In the Name of Allah Most Merciful Most Compassionate

The Republic of Sudan
Ministry of Welfare & Social Security
General Directorate for Women & Family Affairs (GDWFA)

3rd Meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries

Women’s Economic Empowerment

Beirut, 14-15 November 2011
The paper focus on:
- Women situation in Sudan
- Strategies and Macro Policies on Women
- National Mechanisms for Women Empowerment
- Women Rural Development Project
- Challenges
- Way forwards
Introduction:
Sudanese women play a very important role in economic development beside their essential role in the family, they participate efficiently in production processes.

Current Situation:
- Women represent 49.5% of Sudan’s population according to the latest national population census undertaken in 2008. The following statistical indicators represent the current situation of women in Sudan.
- General marital fertility rate is 5.8
- Average household size: 6 members
- Alphabetical literacy: 47.0% of females and 59.5% of males
- Illiteracy rate 53.0% among females
- Illiteracy rate 87.4% among nomad females
- Females represent 44% and males 55.2% of basic school pupils.
- Economic activity rate for women is 31.8%
- Females paid employee are 18%
- Female's employer 3.4%
- Unpaid family worker 48.5%
- Women working in the agricultural sector are 49.5% and men 48%
- Women hold 25% of parliament seats,
Strategies and Macro Policies on Women
-The Women Empowerment National Policy:
Areas of concern of policy
- Health and environment.
- Education.
- Economic Empowerment.
- Human Rights & Law.
- Political Participation & Decision Making.
- Peace and Conflict Resolution.
-Action plan of the WEP has been formulated in order to integrate into next 5 yrs national plan.
National Strategy for the Family was formulated which was subsequently incorporated in the Five Year Strategy 2012-2016 being endorsed by the Council of Ministers according to the Ministerial Decree (13) 2008.

- Social Security Policies
- Agricultural policies
- Employment Policies

Financial policies:
Pro Poor spending is a part of public expenditure of government budget.
- Financing Policies:
- Macro finance policies be a part of the Central Bank financing Policies which is include:
The fund ceiling is increased from 10% to 12% has been specialized financing ceiling for social development.
Moreover, the degree No. 18/2007 stated that 30% out the fund ceiling is for women and 70% is for rural.
The Central Bank of Sudan decree No. 18/2007 about the organization and development of the creation of a bank specialized fund for families (Family Bank) beside to the Savings and Social Development Bank.
Mandate of GDWFA:

- Setting up strategies, policies, plans and programs concerning the promotion & advancement of women.
- Establishment of comprehensive database providing gender profiles.
- Review and fulfillment of national, regional & international commitment concerning women’s empowerment.
- Create linkage across all sectors & connect with decentralized structures at state level both governmental & NGOs.
- Develop Capacity Building programs.
* Central Bank Microfinance Unit, Micro finance units at many commercial banks.

* Women branches within the Financial and Banking institutions such as those in Omdurman National Bank- Bint Khuwailid Branch, Al Baraka Bank- Al Zahra'a Branch, Agricultural Bank, Savings and Social Development Bank and The Family "Al Usra" Bank. Through these departments, the Ministry is capable of making a follow-up of the Poverty Alleviation Projects and the specialized microfinance allocated for women projects.
Rural Women Empowerment Project:

In the long term the project aims to achieve the following effects and outcomes:

- Narrowing the gender gap in opportunities for finance and other economic opportunities.
- Developing budgets and economic policies which are sensitive to gender issues and that aim to achieve equality between sexes.
- To establish mechanisms and supportive institutions to foster capacity of women to access economic opportunities and resources.
- Increasing income of women and families in rural areas and to improve their standard of living.
The Challenges faces the implementation of polices:

- Assets and credit are hard to obtain.
- Rates of unemployment and poverty are on the increase, coupled with a drop in vocational and skills formation and a decrease in coverage through social safety nets.
- Presence of challenges of globalization and the integration into global economy.
- Investment policies are biased towards big projects, to the detriment of medium and small-scale projects which women contribute to.
- Lack of a positive climate wherein women are empowered to play their different roles. Lack of capacity of women (access to banks, women skills in marketing -products ).
Way Forward:

To facilitate women's access to assets and services and finance by:

- Increasing capacity building of Sudanese women
- Implementing the Rural women Empowerment Project.
- Encourage CBOs as mediators between women and banks
- Access services for the banking sector in the rural area (Mobile banks).
- Improving the quality of national products.
- Assessing the macro policies to Integrate gender into those policies
- formulate laws to protect women in informal sector.
- Adopting gender budgeting as strategy to alleviate poverty and empower Sudanese women.