

African Network for the Promotion of Women Parliamentarians (ANPWP)

TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS IN WEST AFRICA

Follow up and assessment of the policies and programmes to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and legislative agendas

Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), September 12-15, 2006

From September 12th to 15th, 2006, a training workshop was delivered in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, to women parliamentarians on the follow up and assessment of the policies and programmes to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and legislative agendas.

The workshop, which was organized by the Parliamentary Centre of Canada (PC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the National Assembly of Burkina Faso, drew women parliamentarians, members of the African Network for the Promotion of Women Parliamentarians (ANPWP) and parliamentary staff from francophone African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali and Senegal. Other guests included representatives from Burundi, Rwanda, the Republic of Congo as well as civil society organizations.



The objective of the workshop was to provide women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with the tools to develop and conduct gender-based analysis of development and governance policies in their respective countries, to enhance decision-making capacities of women within the various bodies of their respective assemblies.

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Assistant Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso, Mr. Mahama SAWADOGO. Three speeches were made.



The first speaker was Ms. Nicole Françoise NDOUME, who read a statement by the African Regional Director of the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, Mr. Rasheed DRAMAN. She summed up the PC's missions and objectives as "building the capacities of parliamentarians and democratic legislative assemblies." As such, the PC promoted the development of the African Parliamentary Network Against



Corruption (APNAC), the African Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network, the Coalition of African Parliamentarians Against HIV and AIDS and the Network for the Promotion of Women Parliamentarians. Ms. NDOUME then reiterated the PC's commitment to helping African parliamentarians and particularly women parliamentarians contribute to building their own capacities.

Following that, the representative of UNFPA-Burkina and acting resident coordinator of the UN System, Ms. Geneviève S.L. AH-SUE, recalled from the outset UNDP's efforts in building the capacities of parliaments and parliamentarians under the Global Programme for Parliamentary Strengthening (GPPS). She underscored the importance of the MDGS, the APRM and legislative agendas, as well as the need for women parliamentarians to take ownership of them in order to better contribute to Africa's renaissance.

The opening statement at the workshop was delivered by Mr. Mahama SAWADOGO, the Assistant Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, on behalf of the Speaker. He started by emphasizing the need to "better promote gender equality and women empowerment" in the implementation of the MDGS, pointing out the tremendous progress that has already been achieved. However, he noted that "the last five years of the MDGS implementation process set for 2015 shows that the road ahead is still long." He then reminded the participants of the strategic importance of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the APRM as instruments to achieve the MDGS. He strongly recommended establishing links between interregional aid instruments, governments, policies and programmes, legislative agendas and enabling bodies. He ended his speech with a call to women parliamentarians to "monitor, assess and control the implementation of policies and programmes." For women

parliamentarians, this means fully participating in the parliamentary decision-making process, acquiring "analytical tools to carry out their representative and legislative missions."

The proceedings began after the opening ceremony and were centred around a number of themes, including an overview of the MDGS implementation process and gender issues; identifying issues for more effective gender mainstreaming in MDGS policies and programmes and the role of parliament; a status report on the APRM and gender mainstreaming and the role of parliamentarians in the countries of the area; developing legislative agendas and passing legislation in parliament; policy and advocacy tools for legislation, the case of MDGS; follow up and evaluation of legislation related to the MDGS implementation policies among others. In a fully participative and interactive approach, participants reported on the accomplishments and progress made in the implementation of MDGS as well as the challenges and constraints they faced. The forum was also an opportunity to share experiences.

The presentations showed that the various countries involved are making efforts to reduce poverty, promote gender equality and women empowerment, as well as primary education, maternal health and the fight against HIV/AIDS. However, despite major progress in the field, the results are still a long way from reaching the MDGS by 2015. In terms of the APRM, the various delegations gave an overview of the situation in their respective countries. This revealed that the member States are at different levels of implementing the APRM, even though significant challenges remain in some instances, including issues related to the implementation process itself, membership conditions, the member States' capacity in terms of the process, gender mainstreaming and follow up evaluation criteria.

At the end of the proceedings, women parliamentarians were able to better identify, circumscribe and understand the terminology and contents of the MDGS and the APRM related-policies as well as gender issues. They also had an opportunity to better apprehend the tools available to them to monitor implementation policies, programmes and projects, and ensure the promotion and follow up of gender mainstreaming. The participants became acquainted with the basic requirements for developing a legislative agenda with a view to influencing the parliamentary debate and legislation in their respective legislatures. Women parliamentarians found the proposed evaluation framework to be in line with their parliamentary role. They need to engage actively in the MDGS implementation for the betterment of their peoples.



After four days, the workshop was closed by the Assistant Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso, Mr. Mahama SAWADOGO, on behalf of the Speaker.

The Honorable Viviane COMPAORE reminded the participating women parliamentarians of the objectives of the workshop namely capacity building for effective MDGS implementation. She was highly appreciative of the quality of the

presentations and the group sessions in that they strengthened the role of women parliamentarians.

That was followed by a statement by Ms. PANGAH, Deputy Representative of the UNDP, who encouraged women parliamentarians to further work towards building their capacities. She recalled the importance of the MDGS for the international community and welcomed women parliamentarians' investing in harnessing evaluation indicators. She added that with such indicators, women would be able to assess development programme results. Furthermore, she underscored the significance of gender issues, pointing out that poverty and illiteracy largely affect women. On the APRM, Ms. PANGAH thought that that was an instrument for measuring the efforts of African countries in terms of governance. Finally, she thanked the United Nations Head Office as well as the partners from Burkina Faso and Canada, whose role ensured the success of the workshop.

In his closing speech, assistant deputy-Speaker Mr. Mahama SAWADOGO thanked the UNDP and the Parliamentary Centre of Canada, whose partnership made the workshop possible. He commended the participants on their skills on the themes of the workshop. Finally, he expressed his confidence in the fact that relevant questions during debates will lead to greater engagement on the part of women parliamentarians in raising the awareness of various legislatures as they get involved in developing, implementing and evaluating development programmes.