

**WORLD CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century**

**Vision and Action**

UNESCO, Paris, 5 – 9 October 1998

**VOLUME IV**

Thematic Debate :

**Women and Higher Education: Issues and Perspectives**

Thematic Debate

## **Women and Higher Education: Issues and Perspectives**

**in collaboration with**

**Steering Committee :**

- International Federation of University Women (IFUW)  
Mrs Françoise Sauvage
- International Federation of Women in Legal Professions (IFWLP)  
Mrs Claire Jourdan
- Soroptimist International  
Mrs Jeannine Jacquemin
- Professor Lydia P. Makhubu, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Swaziland,  
Member of the WCHE Steering Committee

**Partners:**

- Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU)
- International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW)
- International Council of Nurses (ICN)
- International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW)
- Inter-American Organization for Higher Education (IOHE)
- Zonta International

**and**

**The UNESCO SECRETARIAT**

## **Note of the UNESCO Secretariat**

**The present volume is part of the Proceedings of the World Conference on Higher Education (Paris 5-9 October 1998) and comprise :**

- Volume I: Final Report
- Volume II: Speeches and Lectures
- Volume III: Reports of the Commissions
- Volume IV: Reports of the Thematic Debates
- Volume V: Plenary Speeches
- Volume VI: Listing of Titles of Individual Documents.

Documents are archived in the original language of delivery or in one of the language versions provided by the author. Copies can be obtained on request from the Division of Higher Education, UNESCO. Some documents are available in printed form only.

## **Note du Secrétariat de l'UNESCO**

**Le présent volume fait partie des Actes de la Conférence mondiale sur l'enseignement supérieur (Paris, 5-9 octobre 1998) et comprend :**

- Volume I : Rapport final
- Volume II : Discours et exposés spéciaux
- Volume III : Rapports des commissions
- Volume IV : Rapports des débats thématiques
- Volume V : Discours en séances plénières
- Volume VI : Liste des titres des documents individuels.

Les documents sont archivés dans la langue originale du discours ou de l'une des versions transmises par l'auteur. Les copies peuvent être obtenues sur demande adressée à la Division de l'enseignement supérieur, UNESCO. Certains documents ne sont disponibles que sur papier.

## **Nota de la Secretaría de la UNESCO**

**El presente volumen forma parte de las Actas de la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior (París 5-9 de octubre de 1998) e incluye :**

- Volumen I : Informe Final
- Volumen II : Discursos y Ponencias Especiales
- Volumen III : Informes de las Comisiones
- Volumen IV : Informes de los Debates Temáticos
- Volumen V : Discursos de la Plenaria
- Volumen VI : Lista de Títulos de los Documentos Individuales

Los documentos han sido archivados en el idioma original de la intervención o de una de las versiones entregadas por el autor. Para obtener copias de los mismos mande su solicitud a la División de la Enseñanza Superior, UNESCO. Algunos documentos sólo están disponibles en papel impreso.

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## **Introduction**

*In organizing the World Conference on Higher Education, UNESCO's goal was to create favourable conditions for a sweeping debate and to increase awareness of the principal issues in this important field.*

*The Thematic Debates were organized in parallel with the Commissions and the plenary sessions and so constituted one of the selected frameworks for reflection and for deepening discussions.*

*Planning the Thematic Debates included the participation of some fifty representatives of NGOs and IGOs, as well a number of resource persons and UNESCO staff members.*

*Each working document was prepared under the coordination of a leader with the contribution of partners chosen by the secretariat from organizations already cooperating with UNESCO.*

*Working documents of the thematic debates were taken into account in preparing the Conference's principal working documents and in elaborating drafts of the Declaration Framework for Priority Action. This synergy marked the entire preparatory phase.*

*The 12 thematic debates were regrouped into three large themes.*

### **Higher Education and Development**

- ❖ The Requirements of the World of Work*
- ❖ Higher Education and Sustainable Human Development*
- ❖ Contributing to National and Regional Development*
- ❖ Higher Education Staff Development: A Continuing Mission*

### **New Trends and Innovations in Higher Education**

- ❖ Higher Education for a New Society: A Student Vision*
- ❖ From Traditional to Virtual: The New Information Technologies*
- ❖ Higher Education and Research: Challenges and Opportunities*
- ❖ The Contribution of Higher Education to the Education System as a Whole*

### **Higher Education, Culture and Society**

- ❖ Women and Higher Education: Issues and Perspectives*
- ❖ Promoting a Culture of Peace*
- ❖ Mobilizing the Power of Culture*
- ❖ Autonomy, Social Responsibility and Academic Freedom*

*The introduction to each debate was given by the author of the working document. This was then completed by input from the panel members.*

*Each debate produced a synthesis report presenting the results of the discussions and the recommendations made.*

*The general coordination of the preparation and organization of debates was undertaken by the Division of Higher Education, UNESCO.*

*Volume IV of the Proceedings of the World Conference on Higher Education regroups for each of the 12 debates:*

- the working document;*
- the synthesis report for each debate;*
- the interventions of the panel members.*

*With regard to the thematic debates on students and women, contributions which were addressed to the Organizing Committee and judged relevant were also taken into account.*

## **Abstract**

*This debate aimed to examine the status quo with regard to the major issues related to women in higher education. It pointed to strategies which may help Member States and other higher education stakeholders in their efforts to strengthen the role of women in this sector and their contribution to social development in general.*

*Over the past years, and as secondary education enrolments increase, the access of women to higher education has improved significantly. However, progress is still possible, notably their participation in fields such as science and technology.*

*In contrast, the presence of a critical mass of women in the decision-making process remains vastly inadequate. Also, a number of cultural barriers still exist which seriously impedes their development as citizens and professionals.*

*The World Conference on Higher Education provided clear guidelines for the next phase in the dynamic to ensure full equity for women graduates and students. The UNESCO Special Project - Women, Higher Education and Development - provided examples of good practice in this respect.*

## PANEL

**Chair** Dr Attiya Inayatullah, President, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Pakistan  
Former Chairperson, UNESCO Executive Board  
Former Minister, Population, Welfare and Women's Development

**Keynote Speakers** Dr Berit Olsson, Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Sweden  
Prof. Christina Ullenius, President, University College of Karlstad, Sweden

**Discussants** Prof. Federico Mayor, Director General, UNESCO  
Prof. Peter Katjavivi, Vice-Chancellor, University of Namibia, Namibia  
Dr Maria Irigoin, Consultant in Higher Education, University of Santiago de Chile, Chile  
Mrs Linda Souter, President, International Federation of University Women, Canada

**Rapporteurs** Mrs Françoise Sauvage, International Federation of University Women  
Mrs Jeannine Jacquemin, Soroptimist International  
Mrs Claire Jourdan, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers

### International Panelists

Mrs Mouna Mourad,  
Faculty of Medicine,  
St Joseph's University,  
Beirut, Lebanon

Dr Binod Khadria,  
School of Social  
Sciences, Jawaharlal  
Nerhu University,  
New Delhi, India

Dr Joy Kwesiga,  
Dean, Faculty of  
Social Sciences,  
Makerere University,  
Uganda

Dr Ralitsa Muharska,  
St Kliment Ohridski  
University, Sofia,  
Bulgaria

Prof. Maria Inácia  
D'Ávila Neto,  
Director, Institute of  
Psychology, Federal  
University of Rio de  
Janeiro, Brazil

### Special panelists

The Honourable Esi  
Sutherland-Addy,  
Forum for African  
Women Educationalists  
(FAWE), Nairobi,  
Kenya

Dr Breda Pavlic,  
Director,  
Unit for the Status of  
Women and Gender  
Equality, UNESCO

This debate has been generously supported by the Swedish International Co-operation Development Agency (SIDA)



## **List of Speakers' papers**

Dr Attiya Inayatullah  
**Introduction**

Dr Berit Olsson and Prof. Christina Ullenius  
**How to make universities gender aware: the Swedish experience**

Prof. Peter Katjavivi  
**Women and Higher Education Issues**

Dr María Irigoin  
**Mujeres y educación superior: Comentarios sobre un caso ejemplar**

Mrs Linda Souter  
**Women's Leadership: Education and Advocacy for Attitudinal Change**

Prof. Federico Mayor  
**Remarks**

Mrs Mouna Mourad  
**Femmes arabes, enseignement supérieur et développement**

Dr Binod Khadria  
**The Societal Agenda for Women in Higher Education**

Dr Joy Kwesiga  
**Women, Higher Education and Development**

Dr Ralitsa Muharska  
**A Workable Strategy**

Prof. Maria Inácia D'Ávila Neto  
**Femmes, enseignement supérieur et émancipation :  
Réflexions sur une étude de cas brésilien**

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)  
♦ **African Women in Higher Education: Issues, Barriers and Strategies**  
♦ **Women in Higher Education and Research in Africa**  
(in collaboration with the Association of African Universities - AAU)

**Note: To meet UNESCO publishing standards, some editing of papers has been required.**

**Note: Authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in signed articles and for the opinion expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.**

## Working Document

### I. Introduction

This paper prepared for the World Conference on Higher Education aims is to present a stocktaking of the issues related to women in higher education:

- *promotion, notably through the use of binding legal instruments, of the rights of women as citizens to full participation in all areas of social development;*
- *efforts to improve the access of women, especially those from developing countries, to higher education;*
- *measures to ensure that highly qualified women will participate fully in the decision-making processes of society, through their roles in government, in the community and in the family. Here, strengthening their leadership capacities becomes vital.*

The Global Strategy on Women and Higher Education is intended to facilitate the promotion of these goals. Since 1990, UNESCO has situated these issues in a wider arena of discussion notably:

- . the trends driving the development process
- . the progress achieved since the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995)
- . the specific problems related to the renewal and reform of the higher education sector itself
- . the nature of social leadership in a multicultural world.

### II. Women and Development: Guiding Principles

Firstly, UNESCO aims to foster a *gender-inclusive culture* through education, including higher education, in order to promote sustainable human development and peace.

The key dimensions of human development have become: *empowerment, co-operation, equity, sustainability and security.*

The commitment to these goals by the family of world nations can only be possible if effective partnerships are formed to construct a more human society in order to realize the potential of investment in human capital and co-operative action. This emphasis on dialogue, on coalition and on collaboration forms the basis of the new approach to development strategy and requires full participation from the relevant actors involved - that is to say, from men and women. The principle of gender equality must be related to the legal rights of women. In this regard the main normative instruments are:

- *the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948*
- *the Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960*
- *the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979.*

These link to the resolutions and recommendations of major UN conferences and initiatives which emphasize the importance of the gender dimension in the resolution of global issues, inter alia:

- *the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 1985*
- *the report on the World Decade for Cultural Development, 1988-1997*
- *the World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990*
- *the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro 1992*
- *the Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994*
- *the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen 1995*
- *the 4th World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995*
- *Habitat II, Istanbul, 1996*
- *the World Food Summit, Rome 1996*
- *the United Nations Decade on Education for Human Rights 1995-2004*
- *5th International Conference on Adult Education.*

Together, these legal instruments and strategic reports form a framework inside which the gender dimension of education can be assured of reference and advancement.

### III. Beijing and Beyond

The 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) merits special attention for its role as a watershed in the history of women's social empowerment and leadership:

- firstly, it confirmed that the entire gender issue has gained worldwide attention as a crucial component in the development process; with this recognition, it may be possible to redress the inequalities more effectively;
- secondly, and compared with earlier conferences, it resulted in more concrete recommendations to help ensure that women take their full place in the world of the 21st century.

Many of the key problems faced by women and identified in the Beijing Declaration remain unsolved:

- *persistent poverty*
- *inequality of access to education, health and welfare*
- *violence*
- *impact of armed conflicts*
- *absence from decision-making in the economic sector*
- *unequal participation in the power structures of society*
- *insufficient mechanisms to promote the advancement of women*
- *inadequate recognition of women's rights*
- *failure to recognize women's contribution to society*
- *insufficient recognition of their contribution to environmental protection and management.*

These problems impede the personal and social empowerment of women, and, consequently, they hinder their ability to emerge as effective leaders at every level of daily life.

While progress has been significant, much remains to be done as is evidenced by statistics stated in Human Development Report published annually by the United Nations Development Programme:

- *66% of the world's illiterates are women;*
- *only 33% of women compared to men enrol in higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa with even lower figures in science and technology;*
- *their participation in employment is only 50% compared to that of men in developing countries;*
- *women in certain countries still cannot vote or own property;*
- *in politics they represent only 10% of the world's parliamentarians;*
- *national GNPs could rise significantly if women's unpaid work was an official factor in production;*
- *women still suffer salary disparity compared to men in numerous instances of professional life (on average 25% less).*

Clearly rapid change must occur and the role of education, notably as an investment in human capital, is an essential aspect of this challenge where men and women have equal responsibility.

Against this background, the thorough and far-reaching renovation of *education* systems has gained considerable support as one effective way to tackle social problems - old and new.

In 1996, UNESCO published the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors. This exercise studied education in relation to *culture, citizenship, social cohesion, development, employment and scientific progress*, and concluded that, since the world is rapidly moving towards a global and knowledge-intensive society, truly innovative approaches to teaching and learning must be defined and implemented.

The report stresses the concept of the learning society throughout life, on dealing with the realities of internationalization and on social inclusion which has important ramifications with regard to *the education of women and girls*. National policy-makers must ensure that the access to and participation of women in education at all stages of their lives is safeguarded and facilitated.

Since higher education is traditionally where social and economic leaders, as well as experts in all fields, receive a significant part of their personal and professional training, it has special responsibilities for this task which concern men and women on an equal basis.

#### **IV. Higher Education Today: The Challenges**

Five issues are of particular significance:

- i. the continued *demand for access* which has doubled and even tripled in some countries, necessitating a *shift from elite to mass higher education*;
- ii. the continued *reduction of financial resources and growing accountability measures* imposed by governments;
- iii. the *maintenance of quality and relevance* and the measures required for their assessment. This problem will grow since student numbers could reach 120 million by the year 2050;
- iv. the ongoing problem of graduate employment which is forcing a *reassessment of academic degrees and diplomas*;
- v. the growing reality of *internationalization* in higher education teaching, training and research which deals with the mobility of both people and knowledge.

These phenomena dominate the 1994 Policy Papers entitled *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience and Higher Education for Change and Development*, prepared respectively by the World Bank and UNESCO.

With regard to the major challenges facing higher education in various regions of the world, it is possible to propose the following summaries:

- in *Africa*, the continuing development problems and donor insistence on basic education, has deflected attention from higher learning which, as the globalization phenomenon gathers momentum, risks its further decline. There is now a strong dynamic towards renewal to be considered as a partner, rather than a dependent, in a new social order. The gender issue in higher education has emerged as a top priority in this region;

- the *Arab States* are marked by great cultural diversity, economic disparities and social instability. Here, since populations are numerous and very young, there is an urgent need to modernize systems and structures to meet the demand for higher education and to help shape a more stable society. Currently, women are very rare as leaders in higher education institutions;

- *Asia and the Pacific* is the region which has experimented most widely with higher education - very often to meet the new employment requirements of market-driven economies. In contrast, serious poverty persists in certain countries and an over-supply of academic graduates (notably in India) face problems of employment in rapidly changing job markets. Gender is approached in many different ways in this culturally diverse region - however, women as heads of institutions are few.

