

Although poverty was not identified as a key issue, it is acknowledged that the country foresees it becoming a critical issue should the issues concerning women not be addressed.

The Platform has been developed with active input from Non Government Organisations (NGO's). It marks the spirit of partnership between Government and NGO's in the desire to coordinate a nationally recognised framework of action for the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, China on 4 - 15 September, 1995 and for the next decade.

It also calls for strengthening of partnership between the National Government machinery and Non Government Organisations, with strong emphasis on financial and technical support. These critical issues are not exclusive to women but affect the community as a whole.

In pursuit of sustainable development and advancement of women the National Platform requires structural and adaptational changes.

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Current indicators reveal that the literacy status of women remains at 34% for women and 46% for men which is comparatively lower than women in other Melanesian countries of Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Similarly, employment ratios of both men and women in the public and private sector remains very much in favour of men. Only few women occupy managerial positions. The majority of young women do not receive adequate training either to participate in the formal sector or to function productively in their own villages.

The health status of women is also low. Papua New has one of the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world. The life expectancy of women is 47 years and most women die of preventable diseases.

Equal participation of women in decision making in public life is far from reality. Over the years only a handful of women were able to enter into the national and provincial political arena. The period of the late eighties and the nineties have seen a decline in the involvement of women actively participating in the decision making process. Considerations are being made in line with the provision in Section 102 of the National Constitution to nominate and appoint a women's representative to the National Parliament.

Although the National Constitution provides for the equal rights of all citizens, women have not been able to fully understand and exercise their rights. This has largely been due to ineffective government mechanisms advocating and promoting the rights of women.

Stringent donor conditions, and lack of NGO capacity has made it difficult to mobilise and promote the advancement of women. The endorsement by the government and the subsequent launching of the National Women's Policy marked a new era in the advancement of women. The policy set the goals and objectives to facilitate development of women in the country.

It has paved the way for the proposed establishment of the Office of the Status of Women. It is also the basis for the review of the National Council of Women Act and the overall improvement in the capacity of the Council to influence policy matters. Efforts are underway for the establishment of the Women's Information and Data Base System and the strengthening of the national women's machinery.

All these initiatives have generated a high degree of awareness among women. Women are more determined than ever to be active participants as well as beneficiaries in the development process.

## PREFACE

This report has been prepared by the Government of Papua New Guinea at the request of the United Nations. It presents an assessment of the progress and shortfalls experienced during the first five years of the Post Beijing era. The Papua New Guinea Government reflected its commitment for Gender Equality and Women Advancement by sending a strong Government delegation of thirty-one women to Beijing. Prior to the Conference, Papua New Guinea women identified ten critical issues to be addressed during the decade (1995-2005). These issues were officially endorsed by the Government at a special Conference entitled "the Granville Declaration for Emergency Action for Women's Development and the Future of Papua New Guinea," and the adoption of the National Platform.

Following Beijing, the National Platform for Action was re-assessed. Since it was unrealistic to expect government to address all issues with equal significance it was agreed that a certain number of issues be identified and put forward to government for priority action. These issues were:

- Strengthening of the National Women's Machinery
- Economic Empowerment of Women
- Decision Making and Good Governance
- Integration of Gender Issues in Government Planning and Administration.

Since 1995, the PNG Government has undergone tough economic pressures and permanent solution to its current problems is far from sight. Whichever path the Government chooses to improve the plight of women and to fulfil its Beijing commitments will be pursued under strenuous conditions. The National Platform provides the directions by which PNG women seek gender equality and equity to access opportunities in education, health, and productive resources to life themselves, their families and their communities of their current depressive situation. The experience of PNG clearly confirms that women's issues are intricately related to issues in the global, political, social and economic environment.

Furthermore, this assessment has shown that in the absence of the necessary institutions, an effective women's movement and formal women's organisations who can articulate women's interests and fight for their rights, progress and positive changes have been minimal. Papua New Guinea, along with Commonwealth member nations committed itself to the strengthening of its national women's machinery. This was a central feature of the Commonwealth Plan of Action, Ministers agreed that it was indeed vital that this machinery was placed at the highest political level to ensue that it could influence policy decisions of government.

Current assessment of country progress point to lack of political will by Government as major reasons for the lack of commitment and effective implementation of the Global and National Platform during the first five years of this decade (1995-2000).

The Government had been approached through formal policy submissions about the need to build up the capacity of it's focal point to be pro-active, and to vigorously pursue the vision as expressed by women and their needs as reflected in the National Platform for

producing goods for family use, sale and for cultural exchanges and ceremonial purposes.

The introduction of a cash economy, legal systems of justice and democratic forms of government are placing serious strains on the traditional ways. Pacific nations are being forced to examine the appropriateness of customary institutions and laws in the light of changing social conditions. Further disruption may also occur as nations presently in political relationships with major powers continue their quest for self-determination and self government. The attaining of sustainable development depends heavily on the decision we make now with regard to the management of our human, physical and cultural resources.

With these decisions come inevitable changes in the relationship between women and men and especially changes in gender roles. There lies an importance of women's and men's customary status but at the same time there is a need to concentrate on the changing roles to work towards re-establishing the partnership and power sharing relationship between female and male.

It is recognised that within the Pacific region there are unique differences between Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia; and differences still within the sub-regions. But despite these differences there exists a unique bond that defines the 'Pacific' experience. It is within these commonalities that lies the strength to make this Platform of Action a reality.

At the same time Pacific countries do not exist in isolation. Pacific peoples cannot help but be influenced by changing economic as well as ideological global paradigms.

Action. The plans however must be reviewed to be practical in the light of the economic constraints facing PNG.

Clear targets that the country will be able to achieve during the next five years of the decade should be developed with renewed vigour and commitment from Government to all other stakeholders in PNG. As re-iterated by the PNG Delegation upon their return from Beijing, Government must adopt the platform and put in an efficient women's machinery to implement the platform.

# The Granville Declaration on Emergency Action for Women's Development and the Future of Papua New Guinea

3 May 1995, Granville Motel, Port Moresby

Reaffirming the Second National Goal and Directive Principle of the Papua New Guinea National Constitution on Equality and Participation, for all citizens namely,

"We declare our second goal to be for all citizens to have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the development of our country".

Recalling the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action for Children and Development, the International Conference on Population and Development, the Noumea Declaration on Women and Sustainable Development, the Pacific Platform for Action, PNG Law Reform Commission Report No.14, and the PNG National Women's Policy.

We, the participants of the Annual General meeting of the National Council of Women, from 29th April through to the 3rd of May, 1995 including representatives of 20 subsidiary Provincial Councils of Women and affiliated Non Government Organisations, and attended by the National Parliament Speaker and former Prime Minister, Honourable Rabble Namaliu, Acting Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Chris Halveta and the Minister for State Assisting the Prime Minister, Honourable Arnold Marsipal and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) Country Representative;

*Recognise that women make up half of the population of Papua New Guinea and contribute far more than half of the productive capacity of the economy; and that the steadily declining social and economic situation of the female population of PNG present a serious threat to the stability, prosperity and sustainable democratic development of the whole nation.*

**Note with Alarm** that PNG has one of the highest rates of maternal deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth complications in the world;

**Caution** that maternal child health services have declined to a state of collapse, thus further threatening the lives and health of already vulnerable women and children;

**Mindful** of the large scale efforts of the Minister for Health, the Department of Health and the Child Survival Programme to revitalise rural health services for women and children;

**Acknowledge** the high rate of female malnutrition across their life cycle, anaemia in pregnancy and maternal depletion syndrome combined with very poor access to consistent family planning services;

## **1.0 Current Trends in the Achievement of Gender Equality in Papua New Guinea:**

On the eve of the new millennium and in this age of globalisation, women in Papua New Guinea face serious challenges more so than the era of the nineteen eighties. Captured by the financial volatility and economic insecurity prevailing in the Asian region, Papua New Guinea has been subjected to the growing trends of global market competition. Its alliance with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have seen the government push for free market economic policies and privatisation. Although market competition is viewed to provide greater efficiency in the production of goods and services there is no guarantee for equity. As experienced by the people of Papua New Guinea, the rule of Free Market Competition is no longer in the hands of Government. The Government has grown weaker unable to hold the IMF and World Bank to operate its program of assistance within the context of the country's diverse conditions and special needs. The rules of competitive markets are set by outside market forces. Today free markets have rewarded the nation by concentrating the wealth and power in the hands of the few elites, select group of people and corporations who dominate the economy. Papua New Guinea will foresee growing inequality to be inevitable in the 21st century. The Universal Goals for Human Development, and Human Rights is being overshadowed by the quest for expansion of markets and liberalisation.

Since the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) in Papua New Guinea, women have been marginalised further and their conditions appear to be worsening each year. The human impact of the SAP in PNG has been so severe and is likely to persist long after the economic recovery. Health and Education services have been crippled with decreasing budgets for the social sector. Inflation has quadrupled with prices of basic needs rising steeply. Real wages have fallen sharply by approximately 60%. The current consequence of an ailing economy has given rise to the social erosion of Papua New Guinea's society with increasing social unrest, more crimes being committed against women and girls, more violence in the homes and the community at large. While free market is essential for economic growth, women in PNG do not have direct access to participate in the mainstream economic sector.

The majority or over 80% of the women in the rural areas dominate the informal, subsistence sector of PNG. This sector has sustained families and communities in these tough economic times. Although women's participation in the labour force is rising, women still continue to carry the burden of care, women's hour in unpaid work remains high compared to men. Current assessment of the distribution of economic activity by gender (National Statistics Office, 1990) confirms a gradual increase in economic activity by the female gender from 24.9% in 1980 to 27.3% in 1990. This increase is observed in the subsistence sector with an increased number of women selling food for cash.

