing Platform For Action and other international instruments on gender, the Government has mandated the Gender In Development Division to co-ordinate all activities related to gender and development. On the other hand, the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in implementing gender activities are co-ordinated by the Non Governmental Co-ordinating Committee (NGOCC).
- 2.3 Although modalities to co-ordinate and monitor the amounts of money spent on gender and development activities are in place, they have not been effective and thus require to be strengthened. The Division, is currently looking at the possibilities of strengthening collaboration between the Budget Office and Technical Cupertino Department at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and co-operating partners to ensure that information on the funding for gender and development activities is provided to the Gender In Development Division. In order to strengthen the role of the National Women's Machinery in co-ordinating gender and development activities, additional resources and capacity building is required.

- 2.4 The formulation of the National Plan of Action for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action takes cognisance of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Vienna Declaration on Women's Human Rights.
- 2.5 In order to implement the Programme of Action for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Zambia developed the National Population and Development Plan of Action (NPDPA) with the Inter-agency Technical Committee on Population (ITCP) as the co-ordinating agency. The membership of the ITCP includes government ministries, NGOs, co-operating partners and other stakeholders.
- 2.6 The Gender In Development Division at Cabinet Office is responsible for co-ordinating the follow-up to all global efforts on gender. The translation of global efforts on gender into national action is done in collaboration with various government ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders who are involved from the planning, implementation to the evaluation stage.

**PART III** *Implementation of the Critical Areas of Concern of the Beijing Platform for Action.*

3.1 In relation to each of the twelve critical areas of concern describe best practices and innovative action taken by the Government and other Actors;

*3.1.1 Women and poverty*

The Government has put in place a number of programmes and strategies aimed at empowering the disadvantaged groups, especially women. These include:

- The Social Action Programme which aims at cushioning the short term negative impact of the Structural Adjustment programme among the disadvantaged group, with women as a special group;
- The Social Safety Net and the Public Welfare Assistance Scheme also targeted for the vulnerable groups especially those failing to pay for education and health services;
- The Social Sector Rehabilitation Programme whose objectives included the rehabilitation of social facilities and infrastructure. It also aims at restructuring the budgetary allocation and expenditure in favour of social sectors;
- The Poverty Alleviation project with the support the African Development Bank; and
- The introduction and implementation of the Credit Scheme for women entrepreneurs with the support of the United Nations Development programme

*3.1.2 Education and Training of Women*

- The Government through the Ministry of Education has embarked on the Programme for the Advancement of Girls Education (PAGE). PAGE seeks to deliver quality primary education to all children, especially girls and to reduce gender disparities in

primary education, enrolment retention, completion and achievement;

- The Ministry of Education has also initiated the **Zambian Education Rehabilitation Project (ZAREP)** which has introduced **in-service training of Education Managers, Education Management Training – short term courses for Head Teachers, Education Officers and Inspectors of School, with a gender component;**
- The Government has made a pronouncement of the re-admission of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy and other related measures as a means towards achieving gender balance in the education sector; and
- At tertiary level, the Government, through the Bursaries Committee, has set aside a scholarship scheme especially for girls.

### ***3.1.3 Women and Health***

- The Government is in the process of formulating a health policy to take into consideration new and emerging issues and ensure a more comprehensive and integrated approach to meeting the current health needs of all and that is in consonant with the health system;
- The Ministry of Health has introduced training in counselling and interpersonal communication, including analysis of service providers attitudes to aid in the development of appropriate materials and intervention;
- Government is in the process of retraining health personnel in order to improve health provider – client relationship as a way of improving service to the community; and
- The Ministry has also adopted the Super Market Approach to providing health services to ensure that people access the various services at one go. This measure is aimed at reducing the number of time one has to visit the health centre in search of medical services, especially women who are mainly responsible for taking care of the sick.

### ***3.1.4 Violence Against Women***

- The Government through the Zambia Police Service has introduced the Victim Support Unit charged with the responsibility of dealing with cases of gender violence and related crimes.

- Plans to pass a Bill on the elimination of violence against women have also been put in place.

### *3.1.5 Women in power and decision making*

- The Government signed a Declaration on Gender and Development in 1997 which commits governments to ensuring equal representation of women and men in decision making of member states and SADC structures at all levels, and the achievement of at least thirty percent target of women in political and decision-making structures by the year 2005;
- Non Governmental Organisations have been involved in sensitising the public on the need for women to actively participate in politics and have continued to provide assistance to female candidates in the political field.