- *Europe*, of course, encompasses countries with vastly different systems and levels of development. Western European nations are currently engaged in wide-ranging reforms designed to attune higher education to a future society where key aspects such as employment and technology are undergoing radical transformation. Eastern and Central Europe, which are gearing their economies to the market system, have accelerated the modernization of higher education in an effort to equip their populations with the capacities necessary for the management of the social and economic transition in progress. Numerically, this region would have the highest instance of women in leadership posts;

- *Latin America and the Caribbean*, a basically rich region where social and economic stability has significantly improved, has a history of academic higher education with a strong tradition for private institutions. It is now committed to higher education which optimizes human capital and natural resources, thus re-orienting it to meet development priorities and the growing role of the region in the global economy. Women are frequently present in management positions but the gender dimension must be treated with caution in certain contexts.

Against this background, three specific aspects related to *higher education and women* emerge:

- firstly, women graduates must be seen as part of the *essential human resource base of each country*. As such they have then right to the same access and career opportunities as their male counterparts. Discriminatory practices are not only unjust but a flagrant wastage of valuable expertise which, today, is vital for all nations;

- secondly, in higher education itself where reform is the priority, there should be a *strong commitment to equipping women with the necessary range of managerial skills to contribute to the overall renewal of this sector*;

- thirdly, the nature of power, as it is used in positions of leadership and management, may need to be conceived quite differently. *Feminine leadership* needs clearer analysis and definition and may be preferred as a model more suited to the needs of social development across all sectors including, higher education.

## **V. Women and Higher Education: Key Aspects**

Three main factors are vital:

- *societal attitudes to women which discourage their participation in decision-making*;
- *their lower enrolments in higher education to date (although here, patterns are rapidly changing in all regions)*;
- *the absence of a gender dimension in the higher education curriculum*.

They will certainly not accede to leadership posts in higher education or in society in greater numbers until these issues are addressed.

### **Participation in Decision-making**

Decision-making attests to the empowerment of the various actors involved. At the present time, far too few women possess this attribute. Education facilitates empowerment which is essential for the participation of women in all aspects of the development process. Furthermore, higher education provides the expertise usually required for the key posts which shape policy in all fields - hence its particular importance for women is obvious.

In the 1993, UNESCO/Commonwealth Secretariat study *entitled Women in Higher Education Management* identified the principal barriers preventing the participation of women in the decision-making arena:

- limited access to education, especially higher education;
- discriminatory appointment and promotion practices;
- the stresses of dual family and professional roles;
- family attitudes;
- career interruptions;
- cultural stereotyping;
- alienation from the male culture and continued resistance to women in management positions;
- propagation of the glass ceiling syndrome which privileges covert criteria for advancement;
- absence of adequate policies and legislation to ensure the participation of women.

Given these obstacles, solutions to remedy the exclusion of women lie in a reversal of these trends by means of wider access to education, notably higher education, review of appointment and promotion procedures, provision of legislative and infra-structure support in all professions and of special programmes for women, affirmative action to favour women's access and participation while awaiting a genuine change in attitude towards full gender equality and institutional and governmental support through clear and effective policies which are actually enforced.

### **Women's Enrolment in Higher Education**

The past 20 years have witnessed significant - but not sufficient - enrolment of the female population in higher education. This progress has certainly been due in part to specific strategies which have focused attention on the inequalities to be redressed. UN action has been effective in this regard as policy-makers have been sensitized to the rights of women and to the need to open all levels of education to their greater numbers.

A closer analysis of higher education statistics reveals the different nature of the problem in different socio-cultural and economic contexts. In general, women's enrolments have improved and may even exceed those of men. Moreover, certain countries have clearly made a strong commitment to facilitating the access of women to higher education. As might be expected, the greatest disparities continue to be found in the developing world:

#### **Number of Students per 100.000 inhabitants**

	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>	
	<i>1980</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1980</i>	<i>1992</i>
<i>Botswana</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>306</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>280</i>
<i>Senegal</i>	<i>402</i>	<i>495</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Algeria</i>	<i>789</i>	<i>1.523</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>844</i>
<i>Qatar</i>	<i>594</i>	<i>598</i>	<i>1.682</i>	<i>3.072</i>
<i>Australia</i>	<i>2.430</i>	<i>3.003</i>	<i>2.011</i>	<i>3.435</i>
<i>Pakistan</i>	<i>264</i>	<i>359</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>2.451</i>	<i>2.939</i>	<i>1.787</i>	<i>2.621</i>
<i>Poland</i>	<i>1.504</i>	<i>1.366</i>	<i>1.800</i>	<i>1.680</i>
<i>Colombia</i>	<i>1.142</i>	<i>1.530</i>	<i>908</i>	<i>1.578</i>
<i>Mexico</i>	<i>1.859</i>	<i>1.622</i>	<i>912</i>	<i>1.333</i>

- Women who do enter universities often tend to follow courses in arts and social sciences because they lack competence in scientific and technological fields:

#### **Percentage of students by fields of study**

	<i>All students</i>	<i>% Women</i>
<i>Burundi</i>		
• <i>Education</i>	<i>11 %</i>	<i>29 %</i>
• <i>Law, Social Sciences</i>	<i>32 %</i>	<i>35 %</i>
• <i>Medical Sciences/Nursing</i>	<i>8 %</i>	<i>27 %</i>

<i>Tunisia</i>		
• <i>Education</i>	<i>5 %</i>	<i>42 %</i>
• <i>Law, Social Sciences</i>	<i>30 %</i>	<i>40 %</i>
• <i>Medical Sciences/Nursing</i>	<i>10 %</i>	<i>52 %</i>
<i>Japan</i>		
• <i>Education</i>	<i>8 %</i>	<i>73 %</i>
• <i>Law, Social Sciences</i>	<i>39 %</i>	<i>33 %</i>
• <i>Medical Sciences/Nursing</i>	<i>6 %</i>	<i>46 %</i>
<i>United Kingdom</i>		
• <i>Education</i>	<i>6 %</i>	<i>71 %</i>
• <i>Law, Social Sciences</i>	<i>27 %</i>	<i>50 %</i>
• <i>Medical Sciences/Nursing</i>	<i>12 %</i>	<i>76 %</i>
<i>Hungary</i>		
• <i>Education</i>	<i>36 %</i>	<i>65 %</i>
• <i>Law, Social Sciences</i>	<i>17 %</i>	<i>55 %</i>
• <i>Medical Sciences/Nursing</i>	<i>9 %</i>	<i>56 %</i>
<i>Brazil</i>		
• <i>Education</i>	<i>13 %</i>	<i>81 %</i>
• <i>Law, Social Sciences</i>	<i>43 %</i>	<i>50 %</i>
• <i>Medical Sciences/Nursing</i>	<i>9 %</i>	<i>64 %</i>

(Source: *World Education Report, 1995*)

Certain aspects of the access/ participation analysis require significant improvement, notably further analysis of the courses chosen by women, the fortunes of female graduates when they become predominant in a given profession yet fail to share in the decision-making process of that field, and the promotion of women in science at all levels of education so as to permit careers in this domain.

From the economic standpoint, higher education qualifications effectively raise both employment prospects and social expectations of graduates. Despite the current economic climate, those with a degree or diploma are ten times more likely to find employment than unskilled persons. Thus, it is high time to promote more enlightened attitudes towards highly educated women whose qualifications entitle them to career fulfilment and who - as the principal or equal salary-earner - require appropriate support in the management of personal and professional duties.

### **The Gender Dimension of the University Curriculum**

This can be justified on several counts:

- *recognition and enhancement of the university's role in society*
- *the impact of Internationalization and Globalization*
- *the creation and exchange of knowledge and know-how*
- *the need to tackle social problems at the grass-roots level*
- *mainstreaming of gender issues*

In **Women and the University Curriculum**, produced to mark the 1995 Beijing Conference, the authors were in agreement that, today, the university curriculum must:

- offer stimulating role models for women students;
- encouragement and build their confidence
- present male-dominated careers in a light which is more attractive to women.

Moreover, since development theory acknowledges that the gender dimension has become a key factor in any solutions proposed for global problems, and as many higher education institutions are now

engaged in far-reaching curriculum innovation to keep abreast of social change, the omission of this aspect is no longer acceptable.

**Women who are appointed to executive posts in institutions where gender sensitivity is a reality may consequently find that their leadership is more readily accepted.**

## VI. Women as Leaders in Higher Education

Would the higher education sector benefit from more female leaders? We are at a certain point in the process of social change where management models are being questioned and where the numbers of women in various professional fields are increasing steadily. To some extent, this can be seen as a crossroads and the new direction taken is very important since this will lead to governance patterns in the 21st century.

Current statistics from the world's principal associations of universities attest to the need to improve the presence of women at the top of higher education:

NGO	Members	Institutions led by women (numbers or %)
<i>Association of African Universities</i>	120	6
<i>Association of Arab Universities</i>	103	2
<i>Association of Commonwealth Universities</i>	463	371
<i>Association of French-speaking Universities</i>	270	5-7 %
<i>Association of European Universities</i>	497	6-8 %
<i>Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific</i>	1402	5 %-
<i>Inter-American Organization for Higher Education</i>	350	5 % <sup>3</sup>
<i>Unión de Universidades de América Latina</i>	177	47

While women continue to become more numerous posts such as deputy vice-chancellor and as academic HODs, three questions of prime importance emerge:

- *what is the reality of higher education governance today?*
- *is feminine leadership a valid concept with applications to the higher education context?*
- *how does cultural diversity impact upon management practices and the role of women in this area?*

### Higher Education Governance

Given the ongoing modernization and reform of this sector, the role of vice-chancellor or rector has undergone radical transformation in recent years. An ideal checklist of qualities and skills needed by the prospective VC or rector might read as follows:

- strong record of academic leadership/excellence in research and teaching
- leadership skills, including visioning capacities
- management skills
- institutional experience
- international experience of higher education
- negotiating skills to deal with all stakeholders (*internally*, the management, the professoriate and students; *externally*, national policy-makers, the economic sector, community groups, regional and international peer groups)
- communication skills including, if possible, charisma.

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1 10 in non-ACU member universities.

2 Founding member universities.

3 14 % in Brazil.



As the challenges facing higher education grow more complex, it is true that the governance of this sector requires even greater skills. And, these challenges come at a time when top leadership itself is under close scrutiny.

There is no reason why women should be excluded from this position of leadership and power, provided their capacities are those sought. First and foremost, this principle must be reiterated, accepted and practised in the field of higher education. Secondly, adequate training opportunities must be given to women to acquire skills which, otherwise, would exclude their candidature from consideration when leadership posts arise.

For this reason, UNESCO, in co-operation with a number of NGOs promotes management capacities for higher education personnel - from VCs and rectors through the various echelons of the institutions. In particular, with the Association of Commonwealth Universities and the Commonwealth Secretariat, UNESCO has adopted a strategy to provide management training for women and research on the issues which can promote (or hinder) their advancement within the executive ranks. Topics covered include *management development*, *Women's studies as a catalyst for their progress*, *the management of professional and personal roles*, *women and leadership* and, from a broader standpoint, *women and university governance*. So far, this targets women who, through their positions, can train their colleagues and thus ensure a multiplier effect so that more women managers may emerge at all levels of their institutions.

### **Feminine Leadership in the Academy**

The concept of leadership, at all levels, encompasses many facets: vision, the capacity to inspire as well as to organize, to handle power, to assume responsibility and, perhaps, most importantly, to serve society at large in some particular way.

In a world of increasing complexity (some would say chaos), the quality of leadership has certainly assumed new proportions which are essential to the survival and success of any enterprise or institution. This brings us to the notion of feminine leadership and a number of related issues notably whether this is a valid concept and whether women will be permitted to claim their right to participation in higher education decision-making at all levels and on their own terms.

In a study commissioned by UNESCO to the Inter-American Association for Higher Education, Professor Sheryl Bond of Queen's University, Canada, examined the concept of academic leadership today, emphasizing that the increasing appointment of women indicates the reality of social change. Factors preventing women's access to top positions are considered and new paradigms witnessing the interaction of social context and positional power are described. Bond advocates a move from debate to dialogue which will equate the advancement of women with the renewal and progress of the institution - an essential shift in thinking if higher education is to contribute effectively to the development process.

At the moment, feminine leadership and its possible benefits continue to constitute a controversial area of the debate in terms of empowerment for women. However, there is a growing belief that feminine leadership is emerging as a distinct force in management which has been influenced by very specific factors:

- *a commitment to power sharing (which implies rejection of power by domination)*
- *an insistence on self-respect, service and the importance of merit*
- *a focus on concrete results in the professional context*
- *recognition and accommodation of the pressures of managing personal and professional lives.*

As we continue in transition mode, a significant group would still deny these trends, insisting that access to decision-making still depends essentially on emulation of male behaviour. However, despite this divergence of opinion, all would agree that truly able women leaders have an obligation to assist other competent women.

## **Cultural Diversity, Women and Higher Education**

Without doubt, the reality of cultural diversity is a most problematic area in relation to women as leaders and managers both in higher education and in society at large. Many factors come into play - the historical roles of women in certain societies, the conflicts arising from their advanced education and exposure to other cultures, their own continued commitment to the values of their own race, religion and nation.

In dealing with the tension between women of varied cultures and their role in the advancement of higher education, several points must be kept in mind:

- the role of women in any given society is subject to a number of key traditions, some of which are age-old and must impact on their lives as citizens and professions in particularly complex ways; the Special Project *Women, Higher Education and Development*, by promoting the training and research modalities of the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme, aims to improve the careers of women in priority areas such as *higher education management, community health, social inclusion, poverty alleviation and science and development*. These Chairs and networks recognize cultural identity as a key variable in structuring the activities implemented;
- in certain countries and cultures, highly women have had access to power but often because of their family, marital or political connections;
- management varies enormously amongst cultures - a fact which has gained even greater attention with the reality of internationalization; an understanding of other peoples and of their languages as an expression of their thought patterns is now accepted as an essential component for successful enterprise in every sphere of activity;
- paradoxically, management is - universally - about getting things done by other people. Hence, at some point, it is essential for cultures to find common ground for dialogue and negotiation. In this context, culture ceases to be a barrier and, instead, becomes a bridge to building links with the other side.

In the leadership and management of higher education, women of different cultures can network to exchange visions and views which enrich their own approaches to specific issues, including the way in which they handle male attitudes to power and decision-making in their own countries. Despite profound cultural diversity, certain precepts must guide women as they seek greater participation in decision-making and power sharing:

- . **Women's Legal Rights**
- . **The Critical Mass Factor**
- . **Adapting Cultural Traditions**
- . **The Challenges of Leadership**
- . **Institutional Commitment to Gender Equity**
- . **Feminine Leadership**
- . **The Social Responsibilities of Higher Education**

These are universally valid and attest, in the most eloquent manner possible, to the feminine vision of priorities for higher education leadership in the coming years when a new social partnership will be increasing sought - not only by women but by all responsible citizens.