Current indicators, posed by the United Nations Human Report of 1999, on the formal sector employment activities of PNG women reveals that of the top administrators and management only 11.6% are female. While in the professional and technical areas' women comprise 29.5% of total workers in Papua New Guinea.

With increasing fiscal pressures, Papua New Guinea's public service has also deteriorated markedly. Thus being the biggest female employer in the country, the recent retrenchment exercise has seen a rise in the exodus of female workers. Women being employed in the non-skilled traditional sectors are easy targets for the State's public sector rationalisation



an integral human development focus in recognition of women's role in economic productivity and sustainable development; and the implementation of the Law Reform Commission Report Number No. 14 on Domestic Violence;

**Appeal** for significantly improved measures to ensure the protection of the girl child's basic human rights to education, literacy, vocational training and participation in formal employment; and significantly to rapidly accelerate measures to improve the endemic gender imbalance in the education system;

**Request** greater resource support from Government, Donors and International Agencies to ensure women and girls receive proper social services, and that existing Non Government Organisations be fully and consistently supported and that they participate in planning and implementing of any policies and projects.

**Further Request** that consistent and adequate financial support be made available to the National Council of Women and other key Non Government Organisations charged with facilitating the development of women;

**Confirm** our willingness to support the Department of Health and UNICEF in the training of midwives of every village in order to reduce maternal mortality and improve basic primary health care utilising the nationwide Child Survival Programme service delivery model;

*We, the women leaders of Papua New Guinea, firmly believe that without dramatic improvement in the situation of women, the cherished hallmark of true representational democracy, integral human development and equal opportunity cannot be realised. We firmly believe that without dramatic improvement in the situation of women, the foundation of our society - the family - is in serious jeopardy, and therefore our society at large is at peril. We assert our rights as citizens to declare these truths, not out of lust for power but out of love for our country. Papua New Guinea must realise the losses incurred through the decades of neglect of half of its population's special needs. The time has come to redress these longstanding inequities in a bold manner, to bolster the very fragile existence of most rural women in Papua New Guinea, so that all women will be empowered to contribute their share to nation building in peace, dignity, health and security.*

**We commit ourselves as equal partners in Papua New Guinea's development.**

program. As the case is in most developing countries Papua New Guinea women predominate in social service professions and domestic services.

The total adult literacy rate stands at 26.3% of the total population, however of the total adult female population, female literacy stands at 64.7% with the male literacy indicator at 82%.

In general the quality of life for most Papua New Guineans have deteriorated further over the past five years. This is highly evident in the urban areas. Although the country does not have a national poverty line, it is most likely many are living in extreme conditions of poverty. The dependency ratio, derived from the United Nations Human Development Report of 1990 stands at 73% for PNG house holds. As of 1997, 18.7% of the total population won't be expected to survive to the age of 40. Today free markets have rewarded the nation by concentrating the wealth and power in the hands of the few elites, select group of people and corporations who dominate the economy. Furthermore, current cutbacks in jobs will lead to increasing social stress, fragmented families, increase in poverty levels, and domestic violence. Prostitution problems have surfaced in the major urban centres of the country leading to increase incidence of STD and AIDS in the country. The HIV/AIDS epidemic in PNG is reported to disproportionately affect young adults between the age of 19 and 35. According to 1996 reports, approximately 50% of HIV cases are women and the majority fall between the ages of 20 and 29. The risk of acquiring HIV by women is increasingly high due to the social conditions that affect their status and their access to and control of resources. (Jenkins, 1995: 141).

Papua New Guinea's maternal mortality rate is listed among the five worst countries in the world at 930/100,000 births (GoPNG and UNICEF, 1996). The primary cause of deaths in mothers is related to pregnancy and child birth complications. This implies that the situation of women and children have not improved dramatically since 1995. With declining health resources the health status of women and children may have deteriorated further in certain regions of Papua New Guinea. A situation assessment of Women and Children 1996, by UNICEF reported a decline in the public usage of health services with the number of outpatients declining from 8.7% to 7.9% over the past five years.

The 1999 Human Development Report presents PNG's infant mortality rate at 79/100,000 births. Gender indicators on the four critical issues highlighted in the National Platform for Action is lacking in the following areas, education, economic activities and employment. In the absence of available gender desegregated data, it is difficult to ascertain progress for women in the areas concerned.

Despite the gloomy scenario presented above progress has occurred in certain aspects of the Platform. PNG's response to the Global and National Platform for Action particularly in incorporating the gender issues into existing policies and plans of Government is quite encouraging. This is evident in a number of important policies that the government has endorsed in recent years. Examples include, the Population Policy, the National Health Plan, National Education Plan, Small and Medium Term Enterprise Policy and National Defence Force White Paper. A specific project addressing the education of the girl child in PNG has been introduced and funded by the Australian government. Gender responses in existing projects by sectors of government have improved in recent years. This is largely due to the fact that the global movement for gender equality has made positive impact on the international donor community which also has positively impacted on country projects of government.

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## **2.0 Legislative, Political Policy Framework for Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Advancement in PNG.**

The Government of Papua New Guinea officially recognised the disadvantaged position of women, their role and contributions towards national development in the early 1970's. This was manifested in the call for a "a rapid increase in the equal and active participation of women in all forms of economic and social activity," specified in the Seventh Aim of the Government's Eight Point Development Plan. By 1982, the government reviewed the progress of women's development in PNG and called for the establishment of a plan or policy for government to resource in fulfilment of its commitment. As a result, the National Women's Policy was introduced and endorsed by government in 1991. This policy reaffirms the goal for Equality and Participation and Integral Human Development as reflected in the country's National Constitution.

The goals of the Policy are stated below:

*i) Integral Human Development:*

"For everyone to be involved in all endeavours to achieve integral human development of the whole person and to achieve fulfilment through his or her contribution to the common goal".

*ii) Equality and Participation:*

"For all citizen to have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from, development of our country". A specific objective within this goal calls for equal participation by women in all political, economic, social, religious and cultural activities".

Despite the existence of the National Women's Policy, support for the implementation of the Women's Policy and programs for women's advancement have generally been viewed as an extension of former social welfare programs. This places low priority on women related projects.

Due to past and current weakness in social policy of governments, support for Social Development and the universal goals for Gender Equality, Justice and Human Rights issues have been given scant attention in PNG.

During the 1990s, the government began to take certain positive actions in securing an environment for justice, respect for human rights and gender equality in PNG. This is reflected through the ratification of the following four important Human Rights Conventions as a demonstration of its commitment:

- the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
- the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1993
- the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and
- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1994

Since the ratification of CEDAW, legal literacy awareness has commenced within the country. Consultations have also begun between the government focal point, the Attorney Generals office and other institutions concerned with Human Rights issues in Papua New

### III. CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

A broad range of issues have surfaced during workshops, and consultative forums of both the Government and NGOs as being the underlying causes hindering the advancement of women in Papua New Guinea over the past decade. However, Health, Education and Training and Literacy, Mechanisms to Promote the Advancement of Women and Shared Decision Making, Economic Empowerment and Employment Opportunities and Conditions, Legal and Human Rights and Culture and the Family are the six priority areas of concern for Papua New Guinea women that require emergency action from both the Government, NGOs, and individuals for the next decade.

#### 1. HEALTH.

##### Strategic Objective:

To ensure that women's health needs; physical, mental, and spiritual are met and adequately resourced.

##### Actions:

- i. Ensure access to affordable community-based health care services, particularly those provided through mobile MCH clinics, village patrols and community based distributors.
- ii. Encourage gender sensitive education programmes on the health needs of the family.
- iii. Improve the quality of and make available the quality of free gynaecological state services to women in rural and urban areas.
- iv. Support human resource development at all levels in service delivery, particularly the training and employment of female health practitioners at community health centres and aid posts.
- v. Improve and expand public health education programmes including the translation of materials into appropriate vernacular and promote the role of women as traditional healers and the use of natural and traditional remedies.
- vi. Support research into the health needs of women with particular focus on mental health.
- vii. Reduce the high mortality rates to half of the 1990 level through

Guinea. The government has yet to appoint a task force committee to oversee the implementation of CEDAW.

Currently, interim arrangements are in place in the form of an inter-ministerial adhoc committee.

It is expected that this committee will comprise of the following agencies, Attorney General and Justice, Labour and Employment, Government Women's focal point, the National Council of Women, PNG Council of Churches, Individual and Community Rights Advocacy Forum (ICRAF), the PNG Trade Union Congress, PNG Law Reform Commission, Health and Education Departments. There are a number of outstanding tasks that the government has to undertake relating to CEDAW.

This includes a full and comprehensive study on Papua New Guinea's Legal Framework and its implications for CEDAW. A National Implementation Plan is also required. Before a national plan or program of action is developed, a legislative review and study needs to be conducted urgently. Overall, support and training have been solicited and organised at regional levels by UNIFEM for the Pacific Region. However effective follow up action is required at country level of certain countries.

The Papua New Guinea Government had been seriously considering the need for establishing rights protection mechanism. A considerable amount of research was conducted on the possibility of establishing a national Human Rights Commission with technical assistance from the International Human Rights Commission. A Bill to have the Commission enacted through an Act of Parliament is still pending parliamentary approval. This Commission will oversee the implementation of all Human Rights Convention in the Country.

Political participation of women has improved tremendously. The revised Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments (1995) has seen a rapid increase in the participation of women at Provincial and Local Government Levels. Women's representation has been secured through legislation. This development is a direct follow-up on implementation of the Global Platform for Action and an achievement for women of Papua New Guinea. The Women also have the option to contest national and provincial seats on an equal footing with males since independence. At national level, political participation by women is weak. However, the Beijing conference had been an empowering process whereby women had become even more conscious about the need to participate equitably in the political and decision making processes of the nation. This was clearly evident when women contested the 1997 national general elections in greater numbers than ever witnessed before. Two women came out victors, and one became the first women Governor of a province. Acquiring national seats will continue to be difficult for women given the volatile nature of Papua New Guinea politics. Few if not none, are supported by current political parties and sponsorship for female candidacy is quite difficult to attain in Papua New Guinea society.