### *3.1.6 Institutional Mechanisms for the advancement of women*

- The National Institution for the Advancement of Women in Zambia is the Gender In Development Division at Cabinet Office. The efforts of the Division are supplemented by the Gender Focal Points in line ministries and specialised organs of government.
- The Division in collaboration with the Population in Development Department at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Zambia Information Services have established Provincial Inter-agency Technical Committees on Population (ITCP) to spearhead the implementation of gender and population programmes at provincial level. The membership of the Provincial ITCPs includes government ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders.

### *3.1.7 Human rights of women*

- The Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) has set up the Legal Aid Clinic which provides legal aid to disadvantaged women. The efforts of the Legal Aid Clinic are supplemented by the efforts of the Women In Law in Southern Africa (WILSA) and the Women In Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) which also provide free legal advice to women;



- The Government through the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders are mounting awareness campaigns on the reproductive rights of women;
- To protect women's and men's right to inheritance, the Government has enacted the Intestate Act to change and integrate the various customary laws and practices relating to intestate succession.

**3.2 *Obstacles encountered in the implementation of the National Plan of Action include:***

- The negative cultural attitudes, beliefs and practices among the population;
- Negative administrative practices in the private and public sectors;
- Pressure from society and fear;
- Limited gender analytical and technical skills among stakeholders;
- Limited financial and human resources;
- Pending adoption of the National Gender Policy;
- Slow institutionalisation of gender in the Civil Service and other public institutions.

**3.3 *At the Beijing Conference, the Zambian Government committed itself to the following: -***

**3.3.1 *Finalising the National Gender Policy; -***

The Government through the Gender In Development Division at Cabinet Office is in the process of putting in place the National Gender Policy which will serve as a blue print to guide gender activities and mainstreaming of gender into national policies, programmes, plans and projects. In this regard, an extensive consultative process has been going on since 1995 culminating in the preparation of the draft policy document which is currently under consideration.

*3.3.2 Ensuring the full retention of girls through the education system and achieve parity in the enrolment of girls and boys in schools by the year 2000.*

The Government through the Ministry of Education has revised the education policy to ensure that gender concerns are adequately incorporated. The Ministry of Education has revised the school curricular to remove all discrimination, which are designed in favour of the boy child. The Ministry has also began re-training teachers on the use of gender sensitive materials and methodologies.

The Government has also made a pronouncement on the re-admission of girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy and other related reasons as a measure towards ensuring the progression of girls in education. At tertiary level, the Government through the Bursaries Committee of the Ministry of Education has set aside a special scholarship scheme for girls (25 percent of scholarships to the University of Zambia).

*3.3.3 Increasing women's access to credit*

The Government has put in place a conducive environment to ensure that women access various institutions involved in the provision of credit to entrepreneurs.

A number of Non Governmental Organisations such as the Women's Finance Trust, Micro-credit Scheme, Zambia Federation of Women In Business and others are especially involved in providing credit, training and other related services to women.

*3.3.4 Ensuring the provision of water supply and sanitation to women and girls.*

The Ministry of Local Government and Housing is currently implementing the Water and Sanitation, Health Education (WASHIE) Programme which includes a component on ensuring a clean and safe environment.

The main objective of this project is to empower the communities in looking after water facilities and to plan and implement programmes

for themselves. In order to ensure that the project takes into account gender concerns and the Gender In Development Division has been incorporated into the National WAHSE Committee.

Currently, the WASHE programme is being reviewed to ensure that gender is mainstreamed into all programmes and projects being implemented.

- 3.4 *Further actions and initiatives which the Government intends to undertake to ensure that the Beijing Platform for Action is fully implemented beyond the year 2000.*

The Government started the process of engendering the National Budget to ensure that the implementation of gender and development activities are sustained.

In the same vein, the Office of the Auditor General in collaboration with the Gender In Development Division have initiated consultations on modalities of undertaking gender auditing to ensure that the auditing process does not just focus on revenue and expenditure aspects but also ensures that resources are utilised for the intended purposes, especially those related to gender.

- 3.5 *The vision for women's advancement and equality for women in the new millennium.*

The Government of the Republic of Zambia will continue to pursue policies, which will ensure gender equity development.