## **VII. Conclusions: Trends towards Change**

What are the perspectives with regard to these issues?

The world is moving towards greater democracy and market-oriented policies in an effort to improve human development. In this climate, more opportunities should be provided for women to obtain

executive appointments. The efforts of specialized agencies , of women's groups and the resolutions of international conferences all contribute towards the recruitment of women for such positions.

Clear trends to strengthen the empowerment of highly qualified women are visible in the fields of **research, training, advocacy and networking** and must be further strengthened. These operate both in the higher education domain itself and also in professional activities. The spin-off effects resulting from increased access and participation are life-long and have flow-on benefits for women in all social groups.

These thus constitute the foundations of *UNESCO's Global Strategy for Women, Higher Education and Development* mentioned earlier and which aims at their enhanced participation in the decision-making process.

In conclusion, what is now required is a common vision of social and human development shared by men and women alike. This vision is based on social justice and accords women their rightful place in decision-making:

*"The essential task of the 21st century may well be to forge a new partnership between men and women in dealing with the present and in shaping the future of our personal and public agendas." (A Blueprint to Leadership: 19)*

According to this vision, all leaders - whether male or female - become key agents of change for the creation of a new society. Therefore, they are no longer adversaries but full and equal partners in this important endeavour.

The World Conference on Higher Education must clearly articulate the profound desire of women to forge this new social partnership.

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## Introduction

*Address by:* Dr Attiya Inayatullah,  
President, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Pakistan  
Former Chairperson, UNESCO Executive Board  
Former Minister, Population, Welfare and Women's Development

Good afternoon, Mr Director-General, distinguished panelists and of course, participants.

As we all know, the concerns of women are one of the four major priorities of UNESCO and a very warm welcome to all who have come to this thematic debate on *Women and Higher Education* with the sub-topic *Issues and Perspectives*.

The issues will be addressed by our discussants and by the participants, of course. We should briefly recall the perspective - this is within the Beijing theme of equality, development and peace. The principles of equal opportunity and development are well recognized. But indeed, we all know - men and women - that we have to move beyond Beijing and give vision and action to the subject of higher education for women which is closely connected to the self-actualization of women, the professional activity of women and is connected to society itself.

Much needs to be done as is evidenced from the Human Development Report statistics and I shall only quote two of these:

- 66% of the world's illiterates are women
- only 33% of women compared to men enrol in higher education in sub Saharan Africa.

I should point out one other relevant statistic. Despite the efforts made by the Director-General to get women participants to be at least 50% of delegations ( if not 50%, then 30%), I should like to tell you that the tally we have is in the range of 20%.

So we know that much needs to be done for women - very specifically, the evidence is that the higher a women climbs in the education hierarchy, the lower the cut-off point - that is, the higher you go, the lower, the percentage of women. When you start at the bottom, there are a lot of women. But, the higher up you go, the percentage of women goes down.

We also know that a close look at employment statistics and information on career paths raises an important question - do women in higher education really have career paths? We also know that an examination of the impact made by advances in science and technology on women's daily lives leads to the question - higher education for what kind of society? We do not find women fitting into this. Indeed, while a growing number of women and girls seek higher education, they appear to be on an obstacle course. Therefore, it is most opportune that the Swedish agency, SIDA, has sponsored this thematic debate and on behalf of the Director-General and everyone at UNESCO and those gathered here, I extend to SIDA our deepest appreciation for their generous support. To the collaborating education NGOs, with specific interest in women's concerns, we express our gratitude for bringing a driving force, and last but not least, we acknowledge the quality of documentation, including the working document.

The documents clearly establish that the quality of family life, community living, citizenship and nationhood is directly proportional to the educational level of women. Our documents tell us this and refer us back to the question and issues of women's empowerment, co-operation, equity, sustainability and security, which were the cornerstones of the Beijing Conference and the Social Summit.

So, how shall we use the three hours of the debate? I believe we shall use them gainfully. We move into our keynote address and then our discussants will intervene. We have a special guest speaker - none other than the Director-General himself. This comes to me as no surprise. He is one of a kind - a male defender of women activists. In the spirit of Beijing, we thank him for joining us

today in Paris to say "NO" to gender apartheid in all its forms and manifestations. Welcome to you and thank you for being here.

The second part of the debate will feature a panel and we shall have a visual presentation of good gender practice and experiences. Then we shall have an interactive session with participants to propose some strategies for future action to pass on to the Director-General. This is a conference of commitments and I ask the Director-General to take note of requests for action and to turn these into reality.

Consequent to a recent change in government in Sweden, the former minister is unable to join us. We are grateful to Dr Olsson of SIDA and to Professor Ullenius for their document on the Swedish experience. This has been distributed and I shall now invite them to speak to this paper.

## **How to make universities gender aware: the Swedish experience**

*Address by:* Dr Berit Olsson  
Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)  
Sweden

Prof. Christina Ullenius  
President  
University College of Karlstad  
Sweden

### **Introduction**

This is an exciting event. Never before have so many gathered to look at the future of higher education and research. Never before have governments, university leaders, non governmental organisations and other interest groups met in these numbers at this level to examine the issue before us: *how to make universities gender aware ?*

UNESCO is to be congratulated on the initiative to bring gender issues to the forefront of the discussion and to underline the responsibility of member states, their governments as well as institutions of higher learning and research, in correcting existing imbalances.

We would like to pay tribute to all of those who have worked and fought in order to bring attention to gender inequities. The issue has far too long been a task for NGOs and activists alone. Today, it is on the agenda of institutions and governments prepared to take action. The problem now is *how*. We must learn from each other. When it comes to women in academic positions, we in the North are not more advanced than many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Our university leaders have a lot to learn from others.

### **The Swedish Experience**

Today, we will report on some aspects of recent Swedish experiences. During the past four years, some bold and decisive steps were taken by the recent Minister of Education, Mr Carl Tham.

Sweden has been regarded as one of the most advanced countries concerning equality between men and women. Yet, four years ago, 93% of the professors in Swedish colleges and universities were men. This despite the fact that women have been admitted to higher education for 120 years, and despite the fact that more than 60% of Swedish university students were women. This deficiency within the academic world was considered completely unacceptable.

Equality within higher education and scientific research is not just a question of justice, but also a question of democracy and of academic quality. Participation of women and men, inclusion of gender perspectives in curricula, as well as in research, makes it possible to cover a broader field of knowledge, involve students to a greater extent, provide young women with role models, and give women a visibility in the academic world, as well as in society in general.

Today, there are no formal obstacles preventing women from reaching high positions in colleges and universities. Nevertheless, men dominate all levels of influence. This situation is not just a remnant of the past. At closer examination, it became apparent that progress towards gender equality is a very slow process. There were even indications that the process was beginning to stagnate in several educational areas.

Today, the rhetoric has changed. Few would challenge the need for more women in higher education and research. Nevertheless, discrimination against women continues.

It should be pointed out that in Sweden, the major drop out of women occurs at the postgraduate level. We are fully aware that in many other countries decisive action must be taken, all the way from primary and secondary education, as well as within higher education and research.

### **Government Actions Taken**

The Swedish government decided on a package of decisive actions for higher education and research and allocated resources for their implementation. Among these were extensive allocations for new positions from the post-graduate to the professorial level to correct under-representation. A number of new academic positions for women have been established; 32 full professors, 10 guest chairs, 73 assistant professors and 40 post-doctoral positions.

Targets have been established for the further recruitment of women professors. In ten years time, at least 25 % of the full professors should be women. Setting goals for the highest level of the university hierarchy was expected to have a favourable effect for women at all levels within the academic community.

Instructions have been issued for educational and scientific institutions to shoulder the responsibility for addressing gender imbalances, and several measures have been taken to organise and promote gender studies.

This action package was met with antagonism in some quarters and with great support in others. It gave rise to a debate which came to focus on objectivity in the academic world. It became evident that, contrary to the general assumption, the academic world was far from objective. Unintentionally, it discriminated against women.

### **Background**

Two Swedish researchers, Christine Wennerås and Agnes Wold, looked at how men and women were judged when applying for research positions. The findings, published in "Nature" in 1997, under the title "Nepotism and Sexism in Peer Review" were primarily challenged, but scrutinised and found to be valid. They demonstrated some of the mechanisms behind exclusion of women from leading positions and research funding.

Wennerås and Wold showed that, in the peer evaluation of the applicant's competence, all other factors being equal, men were rated higher. Another factor which came through was whether or not the applicant was known to the appointment committee. These two, "qualifications" turned out to have surprisingly decisive consequences. In practice the double handicap of being a woman and lacking personal contacts appeared, only with difficulty, to be compensated by scientific achievements.

Even if this study is unique, its findings are certainly not unique to the Swedish Medical Research Council or other organisations in Sweden or other countries. Within the academic community there is a tendency to play down the subjective element, to speak of research as fundamentally objective. Indeed, this study has put this in question.

Scientific and academic competence are concepts which have evolved in what has been a male-dominated world. Nevertheless they are considered to be gender-neutral. The consequence is that gender today is a basis for segregation in colleges and universities. Students encounter a male-dominated world from the very beginning. Most of the teachers and administrators are men, most of the chosen literature is written by men, and often takes up the problems of men and research by men.

## **Mainstreaming and Special Actions**

This is why gender issues have to be seen as a field of knowledge, both as an area of study in its own right, and, equally important as an integral element in curricula in all relevant subjects of education. This is part of what is often called mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming alone, however, is not enough. In Sweden such efforts have been supported by other means as well. A series of courses have been directed to vice chancellors and other high level staff to improve their knowledge and awareness. These have not primarily focused on attitudes but on facts and figures demonstrating how men and women are affected by measures believed to be gender neutral.

## **Research**

Special attention has been given to the organization and promotion of gender studies - as a field of knowledge. Gender research has an important task in exposing the social mechanisms of culture, customs and tradition that create the female and male characters in society. It may disclose mechanisms which continue to prevent women from improving their situation, despite legislation and economic opportunities. This is true as well within the academic world itself.

Gender research is necessary to answer questions of why women and men remain traditional in their professional and educational choices. In the physical sciences and engineering, women account for only about one-fifth of graduates. Within teaching and health care programmes, the situation is reversed. These fields are largely dominated by women.

To create a society in which all people are given the opportunity to develop themselves on the basis of their ability and interests, we need research which analyses the importance of gender, as well as class and ethnicity. Democracy as well benefits from the situated perspectives provided by different groups.

## **Impact**

It is far too early to assess the impact of these actions. However, there are many promising signs:

- the number of women in high level positions has increased, and they have been positively received;
- universities have started special recruitment efforts and annually report on their progress;
- many students have reacted to the lack of women teachers and researchers, and they have begun to ask how this can affect their studies, their interest in their subject, and their choice of a future career. To an increasing degree, the students have begun to demand a discussion into the fact that the literature in almost all courses is overwhelmingly written by men and that gender is never used as a starting point for analyses;
- the Scientific Councils have started to demand that a gender perspective is considered in research proposals. How are men and women affected by societal change, technological development or other phenomenon under study?
- gender studies have been accepted as an important field of knowledge. Several universities have chairs for gender oriented subjects, e.g. Political Science with a gender perspective;
- special chairs in Gender Science have been established in some of the new universities, e.g. Karlstad, as well as in Lund, one of the old and prestigious ones.



In short, something has started to change. Most people recognize that equality between women and men affects the quality of the academic institutions and the quality of society at large.

We believe that, achievement of equality between men and women does not happen all by itself. Action has to be taken by the government, by the institutions of higher education and by non-governmental organisations and by individuals. Finally, a lot can be achieved on the international level. International co-operation among universities, staff and students can help us look at ourselves with a new perspective and we can learn a lot from each other.

The role of UNESCO, however goes far beyond promoting and facilitating co-operation. By its analytical function and normative role, UNESCO has a major role for advocacy on all levels. We certainly welcome the fact that UNESCO takes a lead in these important efforts.

### **Summary of actions taken by the Swedish Parliament or Government over the last four years:**

#### New positions for the underrepresented sex in various scientific fields

32 chairs (professorships) (compare with circa 1.500 existing chairs)  
10 chairs for women guest professors  
73 research assistants (first level of academic career)  
40 postdoctoral positions  
120 positions for doctoral students

Financial resources to support the programme

#### Resources for gender research

6 academic fields have been identified as fields of particular interest to receive financial support for  
- one professor  
- one research assistant  
- one doctoral student

#### Secretariat for gender research

To support gender research in various fields and in various institutions in Sweden.

New interdisciplinary research group at the Linköping university.

Instructions to the Swedish Research Councils to promote equality between sexes and to include and promote gender perspectives in research being supported by these bodies.

## Women and Higher Education Issues

*Address by:* Prof. Peter Katjavivi  
Vice-Chancellor  
University of Namibia  
Namibia

### Summary

This paper highlights some of the major issues relating to the relatively low numbers of women in higher education and provides some strategies for improving the situation. One of the key barriers preventing women participation in decision-making is their limited access to higher education. For example, in Sub-Sahara Africa, only 33% of women, compared to men, enrol in higher education. This proportion is heavily clustered in the areas of medical care and teaching professions. They are heavily under-represented in the fields of science and technology. In the political arena, women represent only 10% of the world's parliamentarians.

During the last two decades, there has been a large increase in enrolments at both secondary and tertiary levels. In general, this increase is relatively in favour of males than females. However, the universal gender bias in institutions of higher learning still persists. Women are concentrated in education science and health-related fields of study.

Social, cultural and economic factors are the main barriers preventing women to enrol for higher education. Social structures, especially in developing countries, pressure women to start a family ahead of professional considerations. The society expects women to bear the burden of caring for the young, elderly and the sick or disabled. The overall welfare of the family falls on women, who are expected to somehow supplement their families' income.

Necessary strategies should be taken to facilitate more enrolments for women in higher education. The socio-cultural values that act as barriers for women to pursue higher education should be addressed and corrective measures taken. Women should be encouraged to compete for higher level positions of decision-making. In particular, women should be given opportunities to accede to leadership posts in higher education.

### I. Introduction

The 1993 UNESCO/Commonwealth Secretariat study, *Women in Higher Education Management* had identified key barriers preventing the participation of women in the decision-making arena. Limited access to higher education, the stress of dual family and professional roles, family attitudes, and cultural stereotyping were among the identified barriers. Furthermore, the 1997 UNESCO *Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education* points out that women enrolment in higher education is clustered in the medical care and teaching professional fields, and are under-represented in science and technology and also in postgraduate studies. The annual UNDP *Human Development Report* also points out that only 33% of women compared to men enrol in higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa, with even lower figures in science and technology fields. The Report further points out that in politics, women represent only 10% of the world's parliamentarians. In other words, over the years, improvement in access to higher education among women is not parallel to their increased participation in policy- and decision-making, in institutions of higher learning. Having women role models in key academic institutions will sensitise the learning institution on how best to develop the education system and the curricula, so as to encourage more women to pursue the fields of natural science. As we move to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what can we do to enhance the position of women in the academic and the technological arena? Must we pursue different strategies depending on the prevailing social and economic situation of our countries?