- v. Encourage women in urban and rural areas to undertake distance education courses.
- vi. Encourage women to undertake post graduate and higher degree programs at national universities.
- vii. Increase access to non formal education and training opportunities including vocational training for those entering the workforce.
- viii. Promote policies which ensure that there are at least 50% females in all educational institutions.
- ix. Develop a wholistic perspective on education placing importance on education starting from the home.
- x. Encourage women to pursue training in non-traditional areas including management.
- xi. Increase government responsibility for early childhood development by resourcing and giving greater recognition to Pre-school education and Tok Ples School initiatives.
- xii. Increase fellowships for short term in-country courses in the areas of management and other technical skills.
- xiii. Ensure equity of access by women to training opportunities in the public service.
- xiv. Ensure that in future development of curriculum that gender roles are not stereo-typed.

## 2.2 LITERACY.

### Strategic Objective:

To give priority to the issue of illiteracy of women and to strengthen and expand current efforts to reduce illiteracy among women.

### Actions:

- i. Provide materials and increase financial support to Non Government Organisations involved in adult literacy.

### **3.0 Overview of the Global and PNG National Platform for Action**

#### **3.1 Global Platform for Action**

The purpose of the Fourth United Nations Women's World Conference was to review and appraise the implementation of the Nairobi Forward - Looking Strategies (1986 - 1995) and to adopt the Beijing Declaration and the Global Platform for Action. In developing the Beijing Global Platform for Action, women acknowledged that progressive changes have been accomplished in all regions of the world. The Nairobi assessment further showed that the situation of women is intricately linked to changes in the global economic, social and political environment and to policy responses within such frameworks. At Beijing, women reiterated the need for more emphasis on economic growth, sound economic policies and productive employment as practical measure for women's empowerment. Women's economic advancement surfaced prominently as a critical issue for all governments to address in the coming decade (1995-2005).

The Global Platform for Action identified twelve critical issues that are also relevant to Papua New Guinea. The Platform contains three hundred and sixty-one paragraphs, providing a detailed guide for concrete action by member states. The issues endorsed by UN member states in Beijing were summarised as:

- Women and Poverty
- Education and Training for Women
- Women and Health
- Violence Against Women
- Women and Armed Conflict
- Economic Empowerment of Women
- Shared Decision Making
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
- Human Rights of Women
- Women and the Media
- Women and the Environment
- The Girl Child

Prior to the adoption of the Global Platform for Action, countries organised national and regional meetings to negotiate a plan of action that would be accepted globally. Consensus was reached considering that the common issues shared by women cuts across barriers of culture, religion, politics, and varying social and economic contexts of individual nations.

Papua New Guinea's participation at the Beijing Conference was significant because the country commenced preparations eighteen months prior to the event. At sub-regional level, the Pacific Platform for action titled, "Rethinking sustainable Development for Pacific Women Towards the Year 2000". This document gave Pacific Island countries a stronger voice at the ministerial meeting for the Asia-Pacific Region. The Jakarta Declaration represents the commitment of governments in Asia/Pacific region and was adopted in June 1995.



- vi. Assist NCW and other NGO's in institutional strengthening and capacity building.
- vii. Strengthen the Gender and Development Unit within the Department of Finance and Planning.
- viii. Review and update the National Women's Policy.
- ix. Apply gender analysis in developing policy and planning activities.
- x. Provide assistance to Non Government agencies and institutions conducting research and programs on women.
- xi. Strengthen the Women's focal point to provide information for effective networking.
- xii. Encourage donors to resource existing programs rather than set up their own programs.
- xiii. Increase government financial support to NGO's.
- xix. Build a strong partnership between Government and NGO's and for government to coordinate and resource while NGO's implement.
- xv. Lobby for other government departments to support NGO's.
- xvi. Upgrade the status of the Department of Religion, Home Affairs and Youth in recognition of their role in implementing government's social development programmes particularly in supporting NGO's.

### **3.2 SHARED DECISION MAKING.**

#### **Strategic Objective:**

To promote women's active participation in decision making at all levels in the family and in the wider community to ensure that their needs and concerns are represented.

Another significant document that has come into play is the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development that was endorsed by Commonwealth Ministers on the eve of the Beijing Conference.

This document emphasised the need for equal and equitable outcomes from the Global Plan of Action. Commonwealth ministers also committed their governments to intensify efforts to ensure gender concerns become an integral part of the planning processes of Commonwealth countries.

### **3.2 PNG Platform for Action**

Papua New Guinea's pre-Beijing preparations provided the opportunity for women from all walks of life and provinces of Papua New Guinea to take stock of their own situations and to assert their views on the critical areas of concern that governments should address during the decade. Most notable of the various declarations and action plans emanating from this global event, is Papua New Guinea's National Platform for Action. This platform presents the basis upon which the Papua New Guinea Government and society at large must act to advance women's progress in Papua New Guinea. The document is titled, "Papua New Guinea Platform for Action: A Decade of Action for Women Towards National Unity and Sustainability, 1995-2005". Basically the Papua New Guinea Platform for Action identifies ten critical issues of great concern to PNG women. The issues are presented as follows;

- Health
- Education, training and literacy
- Economic empowerment and employment
- Legal and human rights
- Culture and family
- Transport, shelter, water, and communication
- Agriculture and fisheries
- Environment and Development
- Sustainable Development and Poverty

(Detail information on the Platform is attached as Appendix)

Poverty did not surface as a critical issue for women in 1995, however it was acknowledged that failure to address the above issues would instigate a rise in poverty levels within certain groups of Papua New Guinea's population. It is also understood that Papua New Guinea does not have a national standard to measure poverty. The government must therefore develop National Human Development and poverty indicators to be used for planning and monitoring purposes.

It is understood that the current monitoring and reporting processes are in place. The Papua New Guinea Government Delegation Report (1995) after Beijing did not specifically highlight the process involved, however it is understood that after five years (1995 - 2000) governments are required to take stock of their progress.

This report is therefore part of this process. At national level, the National Platform for Action called for the following mechanisms to be established to ensure effective implementation of the Platform.

- i) *Establishment of the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Gender and Development*

#### 4. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONDITIONS.

##### 4.1 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

###### Strategic Objective:

To increase the participation of women in the national economy and recognise and support women's contributions to the voluntary sector.

###### Actions:

- i. Strengthen and expand existing credit schemes for women to include savings and loans to individuals and groups.
- ii. Establish a network and an advisory service for women entrepreneurs in the country.
- iii. Collect and disseminate data on women's participation in economic projects for planning and information purposes.
- iv. Provide information to women on existing financial institutions and revitalise the services available for women.
- v. Legislate and where appropriate introduce policy measures to enable women to participate freely and more effectively in commerce both as employers and entrepreneurs.
- vi. Research into business opportunities, cottage industries, food processing and marketing for women.
- vii. Identify and link women to available business training opportunities.
- viii. Protect business ventures reserved for nationals only which are registered with Investment Promotion Authority.
- ix. Build a handicraft market or resource centre to help establish national and international markets for women's handicrafts. In addition, establish a National Handicraft Association to monitor trading practices and to assist and advise women.
- x. Impose controls on transport levies to assist small business operators.

This committee was introduced earlier under the auspices of Papua New Guinea's National Women's Policy. However given Papua New Guinea's shift from (Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) the committee would reorganise its focus, strengthening mainstreaming efforts across all sectors of government and the community. The role of this committee would be to strengthen integration, coordination and encourage effective communication between all sectors on the implementation of this plan. The members of the committee comprises of agencies within government and key NGO agencies concerned with women's Human Rights issues. This committee did not meet immediately after Beijing but was holding meetings since 1997.

The Gender and Development unit, established in the National Planning Office plays a supportive role in monitoring and advising agencies to minimise duplication of activities and coordination between all sectors on various program responses developed by different agencies. This unit was establishment in 1993 as a policy response to the National Women's Policy.

#### *ii) Establishment of the Office of the Status of Women*

Calls for the establishment of the of the Office of the Status of Women were contrary to existing policies of government. Having engaged the IMF/World Bank in its economic restoration program, the government placed priority on reducing fiscal expenditures. A specific directive was to reduce the size of the public service. This had a direct effect on the establishment of the proposed Office.

In delivering the Government Budget Directions of 1999, the Government introduced a major retrenchment exercise. As a result of this directive the government women's focal point lost 70% of its staff. It had a staff ceiling of 13 and to date is reduced to just four officers. A submission for the establishment of the Office of the Status of Women was presented to the National Executive Council in 1998, however no positive response has been received on this matter.

Financial arrangements on the implementation of the plan were to be sought from Government. However it was disclosed that the PNG Government did not officially endorse the National Platform for Action and made no firm commitments on the four critical issues identified by women. Since Beijing 70% of project funding for women has been derived from external aid agencies and foreign governments.

#### *iii) Role of Non Government Organisations:*

Non Government Organisations have emerged as important partners in the development and delivery of women's projects in Papua New Guinea. In view of the changing role and directions of Government, the Women's focal point in Government is expected to concentrate its focus on facilitating the development of policy, program responses, advice and technical support to agencies and provinces of Papua New Guinea. The changing role of the women's focal point places greater responsibility on NGO's in the implementation of specific projects targeting issues affecting women.