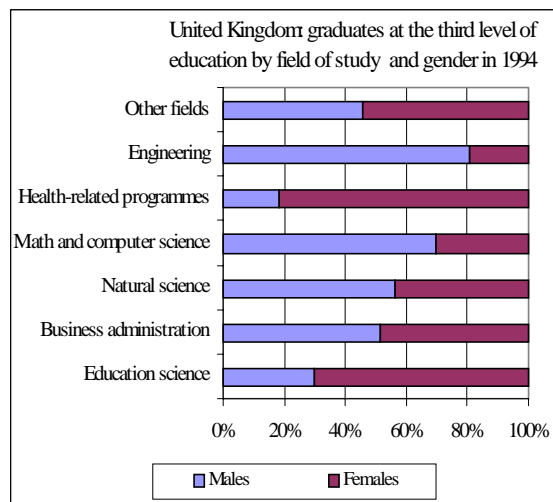
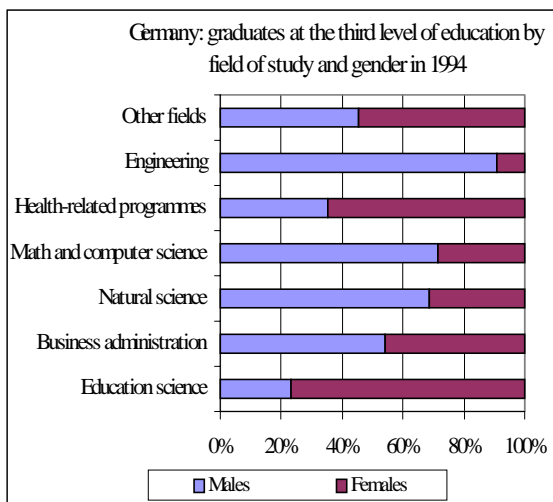
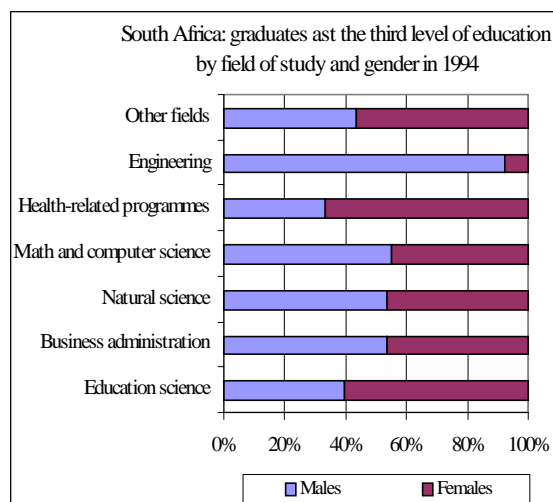
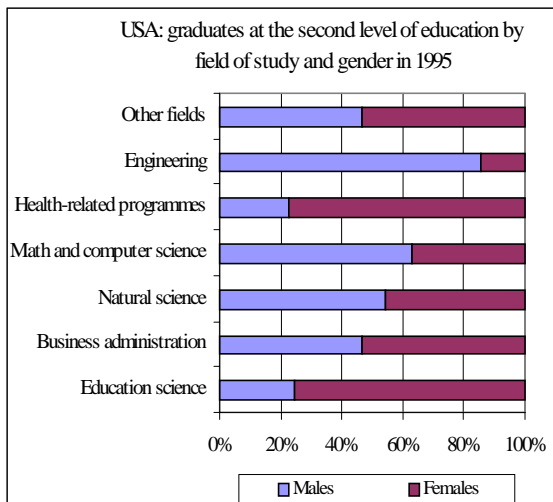
In this brief paper, I shall highlight the status of enrolment of women in higher learning; fields of specialization; and general constraints in access to and scope of higher education in developing countries. Based on this expose, I then develop different scenarios on what must be done to mainstream women into the academic and technological arena of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The 1997 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook is the primary source of data used in this analysis. This source is supplemented with data from Namibia, to provide an in-depth analysis of the constraints and also on what to expect on gender disparity in access to education in a newly independent state.

## II. Status of gender disparity in higher learning

Data from the 1997 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, reproduced in Table1 below, suggest that between 1980 and 1995 access to higher education has improved substantially, and that the relative changes for women outweigh those for men. As a proportion of the school-age population, there are more children enrolled in secondary and tertiary education in 1995 than there were in 1980, and much of the increase is in tertiary enrolment. The gender gap in enrolment is also narrowing, particularly at the tertiary level, women having surpassed the levels for men in the developed countries. Compared to the developed countries, ratios for the developing countries are substantially low but these countries have made the most gains and the pace for women exceeds that of men. Assuming that the trend in bridging the gender gap in access to higher learning will persist into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, chances are that by increasing investment in higher education women will catch-up with men. The problem then is whether an increase in access to higher education restricts women to pursuing fields of study that are compatible with their maternal roles, making them less competitive than men in pursuing careers in academics and technological fields. The most recent data on graduates at the third level of education by fields of study (1997 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook) support this phenomenon.

Countries	1980		1995		Relative change(%)	
	Secondary	Tertiary	Secondary	Tertiary	Secondary	Tertiary
World total: Males	51.6	13.4	62.5	16.8	21.1	25.4
Females	41.1	11.1	53.4	15.6	29.9	40.5
Developed: Males	88.6	36.2	97.8	47.6	10.4	31.5
Females	89.5	36.2	100.1	54.7	11.8	51.1
Developing: Males	42.0	6.7	54.2	10.4	29.0	55.2
Females	28.4	3.7	43.9	7.4	54.6	100.0
Sub-Sahara Africa: Males	21.6	2.5	26.9	4.6	24.5	84.0
Females	12.4	0.7	21.6	2.5	74.2	257.1

Data for the USA, United Kingdom and Germany, the primary host countries for students from other countries, in particular from developing countries, and South Africa which prevails in Sub-Sahara Africa, shown in the charts below, illustrates the universal gender bias in enrolment in institutions of higher learning. Women are concentrated in education science and health-related fields while engineering, the main technological field, is the men's domain. Thus, to be effective, actions targeted at enhancing career opportunities for women in the technological fields must include incentives that would minimise the stress in fulfilling their dual role of family and career.



### III. Constraints in access to higher learning in developing countries

Investment in higher education is a function of the level of social, economic and cultural development (UNESCO, 1997). Further, because of scarce financial and human resources, developing countries rationalise their investments in institutions of higher learning by targeting activities that meet the basic requirements of the country and are also economically most profitable. As a result, only study programmes that maximize social, economic and cultural returns are offered within these countries. To compensate for the demand of qualified people in highly specialised professional fields, students are sponsored to study in other countries. This arrangement conflicts with the desire of some women to be mothers while pursuing their professional ambitions. It is easier for women to surmount the challenges of family care and professional ambitions in their own countries. They can always rely on the extended family support system, if the need arises.

Social, cultural and economic factors make studying outside their countries more convenient for men than for women. The social structure in the developing countries pressure women into getting married and starting a family ahead of professional considerations. Our culture also expects women to bear the burden of caring for the young, the elderly and the sick. The overall welfare of the family also falls on women, forcing them to supplement the family's income. The more they are educated the more they can provide for their families, particularly if they are employed in the male dominated professions. However, once they are married, women redefine their professional aspirations in the context of their cultural obligations. If by chance, the learning or working environment facilities support that

minimises the women's burden of care giving, more of them will pursue postgraduate studies, including the engineering and other technological fields.

#### IV. The situation of women in higher learning in Namibia

In Namibia, women's involvement in the struggle for independence afforded them a unique role in the country's policy decision-making process. In 1995, out of 36 cabinet and sub-cabinet positions, women occupied 6, while in the national assembly there is one woman for every five men (Women in Namibia, 1997). As shown in Table 2, women are under-represented at the leadership positions at the University of Namibia, possibly because they lack the desired academic qualifications.

<u>Academic staff</u>	Male	Female	Total
Professor	19	2	21
Associate professor	19	3	22
Senior lecturer/Librarian/Researcher	32	17	49
Lecturer/Librarian/Researcher	55	57	112
Other	21	38	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>263</b>
<u>Non-academic staff</u>	Male	Female	Total
Top management	7	0	7
Senior management and high level specialists	14	1	15
Middle level management and other specialists	36	40	76
Other	99	108	207
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>305</b>

At the time of Namibia's independence in 1990, the few well-educated Namibians had studied in other countries. As already indicated, chances were that only a small number of women had such an opportunity. In subsequent years, following independence, more Namibians students have enrolled at the University of Namibia. Since its establishment, the University has also developed some postgraduate study programmes in a few of the faculties. The scope of the fields of study or postgraduate studies has not matured to the level of producing full-fledged academicians, let alone to qualify for the top positions. Thus, women are under-represented at the most senior positions at the University of Namibia, partly because they lack the desired academic qualifications. Table 2 on student enrolment at the University supports this.

Table 3. Student Enrolment by Faculty and Sex for various years

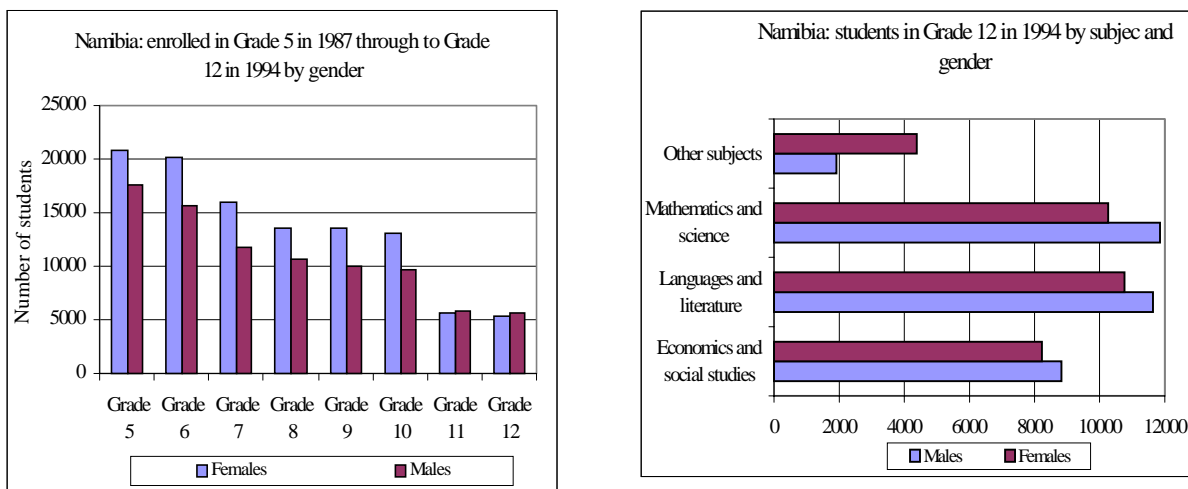
Faculty	Number of Students					
	1992		1994		1996	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Agriculture & Natural Resources	*	*	*	*	20	8
Economics & Management Science	117	91	217	146	313	253
Education	154	204	237	234	370	405
Humanities & Social Sciences	137	147	178	218	196	213
Law	*	*	12	11	41	25
Medical & Health Science	62	573	112	645	94	534
Science	73	32	103	46	161	80
Centre for External Studies	227	373	242	479	253	549

\* No enrolments – New Faculty

Women are concentrated in the fields of Medical and Health Sciences, Education and Humanities and Social Sciences. There are also relatively large numbers of female students where it is possible to pursue studies through distance modes of learning. But they occur in fewest numbers in the science and technologically related fields. Thus, to be effective in bringing women into science and technology fields, incentives or motivations aimed at enhancing career opportunities for women in these fields must be sought.

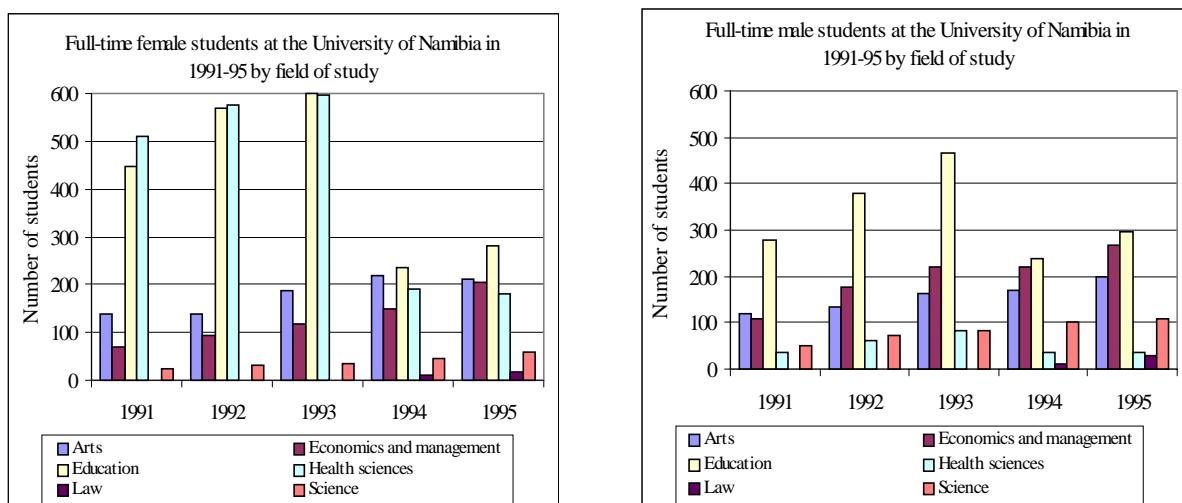
In attempting to promote the participation of women in higher education, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the situation at the secondary and primary school end of the educational spectrum. Figure 1 below summarizes the enrolment pattern by sex in Namibia's primary and secondary schools.

Figure 1. Primary and Secondary School Enrolments in Namibia by Sex for Selected Years



Given the enrolments shown in the charts above, one would have expected that, other things being equal, female and male student representation at the University would be the same in all the fields. But this is not what happens. The Faculties of Medical and Health Science (producing nurses) and Education (producing teachers) take most of the female students at the University – see Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Full-time Enrolment at the University of Namibia for Females and Males, by Field of Study, 1991 – 1995



In addition to gender equalisation in the fields of study at the University of Namibia, the charts below imply that the country has had to make choices on which fields of study to offer at the University of Namibia. Because of resource constraints, the University offers very few fields of study. For instance, law was offered starting from the 1994 student intake and engineering is not even offered yet. In 1994, there were a total of 1,626 full-time students enrolled at the University of Namibia (CSO, 1997) while 1,747 Namibian students, were enrolled at institutions of higher learning in South Africa (1997 UNESCO Statistical Yearbook). This implies that, at university level, there are more students enrolled outside than within Namibia. Even though data are not available by sex, it can be speculated that the numbers are not the same for females and males, and that the latter are likely to be more.

It should further be noted that, the University of Namibia is not only faced with the issues of staff equity in terms of gender, but also with capacity building. While this is one of main priority areas in the development of the University, can we ensure that women are given equal opportunity in this process. Are they readily available to compete with their male counterparts! Do they possess the desired requirements? Who makes the decisions for recruitment and absorption to the academic community? All these are issues which will need to be looked into.

## **V. Action strategies for mainstreaming women in higher learning**

It is worth emphasizing that education facilitates empowerment, which is one of the essential tools in decision-making. At the present time there are far too few women at the higher levels of decision-making, partly because they do not possess the necessary education qualifications. Higher education provides the expertise usually required for key posts which shape policy in all areas. The importance of higher education for women is therefore crucial. In a study by UNESCO/Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) on *Women in Higher Education Management*, three key factors were considered as necessary to enable women to accede to leadership posts in higher education. These are:

- ◆ societal attitudes to women, which discourage their participation in decision-making;
- ◆ their lower enrolments in higher education; and
- ◆ the absence of a gender dimension in the higher education curriculum.

With regard to decision-making, the same study noted that the principal barriers preventing women participation were, among others:

- ◆ limited access to education, especially higher education;
- ◆ discriminatory and promotion practices;
- ◆ the stresses of dual family and professional roles;
- ◆ career interruptions;
- ◆ propagation of the glass ceiling syndrome which privileges cover criteria for advancement; and
- ◆ absence of adequate policies and legislation to ensure the participation of women.

With regard to *the way forward*, here are some recommendations:

- i.** provide women with solid foundation in mathematics and science subjects;
- ii.** discourage the system of tracking students into arts and science streams at the second level of education as practised in some countries;
- iii.** provide childcare facilities at the institution of higher learning. In situations where particular fields of study have to be pursued in another country, create special funding for married women so that their spouses can accompany them;
- iv.** provide a means through which the issues of gender inequality can be addressed both formally and informally, at all levels of society.

In Namibia we are addressing some of these issues. We have a Gender Training and Research Project at the University, funded by the Government of the Netherlands, with the main objective of promoting gender awareness in the University community and incorporating gender studies in the

curricula. Namibia is one of the countries in East, Central and Southern Africa which have been involved in a SIDA funded regional project on the production and promotion of gender statistics. The Government of Namibia has created the Department of Women's Affairs, under the Office of the President, with the specific objective of promoting gender awareness and addressing issues relating to gender inequity in the country.

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## Mujeres y Educación Superior: Comentarios sobre un caso ejemplar

*Palabras del:* Dr María Irigoin,  
Consultora en educación superior,  
Universidad de Santiago de Chile,  
Chile

En el documento sobre políticas de educación superior, la UNESCO invita a las instituciones a ser más proactivas. En este marco, el tema que nos convoca constituye una oportunidad espléndida para que las universidades, y otras instituciones de nivel postsecundario, sean proactivas y no solamente reactivas a un signo muy importante de los tiempos, cual es la irrupción e inserción de las mujeres en la vida social amplia del ejercicio más pleno de los derechos culturales, políticos, sociales, económicos y laborales.

En las exposiciones centrales y en los trabajos de las comisiones de la Conferencia Mundial sobre la Educación Superior, hemos oído un clamor masivo por avanzar desde el crecimiento económico al desarrollo humano, al encuentro de una sola humanidad en la que nos reconozcamos iguales en la diversidad : diversidad de sexos, de edades, de etnias, de situaciones socioeconómicas, de ubicación geográfica. En lo que nos preocupa, el hecho de que hombres y mujeres poblamos el mundo es de esas obviedades que por sabidas se callan y por calladas se olvidan.

El poeta y ensayista mexicano Octavio Paz destacaba, al recibir el premio Nobel de Literatura, que el hecho social más importante de la segunda mitad del siglo era, en su criterio, la irrupción masiva de las mujeres en la vida pública ; él alertaba, al mismo tiempo, de que si no se tomaba conciencia para actuar en consecuencia, se obligaría a las mujeres a integrarse como hombres, perdiendo la humanidad una de las grandes oportunidades de la historia. ¿ Qué están haciendo los países y la educación superior al respecto ? El sistema de las Naciones Unidas y muchos gobiernos están trabajando con seriedad el tema, como se pudo ver en la IV Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer en Beijing (1995) y lo demuestra el seguimiento de su plataforma de acción. Por ejemplo, muchos ministerios de educación realizan esfuerzos para una educación más justa y equitativa para hombres y mujeres. En el campo de la educación superior, un conjunto significativo de documentos dan cuenta de que el nivel preocupa y ocupa, pero aún en círculos que podrían sin duda ser más amplios.

El Informe Delors habla de la educación permanente a través de la cual cada ser humano debería aprender a conocer, a hacer, a ser y a vivir con los demás. ¿ Cómo comparten hombres y mujeres los espacios de la educación superior ? En el presente debate, convocado por el liderazgo de la UNESCO en la materia, Suecia nos ha regalado, a través de la presentación del Dr. Tham, sus lecciones de una experiencia en la cual este país tiene mucho camino recorrido y un conjunto potente de estrategias.

Ante la limitación de espacio para comentar todo lo expuesto, elijo destacar algunas puntualizaciones que considero extraordinariamente relevantes para los temas que nos preocupan :

- La incorporación de la perspectiva de género en la corriente principal es un proceso lento. No se pueden esperar milagros.
- El primer paso es siempre una visibilización de las mujeres y del tema. Sin que haya intencionalidad en los hechos, el mundo en que nos movemos no es neutro, sino que tiene un sesgo de ventaja hacia lo masculino.
- El sesgo de ventaja hacia lo masculino puede y debe ser estudiado. Las investigaciones nos muestran situaciones notables, tal como es el caso al cual alude el Dr. Tham sobre los criterios de selección del personal de la educación superior. Quisiera agregar, al respecto, que los estudios sobre estos temas muchas veces dan luces sobre otros aspectos ignorados de la educación

superior. Por ejemplo, un estudio en Chile ha mostrado que la media de edad de los académicos es de 51 años, lo cual hace más difícil el recambio generacional incluso para los hombres.

- El género es un campo de conocimiento y al mismo tiempo un elemento que debería formar parte integral de todo el curriculum. No basta con el conocer, el género debería permear el curriculum como texto (planes y programas, materiales didácticos), el curriculum como prácticas docentes, el curriculum como evaluación, el curriculum como curriculum oculto que está implícito en el trabajo educacional.
- Existe un discurso aceptado del derecho de las mujeres a participar en todos los niveles, pero funciona en la práctica el « techo de cristal » que como colectivo las deja en los primeros niveles, salvo algunas excepciones.
- Distintas estrategias han demostrado también diversos grados de eficacia, pero hoy la incorporación de la perspectiva de género en la corriente principal (« mainstreaming ») parece ser una estrategia altamente recomendable y de buenos resultados. Dentro de ella se pueden destacar el esfuerzo por visibilizar la perspectiva de género, por aumentar el conocimiento sobre el género y la equidad de género, por incorporar mujeres a los más altos niveles de decisión, por desarrollar métodos y herramientas para la incorporación de la perspectiva de género y el monitoreo y seguimiento de las acciones.

Al revisar los puntos sintetizados, es fácil darse cuenta de que se mueven en el plano de la reflexión y de la acción. No hay duda de que hay una visión de una sociedad más democrática y justa para todos sus miembros y que a partir de ella, la voluntad política se compromete en acciones que buscan un perfeccionamiento permanente. Por último, otro punto que estimo importante es relevar quien ha hablado. Ha sido un hombre, ministro de educación de su país. Se trata de alguien que entiende que la noción de género es relacional y que alude a las relaciones sociales entre hombres y mujeres y el cuidado porque ambos pudieren participar por partes iguales de los esfuerzos y beneficios del desarrollo.

Ya lo dijo el Director de la UNESCO, Federico Mayor, en la Conferencia sobre la Mujer en Beijing : las mujeres no han podido decidir sobre el precio del pan o el precio de la paz, pero han tenido que pagar siempre un alto precio por ellos. No estamos afirmando que si las mujeres entraran en los niveles más altos de decisión bajarían el precio del pan o de la paz pero que sí que es válido su derecho a ser corresponsables de lo que suceda en la historia.

## **Women's Leadership: Education and Advocacy for Attitudinal Change**

*Address by:* Mrs Linda Souter  
President  
International Federation of University Women (IFUW), Canada

We would like to thank the Swedish International Co-operation Development Agency (SIDA) for sponsoring this debate and Dr. Olsson and Professor Ullenius for their clear presentation on research and action in Sweden. As has been stated, mainstreaming gender issues is not enough. Their presentation showed that research can lead to action and in this case the beginning of attitudinal change. However for sustainable development attitudinal change must extend beyond universities into the whole realm of higher education and indeed into society itself. The Swedish experience shows that universities can work with governments to create policies which help break cultural barriers preventing the advancement of women. Attitudinal change is certainly needed!

It is 23 years since the first World Conference on Women. Yet, *Women and Higher Education: Issues and Perspectives* is still a topic for a separate thematic debate. Women's issues and perspectives should have been part of every debate at this Conference. This would have been in line with the aims of UNESCO: «*To define and foster a gender-inclusive culture through education – notably higher education – so as to promote sustainable human development*».

Gender inclusion requires gender access. With the goal of making higher education accessible to all, primary, secondary, continued learning, retraining and re-entry programmes need adjustment to ensure accessibility to women and girls.

Women comprise over 50% of the world's population. Without equal opportunities for the same access and career opportunities a major section of the workforce will be under-utilized and the achievements of the next generation under-developed. This brain waste is unacceptable.

To attain equality, sustainable development and peace, the Beijing Platform for Action emphasizes that women with their different perspectives must be active participants at all levels of decision making. Higher education is the key to women reaching positions of power and decision making in all sectors of society including educational institutions, government, business and industry.

Attitudinal change is required to bring about an equitable distribution of women in leadership positions in both the academic and administrative spheres in education. To be part of the decision making, women need equitable access to career development, training, fellowships and grants. Recognition must also be given to women's different career paths and their need to balance professional and family responsibilities.

Women graduates bring different skills and perspectives to leadership positions in society. Can a just and equitable society really be achieved without these skills?

New technologies open new opportunities for women but care must be taken to ensure that they do not once again become marginalized and more isolated in the process

Our vision for higher education is what a Canadian study called a «*A 'Woman Friendly' University: A place where every woman feels (secure and) comfortable living, studying, working and playing – a place where she can reach her full academic and personal potential*»<sup>1</sup>. Such a university would enable all to achieve their full potential.

Globalization, technological change, changing economies and political systems will impact on people lives. We do not know what effect this will have, but we do know that women must be full partners with men in all aspects of the creativity and decision making that will ensure sustainable human development.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Saunders, M. Therren., L. Williams : Women in Universities CFUW, Ottawa 1992

## **Remarks of the Director-General of UNESCO Prof. Federico Mayor**

This conference means that, although until now there have been many reasons - including gender - why higher education has not been available to all, then now we can try again. There is only one condition - that is, effort and merit. That is why, on the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, I have insisted that these are our moral horizon. These must be kept as the light to guide our destiny. And, I have insisted that we must put human rights into action. We have a wonderful vision - but, starting with Article 26 where it says that access to higher education will be based on merit, this means that it will be based on our efforts and on our devotion. This is what we must proclaim at this conference.

From now on, higher education will not be just a privilege for the elites - the social and economic elites. We must come to action, in my view to change the asymmetry existing at the end of this century, where, before coming to a new dawn, there are still shadows. In higher education, we cannot be guided by markets but by our own vision. This is why, Mme Inayatullah, the vision is so important. We must be guided by our vision and values. These are enshrined in the UNESCO Constitution - justice and freedom and equality. Yes, equality - those who wrote this inspiring document stated "equality". Others have said equity but equality is the essential word. Equality means equality. We all know what is equitable but what is equal is better.

We cannot end the century with 90% of decisions made by men. You see the disaster. Therefore, the very first thing that we must now do is to dare - we must encourage women and dare more than in the past. We must share better. Those who know me know I always say "we must dare to share all - wealth, power and knowledge". The best way to share knowledge and research and all else is to be like a mirror - 50% and 50%.

Mme Inayatullah, I would like to conclude by recalling what you have said before - "NO" to gender apartheid in all its forms and manifestations. This is your statement. I repeat - at this moment, there are only 9% of women in parliaments and I remember agreeing with the former prime minister of India that, by the year 2005, there should be 30% of women in all decision-making bodies from municipalities to the federal government. Let us follow this empowerment - this "in-powerment". Let us appear to acknowledge that if the world has 50% and 50%, then 90 % of the voice of the earth is a male voice. It is not good that 90% of the decisions are men's decisions.

We are in a moment of vision - we can pass to action if we have the political will. You can do this. Here, there are many women who can advance knowledge everywhere. But, please, listen to the women who are the most deprived and the poorest - they have a message for you, the most privileged ones.

Finally, to come from vision to action, I would very much like my successor to be a woman. This would be a very good step for women and for the Organization.

## Femmes arabes, enseignement supérieur et développement

*Intervention de :* Mme Mouna Mourad  
Sociologue, chargée d'enseignement  
Faculté de Médecine  
Université de Saint-Joseph  
Beyrouth, Liban

L'intégration de la Femme, en tant qu'acteur dans l'œuvre de développement, ne peut être uniquement le fait d'une décision de principe nationale ou internationale, mais bien l'aboutissement d'un processus plus ou moins long, ardu, complexe et dans lequel interviennent des facteurs culturels où les aspects socio-religieux, politiques, juridiques, économiques, psychologiques, idéologiques et éducatifs apportent une contribution positive ou négative.

La femme arabe ou plutôt les différents types de femmes arabes, qu'elles soient traditionnelles ou modernes, jeunes ou âgées, riches ou pauvres, instruites ou analphabètes, célibataires ou mariées, actives ou au chômage, croyantes ou athées, urbaines ou rurales, n'échappent pas à cet ensemble de conditionnements, tout en présentant une évolution dont la portée est variable et fonction des caractéristiques de chaque pays.

A signaler les grandes disparités (tableau 1) existant entre les 22 pays arabes, membres de la Ligue Arabe fondée en 1945, dont le siège est au Caire.

Du point de vue géographique, 12 pays arabes sont implantés en Asie et plus précisément au Proche et Moyen Orient et dans la région du Golfe, un archipel dans l'Océan Indien (Afrique australe), 9 en Afrique. Leur superficie varie entre 622 km<sup>2</sup> (Bahreïn), et 2,505,813 km<sup>2</sup> (Soudan).

Leur population varie entre 499,115 habitants (Qatar) et 58,519,000 habitants (Egypte).

Du point de vue du développement humain, le Rapport Mondial sur le Développement Humain 1998 du PNUD<sup>(1)</sup>, classe Bahreïn comme le pays arabe qui a l'IDH<sup>(2)</sup> le plus élevé parmi les pays arabes, en 47<sup>ème</sup> position, et le Soudan comme celui qui a l'IDH le moins élevé, à la 147<sup>ème</sup> position par rapport aux 163 pays classés.