The attendance by Papua New Guinean Women's Organisations at the NGO forum in Beijing has inspired women to strengthen their network, relationships and to build alliances on common issues of concern to women and the community. The women's movement has grown stronger with new groups emerging and advocacy is rising. Although there was no specific reference on the role of NGO's in

## 5. LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS, VIOLENCE, PEACE AND NATIONAL UNITY.

### 5.1 LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

#### Strategic Objective:

To increase community awareness on the importance of women's human rights and legal rights as provided for in the Constitution and in the enforcement and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

#### Actions:

- i. Prioritise issues and develop plan of action on CEDAW.
- ii. Conduct research on legal and human rights issues.
- iii. Support existing efforts of Non Government Organisations on human rights issues.
- iv. Sensitise legislators and administrators about gender and human rights issues.
- v. Strengthen existing efforts by government and NGO's to inform and educate women and the public on women's rights.
- vi. Encourage counselling to include spiritual and moral values.
- vii. Provide legal aid for women and establish a network for all women lawyers.
- viii. Provide support and opportunities for legal literacy and paralegal training for women.
- ix. Make available support services for women including rape crisis centres, shelters for women, private facilities for interviews at police stations and court advocates to enable women to take perpetrators of violence to court.
- x. Give particular attention to the observance of children's rights.
- xi. Give emphasis to teaching basic values to children.

the National Platform, there were calls for greater support for NGO's in PNG, from various sectors of the community.

In 1996 the Papua New Guinea Government introduced the poverty alleviation program with NGO's targeted as the implementing agents for the project. This project also addresses institutional concerns of NGO's and is being supported by the World Bank. A similar scheme is also being supported by the Australian Government. Its emphasis is on strengthening the efforts and capacities of NGOs at grassroots level. Women's organisational needs are also addressed in these two major projects.

Papua New Guinea's largest NGO and umbrella Organisation for Women, the National Council of Women depends heavily on government support for its existence. In recent years the National Council of Women has acquired WID projects that were initially administered by the Government Women's focal point. This move is consistent with existing national reform initiatives to decentralise project and service delivery to Provincial Governments and to NGO's working in close partnership with government agencies. This change necessitates an urgent review of National Council of Women's current Act and its future status. It is viewed as an NGO although it was established under an Act of Parliament, therefore the Government is obliged to fund the National Council of Women annually.

The current proposals for an amalgamation of the current Women's Division and the National Council of Women may be the best option to take at this juncture because of diminishing resources available to women. In recent years, 80% of government funding has been channelled to meeting administrative costs of these two agencies and very little is left for project costs. It is hoped that the amalgamation will improve and strengthen the existing service delivery network for WID projects and streamline communication, dialogue and policy coordination from national right down to district levels.

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#### **4.0 Update on the Status of Implementation on the Global Platform and the PNG, National Platform for Action 1995-20005.**

Most Issues In the Global Platform for Action are identical to those in Papua New Guinea's National Platform for Action. However, the major difference is that the issues are ranked differently in priority. Upon return from Beijing, a post Beijing conference was held. The four priority issues agreed to during this Conference which have surfaced in existing reports available are;

- a) Institutional Strengthening and Upgrade of the National Women's Machinery
- b) Economic Empowerment of Women
- c) Shared Decision Making and Good Governance
- d) Integration of Gender Issues in Policies, Plans and Programs

The following discussion presents the status of implementation of the four critical issues highlighted. The implementation plan needs to be finalised and formally adopted for implementation by Government. Although the PNG Platform has not been presented to the National Executive Council (NEC) for recognition, commitment and further directions, implementation of the issues highlighted are progressively on target. The National Platform remains as a working document and the recommendations made during the Post-Beijing Conference have been widely circulated with all sectors.

##### **4.1 Strengthening of the National Women's Machinery**

This strategic objective addressed the need to build up the capacities of existing institutions and agencies that promote women's advancement in Papua New Guinea. The institutions identified are the women's focal point in government and the National Council of Women. Specific actions that were recommended have been summarised for the purposes of this report and presented below

- a) *To upgrade the Women's Division to become the Office of the Status of Women*

A submission to establish the above office was submitted to the National executive Council in February 1998. However, due to changes in government policy, the submission is still pending. The lack of response is directly linked with the current economic crisis facing PNG. Existing policies of government calls for the reduction of the size of PNG's public service consistent with government's policy directions to reduce fiscal expenditure. This office may not be established until such time when the economy of Papua New Guinea improves.

- b) *To revitalise the Inter-Agency Women's Advisory Committee*

This committee was recently revitalised and is now known as the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Gender and Development. The Committee is responsible for coordinating and monitoring implementation of the National Women's Policy across the entire spectrum of government.

The same Committee also oversees the implementation the Global Platform for Action and the Implementation of CEDAW at country level. Necessary steps are being taken to create a separate higher level Committee to oversee the implementation of CEDAW.



**Actions:**

- i. Integrate the needs of young women in plans and programmes and encourage their active participation in youth activities.
- ii. Introduce family life and adolescent education awareness at grade six level.
- iii. Provide career guidance to grade six students.
- iv. Increase the legal marriage age to eighteen.
- v. Discourage the negative portrayal and abuse of female images in commercial advertisements.
- vi. Provide employment and training opportunities for young girls.
- vii. Investigate child labour abuse practices by private firms and ensure fair remuneration for workers consistent with labour laws.
- viii. Ensure that current youth labour legislation is consistent with International Labour Organisation's standards, and addresses the employment situation of PNG Youth.
- ix. Legislate to protect the rights and interests of children.
- x. Recognise the particular support needs of single parents.
- xi. Support efforts of NGO's providing education for life to young girls and women.

**6.3 SPECIAL GROUPS OF WOMEN.**

**Strategic Objective:**

To recognise and support the particular needs of special groups of women.

- c) *To reorganise and strengthen the National Council of Women's Network at all levels.*

The Beijing Conference had consolidated and strengthened the National Council of Women Network. Women who have been involved in the conference processes both at the national and international levels are performing leadership roles with greater confidence and renewed energy. Current efforts are under way for the revision of the National Council of Women Act. This task will be completed by Year 2000.

- d) *To establish gender desks in key departments namely; Health, Education, Trade & Industry, Agriculture, and Employment, Police and Defence Force.*

Through the revitalisation of the Inter-Agency Committee on Gender and Development, it is hoped that this committee will facilitate progress and commitment from agencies. So far departments of Agriculture, Health, Education and Environment, Police and Defence Force have established gender desk. The women's focal point must continue to support and improve its liaison with these desks through the Committee.

- e) *To strengthen partnership relations between government and other Non Government Organisations (NGO's) concerned with gender issues.*

The role of NGO's in development has gained national and international recognition. In 1992, the Papua New Guinea government introduced a policy titled 'Government and Non-Government Relations in Papua New Guinea'. Government agencies have increasingly involved NGOs in the planning and implementation process of policy and project development. Existing policies of government continue to reflect the importance of NGO participation as an alternate mechanism for service delivery in PNG. Among the projects that government had introduced to be implemented by the NGO sector includes the Poverty Alleviation Project commonly referred to as the Targeted Community Development Program (TCDP) and the Community Development Scheme. Both projects were funded through donor assistance from the World Bank and the Australian Government respectively.

#### **4.2 Economic Empowerment of Women**

This strategic objective called for the increased participation of women in the national economy and for government to recognise and support women's contributions to the informal sector. Major initiatives to be introduced with respect to this objective are summarised as follows;

- a) To strengthen and expand on existing women's credit facilities in country.
- b) To carry out a feasibility study for the establishment of a PNG Women's Bank.
- c) Urgently review the Rural Development Bank's women's credit scheme.
- d) Research and collect data on current participation of PNG women in economic activities.
- e) to establish credit facilities for female headed households for housing purposes.

- iv. Use UNHCR Guideline on the Protection of Refugee Women in conjunction with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugee in considering refugee status for women.

## 7. TRANSPORT, SHELTER AND WATER, AND COMMUNICATION

### 7.1 TRANSPORT

#### Strategic Objective:

To provide safe and affordable transportation systems in rural and urban areas.

#### Actions:

- i. Ensure women's needs such as safety, accessibility and affordability are taken into consideration when transportation policies are formulated.
- ii. Develop and maintain a good system of roads throughout the country to enable women to remain on their lands and still have access to markets, and, services such as health and education.
- iii. Encourage women to learn non-traditional skills such as vehicle and equipment maintenance.
- iv. Encourage the use of non-polluting forms of transportation such as bicycles.
- v. Develop foot paths and bicycle tracks in urban areas.

### 7.2 SHELTER AND WATER

#### Strategic Objective:

To ensure that all women and their families have safe, secure, adequate and affordable shelter and water.

- f) **Conduct gender policy appraisals and impact assessments on macro economic policies.**

This objective has seen a major commitment on the part of the Papua New Guinea Government and the World Bank to establish the Papua New Guinea National Women's Credit Scheme. In 1996, two million Kina was provided by the World Bank while the Papua New Guinea Government made its largest contribution of *five hundred thousand Kina* to the project. This was the largest contribution the PNG government has ever made to a specific project for women in Papua New Guinea's history. Plans are under way to establish an independent Board of Trustees to manage this project outside of government's public service machinery.

It is to be noted however that the project concept evolved from within Papua New Guinea through a project initiative established by women in the Western Highlands Province. The project concept was adopted by the Women's Focal Point and trialed out in two other provinces, namely Simbu and East Sepik. The successes of these pilot projects led to the expansion of the scheme nationwide.

The economic downturn of PNG's economy has slowed progress in efforts to effectively integrate women's participation in the formal economic sector. The Small and Medium Term Enterprise policy presents a starting point for women's effective engagement in the formal economic sector. Since 1996, women of Papua New Guinea have participated at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Women's involvement at APEC level has influenced the development of the Papua New Guinea Women's Entrepreneur's Association. This Association comprises of women currently engaged in Small Medium Business Enterprises. The membership and business networks of this Association are expanding each year as women continue to exploit the benefits associated with APEC.

#### **4.3 Decision Making and Good Governance**

This objective is aimed at promoting women's active participation in decision making at all levels of the Papua New Guinea society. Specific actions to be undertaken are highlighted below.

- a) **To take affirmative positive action for the realisation of section 102 of the National Constitution to have a women's representative in National Parliament.**
- b) **To ensure women's representation in Local Level Government and Provincial level Governments of Papua New Guinea.**
- c) **To develop and promote a data base system of qualified and senior female public servants and professional women in both the public and private sector of Papua New Guinea.**
- d) **To gender sensitise political parties to fund and allocate seats for female candidates in elections at national and provincial levels.**
- e) **To provide training for women's leaders on different aspects of political leadership to ensure their effective performances as politicians.**

### 7.3 COMMUNICATION

#### Strategic Objective:

To provide information and improve communications to women living and working in remote parts of the country.

#### Actions:

- i. Research and implement innovative distance communication systems and technologies appropriate to the varying geographic conditions of PNG.
- ii. Establish communication networks throughout the country among women and women's groups.
- iii. Ensure that women have access to information concerning communications issues.
- iv. Develop the communication training and maintenance capabilities of women.
- v. Encourage and support public radio communications at affordable costs.

### 8. AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

#### Strategic Objective:

To promote and support women's participation in agriculture and fishing, in both paid and unpaid activities, particularly the role of women in securing food.

#### Actions:

- i. Mainstream gender issues and continue to support and strengthen women in all areas of agriculture and fisheries planning.
- ii. Improve women's access to agriculture extension services.
- iii. Introduce training and demonstration programmes on soil management and inter-cropping for sustainable development in agriculture.

Since 1995, Papua New Guinea women have taken an active stance in politics. The 1997 national election saw the entrance of 48 women contesting seats nation wide. Two women won seats and one became the Governor of one of the provinces. The legislative changes on the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments has also seen an increase in women's participation nationwide. In total Papua New Guinea has 18 women appointed members at Provincial level. At Local Government level Papua New Guinea has 284 appointed women members and at Ward level it is estimated that if the total appointments of 5,747 women appointed members at Ward Councils are completed, Papua New Guinea will witness a total of 11,949 woman members at Ward level.

At Ward level two women's representative are allowed for in each Ward Council. This achievements is significant not only for Papua New Guinea but for the pacific region as a whole. The increasing number of women in Papua New Guinea's political system has raised concerns about the effective performance of the women members, their contributions to the level of debate and capabilities to secure decisions in the best interest of women and communities. To this end, Women In Politics Association, a Non-Government Organisation, has embarked on a leadership training project targeting newly appointed members. This project aims to assist the members to be effective in their newly acquired roles. Issues addressed in these training projects focus on leadership skills, parliamentary procedures, budgetary process, conflict resolution skills, effective communication skills, lobbying, advocacy, reporting and other areas of interest in politics. Workshops are conducted at regional level. The project is supported by the Papua New Guinea Government and UNIFEM.

#### **4.4 Integration of Gender Issues in Government Planning and Administration**

The first edition of PNG's National Platform for action (1995) did not address Gender mainstreaming as a strategic objective, however, the Papua New Guinea Government's Delegation Report recognised its importance and made certain key recommendations to be pursued by Governments on the following areas.

- a) To seek technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat to set up gender management systems, including budgeting, accounting systems, impact analysis on policies and programs and gender based management information systems.
- b) Strengthen the national women's machinery by placing mechanisms at the highest level possible either as independent structures or in ministries with policy making responsibilities with adequate staffing and financial resources.
- c) To ensure that the officer in charge of the focal point are senior officials.
- e) Build up capacity in gender planning targeting National and Provincial Planners or policy makers. This training would also be institutionalised at tertiary level.
- f) Conduct gender policy appraisals and impact assessment on macro economic policies.

Commonwealth Ministers also emphasised the need to reduce the adverse effects of macro economic policies on women taking note of recommendations made by the Commonwealth Expert Group Report on Women and Structural Adjustment for the 1990's (PNG Delegation Report, 1990).

### **Actions:**

- i. Increase women's representation in environmental management and development; particularly on forestry, mining and landowner boards.
- ii. Support appropriate environmental legislation, standards and management practices.
- iii. Enforce legislations to strengthen existing mechanisms in the Consumer Affairs Bureau to monitor prices and quality of foods, materials and medicines imported and produced in PNG.
- iv. Introduce safe re-cycling and disposal of waste at all levels of production.
- v. Introduce and maintain safe water systems in rural and urban areas.
- vi. Support efforts in raising awareness on environmental issues.
- vii. Promote proper sanitation and environmental health particularly in reducing air and water pollution.
- viii. Develop town plans and enforce town planning zones so that commercial industries do not operate in or adversely affect residential areas.
- ix. Provide adequate recycling facilities to improve waste management.

## **10. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

The implementation of the National Platform for Action will require financial and skilled human resources from the national government, provincial governments and donor communities through their bilateral and multilateral assistance. Regional Organisations that are mandated to address the social and economic development of nations in the Pacific region are urged to take an active role in supporting and complementing PNG's Action Plan.

The National Women's Policy calls for mainstreaming development planning for women in all sectors of Government. In the absence of a National Planning Office, the Gender and Development Unit of the Department of Finance and Planning will coordinate and monitor sectoral responses towards the Country Platform for Action. It will also play a key role in the financing of development initiatives being proposed by the Government.

Papua New Guinea's effort towards gender mainstreaming in government planning systems began in 1993. Papua New Guinea participated in a pilot project that was sponsored by UNIFEM targeting four countries of the region.

The regional approach to mainstreaming is quite unique, because the approaches used in the training and in building up capacity for gender mainstreaming efforts in the region has evolved over the years. The approaches and concept developed has been refined to suit local conditions in terms of culture, social and political structures of individuals countries. The Gender and Development Unit in the National Planning Office and the Women's Focal point in Government were responsible for the project. The project focussed on planners, policy makers and NGO's involved with women's rights concerns in Papua New Guinea. Efforts after 1995 have slowed with the introduction of other programs introduced by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The capacity in country must be elevated for the program to take off in a direction that is consistent with government priorities. There is also a need for a Papua New Guinea's definition and approach that can be easily appreciated by the menfolk amidst growing misconception of the concept in the community.

Specific progress that has been achieved during the first phase of the program has resulted in the inclusion of a section for gender implications in project formulation documents of the National Planning Office.

The role of advocacy continues to surface prominently in various forums as the vehicle for generating positive reporting and interest from the Mass Media and the Community at large to appreciate gender issues in the community. Women's NGO's are being called upon to submit programs, media articles and take an active interest in awareness raising activities.



The National Council of Women and other grassroots non government organisations have a complementary role to play on advocacy, programme implementation, and policy advice.

The active support and participation of a broad range of implementation partners both government and NGO's is vital.

## 12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A logical framework including the output indicators will be developed to monitor and evaluate the progress of implementation of the Papua New Guinea Platform for Action. This framework will provide the basis for project and budget submissions by Government and Non Government Organisations. Proposals or program responses should be monitored by the Gender and Development Unit in close consultation with the Office of the Status of Women once established. Quarterly progress indicators will be established and reports presented to the Inter-Agency Women's Advisory Committee.

## **5.0 Highlights on Innovative Policies and Programs in Country**

Despite the weakness and lack of a strong coordination point during the years after Beijing, Papua New Guinea continued to experience an emergence of many policies and programs which although may not have been a conscious response by the agencies concerned they do relate to the Global Platform for Action. These policy initiatives should be acknowledged and supported as positive actions towards the achievement of the Platform. At this juncture, the National Platform for Action has not been officially endorsed by the National Executive Council. However, implementation of the Global and National Platforms for Action are continuing and Government has reported progress in the following areas

### **5.1 Employment and Training**

A number of ILO conventions relating to women has been ratified by Papua New Guinea Government

- Underground Work (Women) Convention 1935.
- Maternity Protection Convention (Revised) 1952.
- Maternity Protection Convention (Revised) 1952 no 103.
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention. 1957 no 11.
- Condition for Women in private Sectors relating to Maternity Leave has improved, with support from the Papua New Guinea Trade Union Congress.
- Quota systems being advocated by donor agencies in support of overseas training for women.

### **5.2 Health Sector**

- Greater involvement of the Women's Movement and Organisations in delivering health education programs to the community.
- Traditional midwife projects in East Sepik Province and the Trobriand Islands of Milne Bay Province.
- Women and Children's Health project.
- Weekly Talk-Show on Women's Reproductive Health Issues and Women's Reproductive Rights.

### **5.3 Education Sector**

- Gender program targeting parents and the girl child.
- Gender desk has been established in the Department.
- Gender Degree program has been introduced at the University of Papua New Guinea and will commence in the Year 2000.
- Five projects on Gender Mainstreaming are being implemented concurrently.

### **5.4 Economic Sector**

- Establishment of PNG Women's Entrepreneurs Association.
- PNG's National Women's Credit Scheme.
- Small and Medium Term Enterprise Policy.

Effective partnership relations, integration and collaboration must exist between all agencies both Government and Non Government to ensure there is no duplication and to rationalise our limited resources available in the country. To assist in this process the Inter-agency Women's Advisory Committee will need to be reactivated to monitor the implementation of the Platform and to help to mobilise available resources of agencies.

The role of the Gender and Development Unit of Finance & Planning will be crucial in ensuring that there is effective coordination between the different sectors.

At the regional level, the South Pacific Commission has been urged by its member countries to increase budgetary allocation towards work programme areas which primarily focuses on women's issues and initiatives towards achieving sustainable development.

The Australian assistance to Papua New Guinea has identified Women in Development as one of its priorities. Attempts are being made to ensure that in all sector programmes funded by AusAID, gender issues are taken into consideration. Future Australian assistance will take into account the priority areas identified under this Action Plan, particularly issues relating to sustainable development which includes human rights, women's health, education and training, credit opportunities and law and order.