A remarquer que Djibouti, les territoires Palestiniens, et la Somalie n'ont pas été classés.

Le classement décroissant de l'IDH des pays arabes se présente comme suit : 4 pays du Golfe, Bahreïn, Emirats Arabes Unis, Koweït et Qatar, viennent en première position, suivis par la Libye, le Liban, l'Arabie Saoudite, Oman, la Syrie, l'Algérie, la Tunisie, la Jordanie, l'Egypte, le Maroc, l'Irak, les îles Comores, la Mauritanie, le Yémen et enfin le Soudan.

L'IDH est considéré comme un indicateur mesurant le niveau atteint par un pays en termes d'espérance de vie, d'éducation et de revenu réel corrigé.

A la lumière de ce même rapport et sur la base de l'IDH, les pays arabes se répartissent de la façon suivante :

- 22.70% peuvent être classés dans la catégorie « Développement humain élevé »
- 45.50% peuvent être classés dans la catégorie « Développement humain moyen »
- 31.80% se situent dans la catégorie « Faible Développement humain »

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(1) PNUD : Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement

(2) IDH : Indicateur du Développement Humain

A signaler que cette disparité au niveau du développement humain entre les pays arabes se conjugue avec une disparité socio-politique entre les sexes. Les femmes sont marginalisées des postes de prise de décisions politiques et publiques. En effet, la proportion de femmes qui occupent des sièges parlementaires est très limitée. Elle est égale ou inférieure à 10%. Voir le classement par ordre décroissant (tableau 2): la Syrie, la Tunisie, l'Irak, le Soudan, la Mauritanie, l'Algérie, le Liban, l'Égypte, le Yémen, le Maroc, les îles Comores, Djibouti et la Jordanie(3).

Ces proportions sont très réduites par rapport aux pays occidentaux, notamment la Suède 40.4%, le Danemark 37.4% et l'Espagne 24.7%. Nous relevons qu'en Syrie, il y a actuellement deux femmes ministres dont l'une est Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur. Au Liban, la Présidente de la Commission Parlementaire de l'Éducation, et celle de la Commission Parlementaire de l'Enfance sont des femmes.

Les pays arabes partagent une civilisation très riche, teintée des nuances des sous-cultures y existant. Notre langue est l'Arabe, et le multilinguisme, en particulier le français et l'anglais, y est répandu. Les systèmes éducatifs sont variés selon les modèles : arabe, français et anglo-saxon. La religion de la majorité est l'Islam. Le christianisme est répandu dans plusieurs régions, et particulièrement au Liban. Le taux de natalité y est élevé, la population est jeune. Une mosaïque d'ethnies constitue le tissu social hétérogène du monde arabe.

### **La situation de l'éducation des femmes dans le monde arabe (tableau 3).**

"Le rapport mondial sur l'éducation 1998" nous fournit un ensemble d'indicateurs qui éclairent dans une certaine mesure la situation de l'éducation dans le monde arabe. Je retiendrai quatre indices : le taux de scolarisation net dans l'enseignement primaire, la durée de la scolarité obligatoire, le taux d'inscription brut dans l'enseignement supérieur et le pourcentage d'étudiantes dans les domaines suivants: Éducation - Lettres - Droit et Sciences Sociales - Sciences exactes et naturelles - Science de l'ingénieur - Agriculture - Sciences médicales.

En ce qui concerne le taux de scolarisation dans l'enseignement primaire, on constate que ce taux varie, selon les pays, de 11% à 100% en ce qui concerne le sexe masculin, et de 6% à 100% en ce qui concerne le sexe féminin.

On en retire qu'environ 36% des pays arabes, qui ont fourni des statistiques, ont un taux de scolarisation des garçons dans le primaire dépassant 90% de l'effectif de scolarisation, alors que 28.5% d'entre eux bénéficient de ce taux par rapport aux filles. Par ailleurs 23% des pays arabes ont un taux de scolarisation inférieur à 70% tant pour les garçons que pour les filles

Quant à la durée de la scolarité obligatoire, elle couvre uniquement la totalité du cycle primaire dans près de 35% des cas, 40% prolongent cette scolarité jusqu'à la fin du cycle moyen.

Dans l'enseignement supérieur, il varie par rapport aux garçons de 0.2% (Djibouti) à 27.2% (Liban) et par rapport aux filles, ce taux varie selon les pays de 0.2% à 42.1% (Qatar). Il convient de noter que dans le cas de certains pays arabes (Emirats Arabes Unis, Koweït, Qatar) le taux brut d'inscription des filles est nettement plus élevé que celui des garçons, ce qui s'explique en grande partie par la tendance des garçons à se lancer dans la vie active économique dès la fin du cycle secondaire.

Quant au pourcentage d'étudiantes dans chaque domaine d'études, il révèle que les pays où le taux d'inscription brut des filles dans l'enseignement supérieur est relativement élevé, le sexe féminin est minoritaire dans les domaines des sciences exactes et naturelles, sciences de l'ingénieur et agriculture, il est par contre majoritaire dans les sciences humaines.

La majorité des pays ont aussi des instituts, des collèges et des écoles supérieures, comme ils ont des centres supérieurs d'instruction religieuse.

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(3) Source : Union Interparlementaire 1998

## **Les principaux freins à la participation de la fille et de la femme arabes diplômées au développement.**

De nombreux auteurs et des organismes internationaux et régionaux, en particulier, l'UNESCO, le PNUD et d'autres agences spécialisées dont l'UNIFEM<sup>(4)</sup>, l'ESCWA<sup>(5)</sup>, le UNFPA<sup>(6)</sup>, l'ALESCO<sup>(7)</sup>, le Fonds Monétaire International (FMI), les ONG<sup>(8)</sup>, ... ont analysé les obstacles constituant des freins à la participation de la femme au développement, dans les pays arabes. Il se dégage de ces études que dans nos sociétés patriarcales, les traditions sociales et culturelles, les stéréotypes, présentent généralement la femme comme un être physiologiquement et intellectuellement inférieur à l'homme, naturellement commandé par ses émotions, ce qui nécessite sa protection par les hommes (père, frère ou mari ...).

Il en résulte dans certains milieux la conviction que la femme doit être confinée dans l'espace privé où elle assume de rôle d'épouse, de mère et/ou de maîtresse de maison.

Le port du voile et la séparation des sexes sont considérés, dans certaines régions arabes, comme des moyens protégeant les femmes des «outrages extérieurs de la société» .... Dans cette perspective, il ne saurait être question d'autoriser la femme à travailler en dehors du foyer qu'en cas de nécessité, et à condition que son activité professionnelle ne porte pas atteinte à son rôle familial. Il devient naturel, dans ces conditions, de privilégier les garçons dans le domaine de l'éducation d'autant plus qu'un bon nombre d'employeurs restent réticents à engager les femmes, même qualifiées, car ils les considèrent peu aptes au travail productif et sujettes à l'absentéisme, du fait de leurs responsabilités familiales, ainsi que de certains événements spécifiques de la vie féminine (grossesse, accouchement, ...).

A cette mentalité, s'ajoutent les principaux faits suivants :

- l'absence de politique et de législations favorables à l'engagement de la femme dans les secteurs du développement ;
- le manque d'orientation professionnelle à tous les niveaux et l'inadéquation entre la formation académique et les besoins du marché du travail ;
- l'insuffisance des instituts supérieurs d'enseignement technique et professionnel ;
- le manque de capital financier et de facilités de prêts bancaires aux femmes ;
- le manque d'infrastructure allégeant leur double tâche traditionnelle et professionnelle ;
- le manque de motivations ;
- les risques du harcèlement sexuel ;
- une ignorance chez bon nombre de femmes de leurs droits et obligations ;
- l'attitude du conjoint et la priorité accordée à sa carrière parfois au détriment des ambitions de sa femme ;
- le manque d'équité dans les rapports de la société en général avec les femmes, à plusieurs niveaux.

Qu'est il exigé de l'enseignement supérieur pour remédier à cet état de choses, et engager la femme dans le processus du développement humain durable ?

Le centre d'intérêt de ce processus est l'être humain, dans ses deux genres: féminin et masculin, avec toutes leurs facultés cognitives, psychomotrices et affectives. Tout système éducatif a pour mission de les épanouir en intégrant les deux genres dans leur milieu de vie, tout en élargissant leurs possibilités de choix et leurs opportunités à parts égales dans un environnement naturel qu'il faut maintenir légitimement sain pour le bien-être des générations futures.

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(4) UNIFEM : Fonds des nations Unies pour la Femme

(5) ESCWA : Commission Economique et Sociale de l'Asie de l'Ouest

(6) UNFPA : Fonds des Nations Unies pour la population

(7) ALESCO : Organisation de la Ligue Arabe pour l'Education, la Science et la Culture

(8) ONG : Organisation non-gouvernementale

La croissance économique et la productivité constituent les moyens au service de ces ressources humaines uniques que sont l'homme et la femme.

### **Le rôle de l'enseignement supérieur à l'égard des filles et des femmes pour la promotion du développement.**

Il n'y a pas de doute que l'accès de la femme aux différents cycles de l'enseignement et particulièrement au cycle supérieur, contribue à parachever le profil de la femme en tant qu'acteur du développement.

Ce profil l'engage à :

- \* prendre conscience qu'elle a le droit et le devoir de contribuer au développement de sa société ; qu'elle a donc un rôle à assumer en ce domaine
- \* acquérir les connaissances et développer les qualifications qui la rendent apte à assumer son rôle d'agent de développement
- \* militer en vue d'abolir les facteurs qui constituent des obstacles à sa participation au développement

Un effort sérieux est entrepris dans quelques pays arabes en faveur de l'intégration de la femme dans leurs préoccupations éducatives. Mais il s'avère que les nouvelles possibilités d'éducation offertes aux femmes ont le plus souvent contribué à un simple renforcement des rôles féminins traditionnels, et non pas à transformer les femmes en partenaires à part entière dans la société.

Bien des interrogations restent donc sans réponse claire sur les options de base des systèmes éducatifs, leur rôle, leur place dans nos sociétés, leur degré d'ouverture aux problèmes qui sont ceux de notre temps, les missions qu'ils se donnent à partir des rapports qu'ils définissent plus ou moins implicitement d'ailleurs, entre la formation générale, la formation professionnelle et la formation culturelle.

Dans sa double fonction de formation professionnelle et d'éducation ethico-civique, l'enseignement supérieur, centré sur l'intérêt des étudiantes et des étudiants, doit faire émerger les universités et les institutions assimilées arabes de leur tour d'ivoire, et sensibiliser autant le monde étudiant que le personnel enseignant et administratif à répondre aux besoins de développement de leur société en tenant compte des problèmes majeurs spécifiques aux filles et aux femmes.

### **L'aspect économique**

Il convient d'abord de relever sur la base de l'expérience de nombreux pays, que l'investissement dans l'éducation contribue efficacement à la croissance économique, à l'amélioration de la santé publique et de la qualité de vie pour les femmes aussi bien que pour les hommes. De même, bien des pays ont constaté que leur développement économique et social exige la participation des femmes comme partenaires égales des hommes dans tous les domaines de la vie active. Mais cette participation suppose de « donner aux femmes les mêmes possibilités d'éducation et de formation qu'aux hommes ainsi que le libre accès à tous les types et à tous les niveaux d'éducation ». Cependant, dans leur trajectoire professionnelle, les femmes connaissent des aléas que ne subissent pas les hommes dans leur activité professionnelle.

Le taux le plus élevé de participation des femmes à la vie professionnelle se rencontre chez les célibataires et le plus faible chez les mères de famille ayant des enfants en bas âge. La structure de cette participation est généralement la suivante: emploi dans les années qui suivent immédiatement la sortie de l'école ou de l'université jusqu'au mariage (les filles se marient tôt dans les pays arabes, à



partir de 16 ans) ou jusqu'à la naissance du premier enfant, et recherche d'une reprise du travail lorsque les enfants atteignent l'âge scolaire ou terminent leurs études.

Les femmes qui reprennent un emploi manquent d'expérience ; mais surtout, les connaissances scolaires acquises dans leur jeunesse les ont mal préparées à l'ambiance de travail qu'elles retrouvent, en raison des progrès intervenus dans le domaine scientifique et technique. Quant à la femme dotée d'une formation professionnelle, elle éprouve de grandes difficultés au moment de reprendre un emploi car ses connaissances ont vieilli pendant les années passées à la maison, et elle peut rarement reprendre le métier auquel elle s'était initialement destinée.

Il convient, de ce fait, pour utiliser efficacement la main-d'œuvre féminine, d'élaborer notamment un cadre institutionnel permettant aux femmes de s'adapter à un emploi au moment où elles voudront retrouver un travail. A cet effet, il convient de développer les budgets d'enseignement pour couvrir les frais de formation, pallier les effets du vieillissement des connaissances et rendre productives les ressources féminines grâce à l'adoption et à la mise en œuvre d'une association de l'enseignement, du recyclage et de la recherche. Ces mesures contribueront de manière certaine à améliorer la qualité de l'éducation et l'égalité d'accès à l'enseignement et à la formation pour les femmes et les hommes afin que les femmes de tous âges soient en mesure d'acquérir et de développer les connaissances, les compétences, les aptitudes, les talents et les valeurs morales nécessaires pour participer pleinement, dans des conditions d'égalité, au développement social, économique et politique (Déclaration et Plateforme d'action de Beijing)<sup>(9)</sup>.

### **Ouverture des Universités au monde du travail**

Le progrès scientifique et technique exerce une influence sur les caractéristiques de l'emploi et sur les qualifications requises pour exercer une activité professionnelle efficace.

Si l'on veut atténuer les difficultés inhérentes aux transformations structurelles du marché de la main d'œuvre, tout en constituant le capital professionnel que réclame l'accélération du progrès, il faudra consacrer des ressources aux programmes de recyclage et à la valorisation des aptitudes de la population active dans le cadre de l'enseignement supérieur. L'extension des efforts de formation destinés à élever le niveau des qualifications et à rééduquer le travailleur n'est qu'un aspect du problème, l'autre étant la nécessité d'aménager les progrès futurs.

Les succès manifestes remportés par la recherche organisée ont justifié l'octroi de nouveaux appuis par l'Etat, les entreprises et les fondations privées. On reconnaît de plus en plus que dans les pays développés, le progrès économique nécessite de nouveaux produits et de nouvelles techniques de production. Mais l'expansion de la recherche pose un problème nouveau, celui de la communication.