Finally, at the international level, United Nations Agencies are urged to provide financial support to its agencies for financing of Gender and Development and Women in Development Projects at country level. All United Nations agencies at the regional level are urged to provide close monitoring of Governments in the region to ensure there are effective responses to the Global Platform for Action.

## 11. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Implementation of the Platform for Action is the primary responsibility of government. It is dependent on the partnership with various other Institutions and organisations in the government and non government sectors.

The government should give priority to ensuring mainstreaming of gender issues across the entire spectrum of government.

The upgrading of the Women's Division to an Office of the Status of Women will provide a sound basis for policy advise to government. It should take a lead role in coordinating, monitoring, and assessing the progress of the Platform for Action. This will also require the re-activation of the Inter-Agency Women's Advisory Committee whose role will be to promote integration, coordination, and encourage effective communication between sectors on the progress of the Action Plan.

### **5.5 Politics and Government Sector**

- Provincial Government Reforms allowing for female representation at provincial, local government, and ward levels.
- Female Representation in the Constitutional Development Commission.
- Women in Political Leadership Training Project.

### **5.6 Law and Order Sector**

- Establishment of gender desk in the Police Department.
- Establishment of gender program in the Police Department.
- Gender training for new recruits in Defence Force.
- Recruitment of female soldiers in the Year 2000.
- Introduction of Gender Policy.

### **5.7 Women's Human Rights**

- Legislative reforms under way to effectively address domestic violence.
- Proposal for establishment of Human Rights Commission before Parliament for deliberations.
- Intensive awareness by women's organisations' on women's human rights.
- Legislative and policy review in relation to CEDAW and CRC.

### **5.8 Non-Government Women Organisation**

- Targeted Community Development Project
- Community Development Scheme

The above list is not an exhaustive account of current responses both from Government and the Non-Government Sector. A major review on a sector by sector basis should be undertaken to establish the current activities of each sector and to revise the National Platform for Action. Hence there are many other initiatives at the provincial level that have not been reflected in this report.

- iv. Develop and support an agricultural subsistence improvement programme for women using appropriate technology. Create markets for subsistence women farmers with subsidies for transporting goods to the nearest market.
- v. Conduct research on each family member's contribution to the household activities.
- vi. Support short courses for women to learn the various methods of fish preservation and food processing particularly fruit for canning and making jams, sweet potatoes, yams, bananas and breadfruit.
- vii. Recognise and support women as the traditional agriculturalists and provide training opportunities to improve technical and management skills in agriculture.
- viii. Encourage agricultural practices that increase productivity and are environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.
- ix. Ensure that careful analysis and consideration of all facets of development whether environmental, economic or social have been carried out prior to implementation.
- x. Ensure that development activities are sustainable by designing and implementing activities that meet local needs and participation.
- xi. Promote the concept that agriculture and fishing are not only for income generation but also for domestic consumption.
- ix. Legislate against and educate women about destructive and poisonous baits and explosives for catching fish.

## 9. ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

### Strategic Objective:

To acknowledge the critical role women play in development and effectively utilise their knowledge to recognise and address the long term environmental effects of forestry, mining, fishing and related activities.

## 6.0 Major Obstacles Encountered

The Global Platform for Action has not been implemented effectively as originally envisaged. By 1996, the economy of Papua New Guinea began to deteriorate when Government engaged IMF and the World Bank who subsequently applied the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). A focus of the SAP was to reduce fiscal expenditures which resulted in drastic declines in the social sector budgets. The women's function being relegated to the social welfare sector was severely affected. Women's advancement projects and particularly the Five Year Management Plan for the Women's Division had to be shelved indefinitely due to funding constraints.

Additional setbacks related to policy directions to reform the public service led to a decline in productive output due to low staff morale. The period from 1996 to 1998 were tough years for the country as a whole. It was difficult to plan boldly with no funding forthcoming from the government. The World Bank initiatives conflicted with the United Nations goals for gender equality and human development. The trend of development that has transpired since has focussed on macro economic policies and its emphasis on economic growth, while the UN objectives were gender equity, sustainable development and peace among peoples of the world.

Faced with the above background, the Government Women's Focal Point and the PNG National Council of Women were unable to weigh the consequences of such setbacks and were slow in introducing an alternate plan of action that was more practical and appropriate to Papua New Guinea. Despite these obstacles the Government of Papua New Guinea has made considerable progress in many areas of the Global Platform as reported earlier in the report.

Since the institutional mechanisms called for in the National Platform for Action were not accomplished. The Government's alternate decision had been revitalisation of the Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Gender and Development. This Committee does not have excessive funding and staff implications.

The political leadership of government was quite supportive by releasing funds to send a big delegation of thirty-one government representatives and over seventy NGO participants. Following the conference, constant changes by Government to the political and administrative heads of the Department of Home Affairs led to differing priorities being pursued by each individual leader which had resulted in lack of effective coordination of all stakeholders involved in Government and the Non Government Sectors.

The ratification of CEDAW had also increased the workload of the women's focal point. This means that the Government has to seriously act upon the proposal to upgrade its women's focal point to effectively coordinate the implementation of CEDAW in Government.

### **Actions:**

- i. Develop and implement government housing policy and programmes that are supportive of women, especially single mothers.
- ii. Institute effective systems for land tenure which include women as beneficiaries.
- iii. Ensure that women have access to information and resources for owning their own houses.
- iv. Develop appropriate design, building materials, technology and construction methods that take into consideration culture, environmental sustainability, permanence, and life cycle costs.
- v. In the formal, informal and private sectors, ensure priority access to housing for female wage earners.
- vi. Provide safe and adequate housing for women at universities and training colleges.
- vii. Integrate the needs of poor urban women into urban planning, design of housing, and water supply.
- viii. Ensure all women and their families have adequate and safe drinking water.
- ix. Develop and implement ways for women in settlements to improve their living conditions and to have security of tenure during redevelopment pressures.
- x. Facilitate and financially support partnerships with NGO's in the supply and management of housing for young, single working, and elderly women.
- xi. Conduct gender disaggregated research on housing conditions, household needs, and priorities.

## 7.0 Future Directions

Clearly the early post-Beijing years presented challenges for Papua New Guinea and countries within the Asian Region, thus highlighting government's inadequacies in managing their economies and forcing governments to become more transparent and accountable to their populace. Although the Papua New Guinea Government had introduced emergency packages to restore its economy, the end result of these programs must be to improve human development in Papua New Guinea. With increasing concerns relating to inequalities between different groups in society, Papua New Guinea women today have more problems to contend.

Social Development and Gender Equality are even more relevant today, particularly in the distribution of costs and burdens of existing economic recovery programs. With the current emphasis on the economic empowerment of women, the challenge for Papua New Guinea women is to be involved in the main stream economic and political decision making processes. Reaching this threshold is essential to enable women to influence policy decisions that will affect gender equality, sustainable development and to bring forth the human touch into the domains of policy and decision making arenas. This has been missing during the past 24 years of male governance in Papua New Guinea.

Finally, the National Women's Machinery must be strengthened. Existing alternate systems must be examined to identify a suitable arrangement for Papua New Guinea. The existing arrangement within the department of Home Affairs is quite weak and not capable of influencing and asserting directions across all sectors of government. It may be necessary to have the National Women's Machinery established under a new Act of Parliament. It has taken the PNG Government more than ten years to resolve this issue. Women of Papua New Guinea will not stand by and watch the Government drag this issue into the new millennium.



**Actions:**

**A. Women With Disabilities.**

- i. Women's organisations should integrate the needs of disabled women in their plans and programmes.
- ii. Women's organisations should launch extensive education campaigns to discourage the exploitation of disabled persons by family members disguised as charity for income generating purposes.
- iii. Lobby for physical access for women and men with disabilities in public places.
- iv. Government to legislate for families to take responsibility for disabled persons.
- v. That legislation be passed requiring all buildings to have access for people with disabilities.

**B. Elderly Women.**

- i. Recognise older women's leadership contribution and capabilities.
- ii. Instill and strengthen Melanesian values on the need to care for elderly women.
- iii. Promote health education among women to increase understanding of themselves and the impact of menopause.

**C. Refugee and Displaced Women.**

- i. Integrate needs of refugee and displaced women into planning and programming in consultation with women themselves.
- iii. Provide rehabilitation services to refugee and displaced women through proper training to help develop their potential.

## 8.0 Recommendations

The following suggestions are made to activate PNG's effective response to the Global and PNG Platform for Action during the years 2000-2005. It is important that the agencies implicated in the four critical issues endorsed by Papua New Guinea women must be involved in developing the program responses as the lead agency for the issue concerned.

1. Revision and finalisation of the National Platform for Action (1995-2005). A separate program of Action should be drawn on the four critical issue areas identified during the Post Beijing Conference. The Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Gender and Development should also consider the appointment of four working committees to conduct this task and to report its progress to the main committee. It is important that participation is sought from members of the committee.
2. The Minister for Women's Affairs to be briefed on the outcomes of Beijing, the Global Platform and Papua New Guinea's Platform for Action. A submission should also be presented to Cabinet seeking endorsement and commitment on the four critical issues endorsed by Papua New Guinea Women.
3. The review on Papua New Guinea's Legislative Framework and implications on CEDAW to be undertaken urgently to determine the following matters:
  - a) appropriate mechanism to coordinate and monitor the implementation of CEDAW
  - b) Appropriate national women's machinery to promote women's advancement and gender equality in Papua New Guinea.
  - c) The future role and status of the Papua New Guinea National Council of Women.
  - d) Establish a national implementation program on CEDAW.
4. The National Council of Women to initiate consultation with its members and government on the future status of the organisation and the proposal to amalgamate.
5. The Women's Ministry and the National Council Women to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Women's Credit Scheme. The results of this evaluation should provide directions for an alternate management system for the project.
6. The National Statistical Office and Gender Development Unit (NPO) to finalise the gender desegregated data project outstanding since 1995.
7. Awareness to be conducted again on the Papua New Guinea's Platform for Action as a review of mid-decade implementation process. The document should be widely circulated within government and the NGO sector.
8. Budgetary allocations to be made available to the implementing agencies responsible for the four critical issues with specific projects to be accomplished annually.