Au cours de l'histoire, l'Université a joué un rôle majeur dans le progrès des sciences, mais en même temps, l'industrie a elle aussi créé et développé ses laboratoires de recherche ; ainsi, dans certains domaines, l'Université n'est plus à la tête du progrès scientifique. Dans le cadre universitaire, l'avancement des connaissances par la recherche se combine avec l'enseignement, alors que le laboratoire indépendant de l'Université doit créer de toutes pièces un courant d'informations destinées à l'étudiant et aux spécialistes appartenant déjà à la profession. Le problème central consiste donc à assurer un échange d'idées entre les instituts de recherche d'obédience universitaire ou non. C'est cette orientation que doivent prendre dans les pays arabes, les Universités et les industries qui ont bien du chemin à parcourir dans le domaine de la recherche et du progrès technique. La faible intensité des activités de recherche et le nombre peu élevé de chercheurs résultent des conditions peu favorables à ces activités tant au niveau de l'environnement économique et culturel qu'au niveau de l'individu : absence de programmes de soutien, prévalence des programmes et méthodes traditionnelles de formation etc. ... . Ce problème est accentué du fait de la répartition inégale des effectifs dans l'ensemble des disciplines, avec peu de femmes dans des domaines non traditionnels, tels que l'ingénierie. Dans leur grande majorité, les femmes suivent des formations qui les préparent à des

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(9) IV<sup>ème</sup> Conférence Mondiale sur les Femmes à Beijing (Chine) - 1995

professions considérées comme des prolongements de leurs rôles naturels d'épouse et de mère (l'enseignement, les soins infirmiers, ...) comme elles tendent à se regrouper dans des domaines d'études menant à des carrières traditionnellement féminines. Il y a lieu de s'inquiéter de l'exclusion choisie ou forcée des femmes des professions liées aux sciences et aux techniques et qui ne peut être que préjudiciable au développement des pays arabes. Des fonds importants doivent être consacrés à la formation de haut niveau d'hommes et de femmes, sans discrimination, dans les technologies avancées pour qu'ils ne soient pas continuellement dépassés par l'avènement de la mondialisation.

### **Stratégies proposées pour la participation de la Femme au développement social**

- \* Revoir la totalité des programmes et des méthodes d'éducation, à la lumière d'une vision englobant l'égalité entre les deux sexes, dans la perspective du développement, et permettant de pallier les déficiences résultant de la non prise en compte de la femme et de ses problèmes essentiels dans la définition des objectifs de ces programmes, ainsi que de leurs contenus et de leurs applications ;
- \* Orienter les filles et les femmes vers les domaines scientifiques et techniques ;
- \* Etablir un programme national bien étudié pour lutter contre l'analphabétisme ;
- \* Eviter de privilégier le sexe masculin au détriment du sexe féminin dans les programmes et matières d'enseignement, et donner de la femme une image de personnage - agent dynamique de développement dans les livres scolaires ;
- \* Leur donner l'opportunité de suivre un enseignement tout au long de leur vie dans le cadre de l'enseignement supérieur ;
- \* Veiller à l'application des objectifs contenus dans les articles 5 - 10 - 11 relatifs au rôle des hommes et des femmes, à l'éducation et à l'emploi de "La Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes" ratifiée par 62% des pays arabes (tableau 4).

A savoir :

### **Rôle des hommes et des femmes**

#### **Article 5 :**

« Tous les Etats parties à la Convention conviennent de prendre des mesures appropriées pour :

- parvenir à l'élimination des préjugés et de toutes les pratiques qui sont fondés sur l'idée de l'infériorité ou de la supériorité de l'un ou l'autre sexe ou d'un rôle stéréotypé des hommes et des femmes ;
- faire en sorte que l'éducation familiale contribue à bien faire comprendre que la maternité est une fonction sociale, et à faire reconnaître la responsabilité commune de l'homme et de la femme dans le soin d'élever leurs enfants».

### **Education**

#### **Article 10 :**

«Les femmes doivent avoir des droits égaux à ceux des hommes dans le domaine de l'éducation, en particulier en ce qui concerne :

- les conditions de carrière et l'orientation professionnelle ;
- l'accès aux programmes d'études, aux examens et à un enseignement par des maîtres qualifiés, ainsi que la qualité des locaux et de l'équipement scolaire ;

- l'enseignement mixte, tandis que les manuels doivent être révisés pour éliminer toute conception stéréotypée des rôles de l'homme et de la femme ;
- les possibilités d'obtention de bourses et d'allocations d'études ;
- l'accès aux programmes d'éducation permanente, y compris aux programmes d'alphabétisation pour adultes ;
- la réduction des taux d'abandon scolaire féminins ;
- les possibilités de participer activement aux sports et à l'éducation physique ;
- l'accès à l'information permettant d'assurer la santé et le bien-être des familles et notamment l'accès aux conseils de planification familiale».

## **Emploi**

### **Article 11 :**

«Des mesures doivent être prises pour éliminer la discrimination entre les sexes dans l'emploi, afin d'assurer aux femmes :

- le droit au travail ;
- les mêmes possibilités d'emploi que les hommes ;
- le libre choix de leur profession et de leur emploi, le droit à la promotion, à la stabilité de l'emploi, à toutes les prestations et conditions de travail applicables, à la formation professionnelle et au recyclage, notamment apprentissage, perfectionnement professionnel et formation permanente ;
- l'égalité de rémunération, y compris en matière de prestations, l'égalité de traitement pour un travail d'égale valeur et l'égalité de traitement dans l'évaluation de la qualité du travail ;
- le droit à la sécurité sociale ;
- le droit à la protection de la santé et à la sécurité des conditions de travail.

Afin de prévenir toute discrimination motivée par le mariage de la femme ou la maternité, les Etats parties s'engagent à :

- interdire le licenciement pour cause de grossesse, d'absence en congé de maternité ou de situation matrimoniale ;
- instituer des congés de maladie payés ou ouvrant droit à des prestations sociales comparables, avec garantie du maintien de l'emploi antérieur, des droits d'ancienneté et des avantages sociaux ;
- encourager les services sociaux, en particulier l'établissement d'un réseau de garderies, pour permettre aux parents de concilier obligations familiales et responsabilités professionnelles ;
- assurer une protection spéciale aux femmes enceintes exerçant une activité professionnelle dont il est prouvé qu'elle est nocive ;
- créer des groupes de pression d'hommes et de femmes en vue de sensibiliser les gouvernements de nos pays à ratifier les Conventions de protection des droits de l'homme».

Parmi ces instruments, nous citerons : (tableau 4)

- Le pacte international relatif aux droits économiques, sociaux et culturels (1966) ratifié par 62% des pays arabes ;
- Le pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques élaborés en 1966 et ratifié aussi par 62% des pays arabes ;
- La Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant en 1989 ratifiée par 90% des pays arabes.

(On constate que la majorité écrasante des pays arabes se préoccupent des droits de l'enfant, femme et homme de demain, et que leur attitude a évolué favorablement envers les instruments internationaux de protection des droits de l'homme en 10 ans).

- \* Donner une priorité à l'investissement dans l'éducation et la santé des ressources humaines, femmes et hommes, le capital authentique des états ;

- \* Etre au service de la démocratisation de l'enseignement supérieur en assurant les places décentes nécessaires à l'ensemble des personnes en âge scolaire et universitaire des deux sexes, et assouplir les conditions d'admission ;
- \* Introduire l'enseignement à distance ou l'université ouverte ;
- \* Encourager le travail et les recherches en équipes, ainsi que la mixité dans les établissements d'enseignement ;
- \* Augmenter les crédits alloués à l'éducation, à l'enseignement technique et à la recherche ;
- \* Diversifier des programmes spéciaux aptes au développement des facultés des femmes ;
- \* Sélectionner les enseignants, les administrateurs et les gestionnaires selon le mérite ;
- \* Exiger, évaluer et contrôler la pertinence, la qualité de l'enseignement à tous les niveaux ;
- \* Opérer une orientation professionnelle à la fin de chaque cycle d'études scolaires et universitaires ;
- \* Impliquer l'université et les institutions assimilées dans la vie de la communauté régionale, et leur donner les moyens d'être à son service ;
- \* Renforcer l'esprit civique ;
- \* Recourir aux moyens d'information (la télévision) pour des programmes ciblés sur la femme-productrice de services de développement ;
- \* Mettre à profit les documents d'orientation et les déclarations des conférences et des congrès nationaux, régionaux et internationaux des organismes nationaux, régionaux et internationaux, dont l'UNESCO ;
- \* Donner une dimension internationale aux institutions d'enseignement supérieur ;
- \* Orienter notre jeunesse arabe à se solidariser en vue du développement harmonisé de tous les pays arabes, et à collaborer avec les instances internationales messagères d'entente, d'équité, de justice sociale, et d'égalité entre les sexes ;
- \* Encourager les étudiantes et les étudiants à adhérer à des organisations, à des associations et à des mouvements luttant pour la promotion de la démocratie et du développement ;
- \* Eduquer les jeunes et les adultes à sauvegarder le patrimoine arabe et l'environnement ;
- \* Organiser des concours locaux et interarabes motivant les étudiantes à la créativité et à la productivité.

L'accès à l'enseignement supérieur doit cesser d'être l'apanage d'une élite de femmes pour élargir les possibilités de choix au plus grand nombre, favorisant leur passage de l'espace privé à l'espace public. C'est à l'intelligentsia arabe masculine et féminine, comprenant les décideurs, les gestionnaires, les apprenants et les enseignants, qu'il incombe de faire réussir cette performance de "Responsabiliser" toutes les forces de nos nations arabes : gouvernement, secteur public, secteur privé et société civile dont les syndicats, les partis politiques, les ONG et les universitaires, à l'oeuvre de promotion de la condition de la femme arabe, en vue du développement des régions arabes.

Cependant, quelles que soient les mesures prises dans ces différents domaines, le problème restera entier si les différents obstacles évoqués ne sont pas aplanis, si les attitudes, les valeurs et les stéréotypes culturels restent inchangés, et si les femmes elles-mêmes ne dépassent pas leur résignation pour lutter dans la direction de leur promotion politico-sociale.

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**Tableau 1 - Présentation des Pays et Territoires Arabes**

No.	PAYS	CAPITALE	IMPLANTATION GEOGRAPHIQUE	SUPERFICIE Km2 (1)	POPULATION (1)	Classement selon l'IDH par rapport au Monde (2)	Classement selon l'IDH par rapport au Monde Arabe (2)
1	Algérie	Alger	Afrique	2,381,741	28,581,000	75eme	10eme
2	Arabie Saoudite	Riad	Asie	2,240,000	17,608,000	63eme	7eme
3	Bahreïn	Manama	Asie	622	533,022	41eme	1er
4	Comores	Moroni	Océan Indien	2,238	653,000	131eme	16eme
5	Djibouti	Djibouti	Afrique	23,200	511,000	-	-
6	Egypte	Caire	Afrique	1,001,450	58,519,000	104eme	13eme
7	Emirats Arabes Unis	Abu-Dhabi	Asie	77,700	1,785,000	46eme	2eme
8	Irak	Bagdad	Asie	434,924	21,224,000	117eme	15eme
9	Jordanie	Amman	Asie	89,556	4,755,000	80eme	12eme
10	Koweït	Koweït City	Asie	17,818	1,698,077	50eme	3eme
11	Liban	Beyrouth	Asie	10,452	3,552,369	59eme	6eme
12	Jamahiriya Arabe Libyenne	Tripoli	Afrique	1,759,540	5,407,000	57eme	5eme
13	Maroc	Rabat	Afrique	446,500	28,260,000	115eme	14eme
14	Mauritanie	Nouakchott	Afrique	1,030,700	2,335,000	139eme	17eme
15	Oman	Masquât	Asie	212,457	1,822,000	64eme	8eme
16	Territoires Palestiniens	Gaza	Asie			-	-
17	Qatar	Doha	Asie	11,437	499,115	51eme	4eme
18	Somalie	Mogadishu	Afrique	637,657	10,173,000	-	-
19	Soudan	Khartoum	Afrique	2,505,813	28,960,000	147eme	19eme
20	Syrie	Damas	Asie	185,050	14,775,000	74eme	9eme
21	Tunisie	Tunis	Afrique	163,310	8,933,000	76eme	11eme
22	Yémen	Sanaa	Asie	527,970	13,897,000	141eme	18eme

Source: 1- Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 96.

2 - Rapport Mondial sur le développement humain 1998



**Tableau 2 - Les Femmes Parlementaires dans le Monde Arabe**

No.	PAYS	Nombre des sièges parlementaires	Nombre de Femmes Parlementaires	%	Classement par rapport aux Parlements membres de l'union interparlementaire
1	Algérie ( 2 conseils )	380	12	3.2	94
		144	8	5.6	-
4	Comores	43	-	-	105
5	Djibouti	65	-	-	105
6	Egypte	454	9	2	99
7	Emirats Arabes Unis	40	-	-	105
8	Irak	250	16	6.4	73
9	Jordanie ( 2 conseils )	80	-	-	105
		40	3	7.5	105
10	Koweït	50	-	-	105
11	Liban	128	3	2.3	98
12	Libye	76	-	-	105
13	Maroc ( 2 conseils )	325	2	0.6	104
		270	2	-	-
14	Mauritanie	79	3	3.8	88
15	Oman	-	-	-	-
16	Territoires Palestiniens	-	-	10	-
17	Qatar	-	-	-	-
18	Somalie	-	-	-	-
19	Soudan	400	21	5.3	80
20	Syrie	250	24	9.6	53
21	Tunisie	163	12	7.4	67
22	Yémen	301	2	0.7	103

Source : Union interparlementaire 15/6/1998

**Tableau 3 : Quelques Indicateurs de l'Education dans les Pays Arabes**

No.	PAYS	Enseignement Primaire				Annee Scol. Obligatoire	Enseignement Superieur											Répart. Dépenses ordinaires par niveau d'enseignement %						
		Taux Scolarisation Net					Taux d'Inscription brut				% d'Etudiantes dans chaque Domaine d'Etudes 1995						1985			1995				
		%					%				Tous Domaines	Education	Lettres	Droit & Sc. Social	Sc. Exact-Natur-Ing.-Agric.	Sciences Medicales	Indice Segregation des sexes	Pre-primaire+Prim.	Secondaire	Superieur	Pre-primaire+Prim.	Secondaire	Superieur	
		M		F			M		F															
		1985	1995	1985	1995		1985	1995	1985	1995														
1	Algérie	94	99	78	91	9	10,7	12,8	5,0	8,9	43	27	62	45	35	52	8							
2	Arabie Saoudite																							
3	Bahreïn	94	99	98	100	12	9,7		16,4		58	68	1	71	42	64	12							
4	Comores		58		84	9		0,6		0,3											36,6	35,1	17,2	
5	Djibouti	37	37	26	28	6		0,2		0,2	47	61		41			8				64,3		35,7	
6	Egypte					8	24,5	22,1	11,2	13,7	39	52	51	33	27	42	9							
7	Emirats Arabes Unis	76	84	77	82	6	4,8	4,7	9,5	14,1														
8	Irak	99		87		6	14,4		8,6									46,5	19,5	25,0				
9	Jordanie		89		89	10					46	64	65	37	35	54	12	63,7		32,0	57,5		34,4	
10	Koweït	88	65	85	65	8	15,3	22,4	17,9	28,3	62	74	70	60	43	72	10	77,1		16,7				
11	Liban					6		27,2		26,8	49	38	54	50	37	53	4							
12	Libye		98		96	9																		
13	Maroc	73	81	84	62	6	11,9	13	5,5	9,4	41	31	51	42	28	49	7	35,3	47,6	17,1	33,0	50,7	16,3	
14	Mauritanie		64		55	6		6,8		1,4	17	13	18	15	15		3	25,1	30,3	17,5	40,4	35,5	20,4	
15	Oman	70	72	63	70	8	1	4,7	0,6	4,6								50,9	32,1	15,3	47,8	45,3	5,8	
16	Ter.Palestinien: Gaza					10					37	43	38	31	38	39	5							
	Cis Jordanie										54	69	63	48	43	72	10							
17	Qatar	88	81	94	80		12,7	14,7	33,8	42,1	72	89	80	43	44									
18	Somalie	11		6		8	3,4		0,8															
19	Soudan					8	2,4		1,4															
20	Syrie	100	95	92	87	6	21,5	21,4	12,3	14,3	38	55	61	32	30	34	10	38,4	25,3	33,6				
21	Tunisie	99	98	87	95	9	6,9	14,2	4,0	11,5	44	46	58	42	28	54	9	44,0	37,0	18,2	42,6	36,8	18,8	
22	Yémen					9																		