## 6. CULTURE AND THE FAMILY.

### 6.1. CULTURE AND THE FAMILY

#### Strategic Objective:

To encourage women to learn and understand their own culture and be more appreciative of their Melanesian identity and values and, advocate for the elimination of practices that discriminate against women.

#### Actions:

- i. Integrate and encourage women's participation in national and provincial cultural activities.
- ii. Introduce legislation against polygamous marriages where polygamy is not practiced as customary law.
- iii. Adequate support is given to the wives where polygamy is practiced and review customary law.
- iv. Recognise and encourage traditional Melanesian ways of problem solving.
- iv. Provide appropriate training for village court magistrates and officers to adequately deal with problems relating to adultery, domestic violence, polygamy and desertion.
- v. Make available relationship and marriage counselling support services.
- vi. Promote christian values and spiritual development in the affirmation of Identity for Papua New Guineans.
- vii. Nurture the positive aspects of culture and tradition and encourage the teaching and translation of PNG vernacular.

### 6.2 YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS.

#### Strategic Objective:

To provide equal opportunities to young women and girls to develop their potential and participate in the community.

9. The Inter-Agency Committee on Gender and Development to meet on a quarterly basis. Special meetings may be convened when necessary.
10. The Global Beijing Platform For Action to be circulated and the Government women's focal point should have copies available in the office.

- xii. Monitor, review and strengthen legislations against sexual abuse and prostitution.

## 5.2 VIOLENCE.

### Strategic Objective:

To create increased awareness that violence is both a crime and a violation of women's human rights, develop appropriate public measures to eliminate violence and mechanisms to ensure that this is enforced.

### Actions:

- i. Promote legislation and enforcement of policies aimed at eliminating domestic violence as a national priority.
- ii. Implement the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission Report No. 14 on violence against women.
- iii. Liaise with police and other relevant agencies to establish an integrated data base on violence against women.
- iv. Enforce legislation on child abuse including incest, rape and prostitution and provide appropriate support services and counselling.
- v. Increase the number of police officers with special training to deal with women who are subjected to violence.
- vi. Undertake innovative and wide ranging community education to raise awareness about the root causes of violence against women.
- vii. Provide support through NGO crisis intervention centres and through emergency financial and accommodation assistance.
- viii. Support efforts of churches to educate teachers and individuals on christian values and the value of human life to deter domestic violence.
- ix. Resource Censorship Board, Ombudsman Commission, Law Reform Commission, Police and Custom's Office to effectively monitor black markets, pornographic materials and drug outlets.

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- xi. Seriously review the structural adjustment policies and GATT to assess its negative effect and impact on PNG women and support measures to redress this situation.
- xii. Provide situation for women to have access to more efficient labour saving devices.
- xiii. Undertake research into discrimination of single parents in accessing resources and financial credit.

#### 4.2 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONDITIONS.

##### Strategic Objective:

To review employment legislation and policies to ensure equitable terms, conditions and benefits for women workers in the private and public sectors. (Employment Policy)

##### Actions:

- i. Develop national employment policy with emphasis on equal opportunity in employment.
- ii. Ratify relevant International Labour Organisation's legislations on employment of women.
- iii. Sensitise trade unions to address women's issues and encourage participation of women members in trade union activities.
- iv. Research into stress related and work problems of women.
- v. Enforce laws and develop policies against sexual harassment, adultery and enticement in the work place.
- vi. Assist domestic workers to form a union or association to advocate for better working conditions.
- vii. Make available occupational health services including resting and nursing facilities and care centres in the work place.
- viii. Ensure there are adequate legislative provisions for parental leave covering all workers in the public and private sectors.





### **Actions:**

- i. **Ensure that all national boards have women's representation and monitor that they regularly consult with women's organisations.**
- ii. **Work towards increasing women's participation in parliament.**
- iii. **Support Provincial Council of Women to ensure effective representation in government and on boards at the provincial and district levels.**
- iv. **Ensure that gender issues are considered in setting National Budget and Planning Priorities.**
- v. **Make available opportunities for women in senior government positions to become department and divisional heads at national and provincial levels through affirmative action.**
- vi. **Ensure leadership training for women Includes conflict resolution, being constructive and objective, lobbying, advocacy, how to conduct meetings, build up professional leadership qualities.**
- vii. **Support political awareness campaigns that promote participation of women in the democratic process.**
- viii. **Support the compilation of gender disaggregated data. Develop and compile a women's nomination file with biodata of women for nomination into decision making forums.**
- ix. **Consult and brief the Prime Ministers Office and Department of Finance & Planning, and other appropriate line Departments on issues affecting women.**
- x. **Conduct gender awareness training targeting politicians and leaders.**
- xi. **Promote the sharing of roles and responsibilities within the family through innovative media campaigns, school and community education programs emphasising gender equity and non-stereotype gender roles of women and men.**
- xii. **Recognise and support the important role of women in peace and other forms of negotiations.**



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**PLATFORM  
FOR  
ACTION**

**A DECADE OF ACTION  
FOR WOMEN TOWARDS  
NATIONAL UNITY  
AND SUSTAINABILITY**

June 1995  
First Edition

- ii. Introduce measures to promote functional literacy with emphasis on health, nutrition, income generating skills, personal development, human rights, violence, constitution and land rights.
- iii. Support training of literacy trainers and provide incentives for trainers.
- iv. Facilitate coordination among organisations carrying out literacy training and encourage NGOs to work together.
- v. Develop radio broadcast programmes on adult literacy.

### **3. MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AND SHARED DECISION MAKING.**

#### **3.1 MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN.**

##### **Strategic Objective:**

To introduce and strengthen existing mechanisms to promote the advancement of women at all levels and in all sectors of the community.

##### **Actions:**

- i. Upgrade the Women's Division to the Office of the Status of Women, that is effectively staffed and adequately resourced.
- ii. Revitalise and strengthen an effective partnership between the intended Office of the Status of Women (OSW) and the National Council of women (NCW) to clarify and understand their respective roles.
- iii. Strengthen the relationship between Government and other NGO's.
- iv. Revitalise the Inter Agency Women's Advisory Committee (IWAC).
- v. Support efforts to operationalise gender approach in all functional activities.

## FOREWORD

The past twenty years has been a period of tremendous change, accomplishment and challenge for women in Papua New Guinea. Women have made important contributions to national development, particularly in sustaining the well being of the nation's population as the backbone of the subsistence agricultural economy. The majority of the population depend on this sector for survival.

Despite social and economic constraints as a developing nation, we have achieved much during our short history. Our democratic system of government and National Constitution have provided the environment for positive advances to be undertaken to achieve the universal goal of "Equality, Development and Peace". Improvement can be seen in areas of education, training, employment and health. Access to tertiary education for women and participation of women in the labour force have improved markedly.

During the later years of the decade, the government has taken positive steps to boost efforts for women's progress. These include the endorsement of the National Women's Policy in 1991, the Five Year Management Plan for the Women's Division and most importantly the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in 1994. CEDAW provides the basis for future legislative changes and promotes women's equal rights in Papua New Guinea.

Although much had been accomplished, key areas of concern remain particularly, the law and order situation and current structural adjustments and reforms in the economy. Women's position in society should not be disadvantaged any further. Investment in gender sensitive initiatives will be crucial in the long run in order to alleviate social costs particularly in regard to health and other social services. Mainstreaming gender issues particularly in policy and planning agencies of government, non government and private sector is a step forward in the right direction. As one of the responses to this approach, the Gender and Development Unit has been established in the Department of Finance and Planning.

I am pleased to note that Papua New Guinea women today are taking up the challenge and in partnership with all agencies, both Government and Non Government, have all contributed to this important document. This spells a new era of development as partners in sustainable development and nation building. However, this must start at home within the family, the smallest, but the most basic social unit of our society.

improved family planning services and family life education programmes directed at both men and women.

- viii. Increase government support of NGOs working in the areas of family health.
- ix. Minimise the socio-economic impact of STD/AIDS among the community.
- x. Advocate and promote environmental hygiene, the provision of better sanitation, and the reduction of land, water and air pollution.
- xi. Strengthen the education curriculum to increase awareness about the functions of the human body.
- xii. Promote primary health care at all levels.

## 2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND LITERACY.

### 2.1 EDUCATION

#### Strategic Objective:

To ensure women have equal access to formal and non formal education and training opportunities at all levels.

#### Actions:

- i. Encourage gender balance through affirmative action and quotas for women in the allocation of educational scholarships.
- ii. Promote scholarship policies that do not penalise against women who become pregnant while studying and establish support systems for women to enable them to complete their studies.
- iii. Provide safe and adequate boarding facilities for female students at tertiary levels.
- iv. Increase public awareness and community education on the importance of continuing education and training for girls.

## THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA PLATFORM FOR ACTION

### PREAMBLE

The Papua New Guinea Platform for Action is a national statement emerging from Provincial Reports, NGO Reports, the Women's Division Five Year Management Plan, and the Country Report on the Platform for Action to the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations and various workshops and consultative forums.

The government of PNG officially recognises the needs and potential of women in its endorsement of the National Women's Policy. This is in line with the National Constitution where the first and second goal address Integral Human Development and Equality and Participation.

Specifically, under Integral Human Development;

"Everyone to be involved in our endeavours to achieve integral human development of the whole person and to seek fulfilment through his or her contribution to the common good".

The second goal of Equality and Participation states;

"We declare our second goal to be for all citizens to have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the development of our country".

and further calls for;

"Equal participation by women citizens in all political, economic, social, and religious activities".

The Platform reaffirms the National Constitution, particularly strengthening the goals of Equality and Participation and Integral Sustainable Development and Peace.

The critical areas of concern are:-

Health, Education and Training and Literacy, Mechanisms to Promote the Advancement of Women and Shared Decision Making, Economic Empowerment and Employment Opportunities and Conditions, Legal and Human Rights (Violence, Poverty, Peace, National Unity), Culture and the Family (Young Women and Girls and Special Groups), Transport, Shelter and Water, and Communication, Environment and Development, Agriculture and Fisheries, and, Foreign Investments affecting women.

33	"	DAISY KENNEDY	EASTERN HLD CW.	PRESIDENT	<i>D Kennedy</i>
34	"	A. TITUS	NORTH SOLOMON PWC	PRESIDENT	ABSENT
35	"	A. BATA	EAST NEW BRITAIN PWC	PRESIDENT	ABSENT
36	"	M. MAIMA	UNITEC	PRESIDENT	ABSENT
37	"	J. GOLOWANG	RAMU SUGAR	PRESIDENT	<i>J. GoLOWANG</i>
38	"	L. BARU	EAST SEPIK	PRESIDENT	ABSENT
39	"	J. PANDUKASI	M.A. CHURCH	PRESIDENT	<i>J. Pandukasi</i>
40	"	N. NORLICE	NEW GUINEA IS.	Vice President	<i>N. Norlice</i>

## OVERVIEW ON STATUS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA WOMEN

Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea sharing an international border with Indonesia, Solomon Islands to the South East, and Australia to the South. It has a population of over 3.8 million people and is ethnically very diverse. It has many hundreds of tribal and ethnic groupings speaking over 800 different languages. Women make up 50% of the country's population. Although traditionally women played a subordinate role to men especially in public and community decisions they were key players in maintaining the social and economic system. Women currently produce and process over 80% of the country's food much of which is done with limited technical assistance.

This important role of women in sustaining family life and their overall contribution to national development has not been fully acknowledged.

Papua New Guinea gained independence in 1975 and endorsed the National Development Strategy as its blue print for development. The Eight Point Plan calls for "The equal participation of women in all forms of social and economic development for the country". This goal precipitated a number of national actions for women. These include:-

- the appointment of a Women's Adviser to the Prime Minister in 1974;
- the creation of a Women's Unit in the Department of Decentralisation and subsequent appointment of Women's Activity Officer in all provinces of Papua New Guinea;
- the establishment of the National Council of Women under an Act of Parliament in 1979;
- the upgrading of the Women's Section to Divisional Status in 1983;
- the establishment of the National Women's Development Program in 1984;
- the establishment of the National Women's Policy in 1990;
- the ratification of CEDAW in 1994 and,
- the Women's Division Five Year Management Plan in 1995.

Despite these early initiatives, successive government policies have not been consistent enough to maintain the momentum. This has resulted in fewer achievements in the advancement of women with the consequential impact of a poorer quality of life for women in Papua New Guinea.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 1995.

DATE: 1ST - 3RD MAY, 1995

VENUE: GRANVILLE CONFERENCE ROOM

PARTICIPANTS SIGNATURES TO THE GRANVILLE DECLARATION

NO:	DATE:	PARTICIPANTS PERSON NAME:	NAME OF THE ORGANISATION:	POSITION	SIGNATURE
1	3/5	J. ABAIJAH	NCW	NATIONAL PRESIDENT	<i>J. Abaijah</i>
2	"	B. SUBA	HIGHLANDS REGIONAL	VICE PRESIDENT	<i>B. Suba</i>
3	"	L. RIU	CENTRAL PCW	PRESIDENT	<i>L. Riu</i>
4	"	S. ODA	PAPUA REGION	VICE PRESIDENT	<i>S. Oda</i>
5	"	D. NIPUEGA	MILNE BAY, PCW	PRESIDENT	<i>D. Nipuega</i>
6	"	E. KARAVA	BAHAI	PRESIDENT	<i>E. Karava</i>
7	"	C. UMA	WUB PCW	PRESIDENT	<i>C. Uma</i>
8	"	B. WATLEN	NCP, PCW	PRESIDENT	<i>B. Watlen</i>
9	"	V. IAGATA	SANDAUN PCW	PRESIDENT	ABSENT
10	"	E. GIDIK	MADANG PCW	PRESIDENT	<i>E. Gidik</i>
11	"	O. SUNARI	CRO, PCW	PRESIDENT	<i>O. Sunari</i>
12	"	R. MOJICA	PHILIPPINE WOMEN'S CLUB	PRESIDENT	<i>R. Mojica</i>
13	"	<del>S. KATA</del> KUA	SIMBU, PCW	PRESIDENT	<i>S. Kata Kua</i>
14	"	S. PANAPEN	G'UNIUS PNG	PRESIDENT	ABSENT
15	"	S. WARAI	ENGA PCW	PRESIDENT	ABSENT
16	"	A. BANABAS	PGCWF	PRESIDENT	<i>A. Banabas</i>

## I. STATEMENT OF MISSION

The Platform for Action gives recognition to strengthening the multiple roles of women in the family and community and consolidates the partnership between Government and Non Government Organisations in order to achieve sustainable development, national unity and peace. It also recognises that the partnership between men and women is vital and uses mainstreaming of gender issues as an approach to accelerate the full participation of all persons in the development process.

The Platform for Action provides a framework which outlines ways in which women can be enabled and empowered to contribute more effectively and meaningfully to society over the next decade.

The Platform for Action requires immediate action to redress longstanding inequities. It is based on rights accorded to all citizens by the provision of adequate resources, the strengthening of the national women's machinery, and a firm commitment by Government to be responsive to the needs of half of the country's population.

## II. GLOBAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

Since the adoption of the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985, the Pacific region has been experiencing a structuring of political, economic, social and cultural relationships. The restructuring process has had a dramatic impact on the Pacific region and in the quest for Equality, Development and Peace.

We are beginning to assert a "Pacific" identity. Although we share commonalities with the global community and with the Asian region with which we are most commonly grouped by the United Nations, our Pacific experiences are different. Our uniqueness is reflected in our different geographical, historical and cultural backgrounds, more specifically, in the central role of customs and tradition in our island countries and territories, the primacy of the family and the strong affinity of our people with the land. The majority of land is held in customary tenure.

Our fragile resource bases are our second point of uniqueness. Ocean, land and labour are the region's major resources with the exception of mineral rich countries such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. The employment patterns in most countries is comprised of three sectors; a small formal sector dominated by government jobs, small family businesses, tourism enterprises, and more recently a spread of factory-type jobs brought about by the encouragement of Free Trade Zones and incentives; an increasingly visible informal sector; and agriculture. In the latter, families are the main production units,

**Aware** of the fact that 40% of school age girls are not at school;

**Concerned** that over 60% of adult women cannot read and write and the continued failure of the education system to achieve gender equity in education continues to under-produce educated, prepared women leaders and homemakers;

**Appalled** that Papua New Guinea is one of the only five countries in the world with no women serving in National Parliament;

**Noting** that the government does not have a clear, well supported mechanism to deal with women's concern, and that the percentage of female senior and mid-level managers in the Public Services is one of the lowest in the region;

**Fearful** of the continued rapid degradation of Papua New Guinea's natural heritage (environment), with resulting increase in soil erosion, pollution and loss of bio-diversity, soil fertility, fisheries and wildlife resources, and the disproportionate impact this is already having on women and children's lives;

**Recognising** the excessively high rate of domestic violence, combined with the seriously worsening law and order situation, increased tribal violence, rape harassment, assault, and violence against women and girls;

**Concerned** over the continuing civil war on Bougainville which has subjected that Province's women and children to trauma, abuse and daily hardship;

**Cautioning** that an accelerating trend toward non-customary and casual polygamy and loss of social controls governing family relationships and responsibilities, with resulting illegitimate children, teen pregnancies, drug and alcohol abuse and prostitution which have a disproportionate negative impact on women;

**Do Hereby Declare** that in consideration of the foregoing statement of facts, the situation of women in Papua New Guinea may well be classified as among the worst in the world overall, and that the time has now come for concerted national mobilisation to achieve equality for women in all spheres as a matter of grave national interest;

**And we immediately:**

**Call upon** the 109 Members of Parliament to implement section 102 of Papua New Guinea Constitution relating to nominated seat in order to gain maximum representation of women at the National Parliamentary level, and that relevant procedures applying to Provincial political representation be also put in place;

**Demand** the improvement of maternal child health and reproductive health services especially to the rural areas as a matter of highest national priority as a key element of the structural adjustment programme with

**Table 1. Critical Issues of the National, Sub-Regional and Global Platforms for Action.**

<b>National Issues</b>	<b>Pacific Issues</b>	<b>Global Issues</b>
1. Health	1. Health	1. Poverty
2. Education, Training and Literacy	2. Education	2. Education
3. Mechanisms and Shared Decision Making	3. Economic Empowerment	3. Health
4. Economic Empowerment and Employment Opportunities and Conditions	4. Agriculture and Fishing	4. Violence Against Women
5. Legal and Human Rights 0 Violence 0 Peace and National Unity	5. Legal and Human Rights	5. Effect of Armed and Other Conflicts
6. Culture and the Family 0 Young Women and Girls 0 Special Groups of Women	6. Shared Decision Making	6. Economic Empowerment
7. Transport, Shelter and Water, and Communication	7. Environment	7. Shared Decision Making
8. Agriculture and Fisheries 0 Resources 0 Foreign Investment Affecting women	8. Culture and the Family	6. Insufficient Mechanisms
9. Environment and Development	9. Mechanisms to Promote the Advancement of Women	9. Women's Human Rights
10. Sustainable Development and Poverty	10. Violence	10. Mass Media
	11. Peace and Justice	11. Managing and Safe-guarding of Environment
	12. Poverty	12. Girl Child
	13. Indegenous Peoples Rights	