Source : Rapport mondial sur l'education 1998. UNESCO

**Tableau 4 - Adhésion des Pays Arabes aux Instruments de Protection des Droits de l'homme**

No.	PAYS	PACTE INTERNATIONAL RELATIF AUX DROITS ECONOMIQUES, SOCIAUX ET CULTURELS 1966	PACTE INTERNATIONAL RELATIF AUX DROITS CIVILS ET POLITIQUES	CONVENTION SUR L'ELIMINATION DE TOUTES LES FORMES DE DISCRIMINATION A L'EGARD DES FEMMES 1979	CONVENTION RELATIVE AUX DROITS DE L'ENFANT 1989
1	Algérie	+	+	+	+
2	Arabie Saoudite	-	-	-	+
3	Bahreïn	-	-	+	+
4	Comores	-	-	+	+
5	Djibouti	-	-	+	-
6	Egypte	+	+	+	+
7	Emirats Arabes Unis	-	-	-	+
8	Irak	+	+	+	+
9	Jordanie	+	+	+	+
10	Koweït	+	+	+	+
11	Liban	+	+	+	+
12	Jamahiriya Arabe Libyenne	+	+	+	+
13	Maroc	+	+	+	+
14	Mauritanie	-	-	-	+
15	Oman	-	-	-	+
16	Territoire Palestinien				
17	Qatar	-	-	-	+
18	Somalie	+	+	-	-
19	Soudan	+	+	-	+
20	Syrie	+	+	-	+
21	Tunisie	+	+	+	+
22	Yémen	+	+	+	+

+ : Ratification

- : Non ratification

Source : Rapport mondial sur le développement humain 1998

## The Societal Agenda for Women in Higher Education

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While higher education is supposed to generate externality for universally benefiting the institution of society at large, it also can be an important source of creating inequalities by allocating societal power inequitably amongst individuals and groups - in terms of giving some of them access if not claim or outright share of the economic, cultural and political resources in society. This is one way how power in most societies has come to rest with the already privileged, be it the upper classes, the whites, any religious majority, and above all men within each such category. Significant changes towards any kind of equality are, therefore, impossible without a reallocation of society's resources, including power. But such reallocation is often difficult because "those (already) in control of societal power administer it in ways that work to their continuing advantage and privilege" (Bason, 1992: 345). Women being the largest underprivileged group which cuts across all other groups in the lower rungs of societal hierarchy deserve special attention when distribution of higher education resources is to be talked about.

The issues and the perspectives that emerge from UNESCO's own stocktaking on women and higher education are intended to provide this attention both exhaustively and comprehensively, and there cannot be two opinions about their primacy in all countries, particularly the developing ones (Kearney, 1998). However, in transiting from mere rhetoric to affirmative action for forging "a new partnership between men and women", and more importantly, between the privileged and the underprivileged women of different groups, the rules of the game for setting their *personal* and *public agendas* need to be articulated clearly and profoundly - whether (1) to improve women's access to (a) higher education including in science and technology, and (b) tertiary occupations; (2) to gender-sensitize the curriculum of education; or (3) to increase women's participation in decision-making (a) in the wider national polity, and (b) within the higher education system and its institutions (Gleeson, 1998; Khadria, 1998c).

In a widely diverse region like the Asia-Pacific - culturally, socio-economically and politically - where it may be difficult to deliberate through broad generalizations otherwise, this could be an issue to be discussed as common to almost all countries. I, coming from India - itself a diverse sub-continent within this region - would like to believe in its universality of relevance as well as applicability.

It is in the above context that a reference can be made to the Women's Reservation Bill for enacting a Constitutional Amendment in India to create a quota of 33% of seats in the lower house of the Indian parliament exclusively for women, which is being debated for over a year now (TOI, 1997). The debate has occasioned both demands and dismissals of claims to sub-reservation for minority groups like "other backward classes" (OBCs), Muslims and other groups, within the folds of the affirmative action aimed in favour of women as a backward class and the biggest minority of all. The rules of the game governing the relationship between higher education and women will, therefore, need to be determined by gender relations in any particular historical situation - "constructed by the entire array of hierarchical social relations in which 'woman' or 'man' participates" (Harding, 1992: 14). One cannot, therefore, meaningfully talk about *higher education and women* or *women and knowledge* without first looking into the distinct practices and their meanings which accumulate in the life of someone who is a woman at "any particular historical intersection of race, class and culture" (Harding, 1992: 14). There could be, therefore, as many relationships between women and higher education as there are cultural configurations of womanhood, and of higher education itself.

Let us look only at the following two matrices:

Matrix A:

	WHITE	BLACK
MALE	4	2
FEMALE	3	1

Matrix B:

	MAJORITY	MINORITY
MALE	4	3
FEMALE	2	1

for setting priorities in higher education - 1 the highest and 4 the lowest - and try to look at the dilemmas that we shall face while reducing the four-rank priorities to a two-rank priorities structure: P-I for the underprivileged and P-II for the privileged. Clubbing 1 and 2 as P-I, and 3 and 4 and P-II, we get two outcomes: a gender-based priority structure in Matrix B, and a non-gender based priority structure in Matrix A. However, both the structures have problems of social construction which I would not like to go into here.

To digress here, for linking the various issues of women and higher education with each other, it needs to be mentioned that a new genre of historians is bringing to bear on the lives of highly educated women the insights of several decades of feminist approaches to women's history (for example, Forbes, 1998). Class and race played roles in creating opportunities for these women, as they did for their brothers. Many highly qualified early women were in fact related to highly qualified males - either fathers or husbands in the role of mentors. Class and race opportunities thus play a determining role because poor or coloured women were as unlikely as their brothers to have relatives who were highly educated. On the other hand, the consciousness of the women who did find a place in higher education was not feminist (Weiner, 1997). In order to succeed, these women usually had to force their lives as closely as possible into life cycles designed to accommodate the lives not of women but of men in patriarchal societies. For instance, their possibilities for marriage and children were severely diminished in ways that would have never affected their brothers' lives or autonomy (Jejeebhoy, 1995).

There is much more to be learned about higher education and women's position in it by exploring the lives of these women who were pioneers on more than one count - as professionals, as women, as coloured people, and as members of the working class. With few exceptions, they have been left out of the standard histories of science, engineering, mathematics, medicine and the social sciences. Curricula reform will have to take note of this and not only correct the past biases but also see to it that such histories are made part of the compulsory curricula at various levels of education right from the bottom upwards. In India, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has not only started bringing out school level books on the lives of great Indian women but also handbooks on women's equality and empowerment through curriculum for primary and upper primary school teachers (NCERT, 1996, 1997). Apart from being relevant to the curriculum, the outcome of such efforts also throw light on the decision-making role of women as well as the state of access to higher education for girls in different countries. For example, in the 19th and 20th centuries, many important women scientists who have been active as leaders and decision-makers were also, as mentors, opening the doors of higher education for their women students.

Historical accounts of the emergence, flourishing and eventual decline of the *formal* barriers to women in higher education, particularly in the sciences have been complemented by sociological and psychological studies of informal barriers. As a result, girls and women prefer teaching, mothering, and other service and caring activities to those that are essential for careers in mathematics, science and engineering.

In India, for example, one such informal barrier of attitudes may have emanated from the parental fear of the girl - child's exposure to crime against women. If the incidence of gender-biased street crimes like eve-teasing, molestation, rape, and sexual harassment in places of study and work can be brought under control in particular societies, then women's participation in higher science, technical and professional education, i.e. those requiring the girls to be away from home both in time and distance, would be likely to increase because of a rise in what may be called their "effective access". Another step will be to have larger number of science, medical and technical colleges exclusively for girls, as for example the one which has been just announced under a new university in Delhi (HT, 1998). Such innovative and imaginative practices will perhaps also open up fresh discourses on other problems of higher education like that of stemming the brain drain (Khadria, 1990b, 1991, 1997, 1998a, 1998e).

What is also important is to take note of the strong backward linkages of women's participation in higher education to lower levels of education - primary and secondary - in at least two ways: (a) as students' eligibility to enter higher education and (b) as school teachers' ability to prepare school students for colleges and universities. In developing countries this is parallel to the fact that in developed countries "Nobel prizes could not be won without the workforce of women as lab technicians and post-doctoral lab assistants, not to mention data analysts and computer programmers" (Harding, 1991: 26).

The access question in higher education should not be looked at in complete isolation from the gender dimension of its curriculum. This is because, if, for example, "science education for girls" means the same kinds of educational opportunities and supportive environments available to their male kin, the implication is that "boys' science education" is ideal. Here a gender-sensitive curriculum may have far-reaching implications for usages of science in society, e.g. the military use of science, or the domestic use of technology. The question that emerges here is whether women should want to become just like men in science? If so, then to which men in science should women want to be equal? Presumably the answer is: "not underpaid and exploited lab technicians, or men in racial minorities who have also suffered exclusion and devaluation" (Harding, 1991: 33).

We thus realize how the exploration of issues that at first appear to be merely conventional or only reformist can move our perspective of higher education and women toward far more radical issues. The sheer documentation of discrimination against women in the social structure of higher education in general and science in particular draws attention to the mystifying universalism claim of externality mentioned earlier at the beginning of this note. The social identity of a researcher or higher education participant is considered irrelevant to its social value (Bartlett, 1997). But the history and experience of vigorous individual, institutional and international donor agency attempts towards privatization or withdrawal of the state from higher education, and the impact of this in further excluding women as well as the other marginalized groups of society from higher education, and thereby from tertiary jobs as well, show that claims to universalism of externality of higher education are in fact intended to apply only within the dominant gender, classes, races and cultures (Khadria, 1989, 1990, 1998).

Even when access and curriculum are considered or assumed to have become favourable to women's participation over time, the worrying issue should not only be one of their numbers in higher education and higher jobs. The worry instead should be why there are so few women directing the agenda of higher education - and they too, why as *equal to men* and not *different from men*.

I may now go back from the issues and perspectives to the task of setting the rules of the game that was mentioned in the beginning of this note. Various policies and strategies of action have been mentioned and discussed in the programmes of affirmative action favouring women, viz. 'special

recruitment', 'tiebreaking', 'handicapping', 'lexical assessment', and 'numerical goal, or 'quotas' (Sumner, 1987). It is usually the last one i.e. quotas which has drawn the most of attention as well as the most of justification in both the academic literature and the popular movements. I would, however, like to think aloud that the rationality of such affirmative action will be made stronger rather than weaker when quotas are based on a two-fold distinction between the personal and public interests in societal agenda in place of being one omnibus public-interest proposition in it. I, therefore, suggest:

1. that the decision-making role of women in higher education as also in the larger polity around needs to be guarded and nurtured for all women so that women can make themselves heard as a public voice of judgement - heard by both men and women;

2. that expansion of gender dimension in educational curriculum - not only in higher education but all levels, and particularly in science and technology curriculum - should be meant for the public domain of judgement, of both men and women alike.

In contrast to these, but as complements, the rules of the game may be, or rather should be, set in the personal domain for dealing with:

3. access of women to higher education. Here, although positive discrimination in their favour is called for in general, emancipation of the subaltern women requires a priority over public protection of the elite women's interests. This, therefore, should be based on the private domain of personal interests rather than public domain of universalism; and

4. access to tertiary employment after higher education should also be discriminatingly based on ranking of personal interests in public judgements, and therefore meant to favour the downtrodden women over the elite.

The rationality of the conflict between personal interests of two different groups of individuals on the one hand, or between personal interest and public judgement of a given group or individual may not be difficult to establish (Majumdar, 1980). But what may emerge to be easier is minimizing the conflict itself - if the aims and objectives underlying the issues and perspectives brought forth in this debate on women and higher education are not lost forgotten.

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## **Women, Higher Education and Development**

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### **I. Introduction**

The need to increase access/participation rates for Women in Higher Education has been highlighted for decades. For sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), women did not enter universities until the 1940s. For example, Makerere University College, the only higher education institution for Eastern and Southern Africa up to the late 1960s, only welcomed women in 1945. The pace was slow. Starting from 6 women students then, rising to 30 in 1965, the number touched the 100 mark only in the 1970s.

Although in the 1990s, we can state that more women are entering universities as undergraduate and graduate students, as lecturers, academic and administrative staff, the percentages remain low in this region. Increased numbers can be explained by wider access at basic and secondary levels of education. Many SSA countries have Universal Primary Education (UPE) programmes. In some countries, notably Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, girls outnumber boys at the secondary level. Establishment of more state universities, encouragement of private institutions as well as admitting privately sponsored students into state-funded universities have all provided more opportunities. In some countries, such as Uganda, an enabling environment, deriving from wide ranging affirmative action programmes in favour of women is a reinforcing factor.

Recent studies have clarified the changing nature of the obstacles. Positive global changes have also been influential in highlighting these obstacles, but also in making a contribution towards attitudinal and policy changes.

The paper is structured within the framework of the guidelines provided by UNESCO.

### **II. Access/Participation at Undergraduate Level**

#### **(i) Emerging issues as a result of increased access/participation necessitate different types of support systems.**

- The new phenomenon of payment for higher education. Previously the state met all charges. Many qualified female students have had to join non-degree awarding colleges (still state-funded) because of their inability to pay. The pool of potential female students is thus reduced, in comparison with male students who normally outnumber the former at secondary school level. Some women students end up getting married as they "hang around" waiting to see what to do.

For example, over 15,000 qualified candidates applied for entry into Makerere University for the 1998/99 year. Only 2000 could secure state funding.

- Non-residence policy. Universities can no longer house and feed all students, even those who are state-sponsored. However, residential areas within the vicinity of these institutions are only rising to the challenge of providing commercial hostels/homes where students can live. High transport charges, sexual harassment, property thefts in the cheaper sectors, inadequate study facilities - all pose more obstacles. Some young women are sometimes trapped into cohabitation and/or early marriages, which lead to poor performance.

- Attractions of modern life style. Television, music systems, fashionable garments and other related urban attractions are a temptation to young female students. They use all sorts of methods to earn money, ranging from modelling in fashion shows and magazines, to practising prostitution. All these affect their performance and academic excellence is devalued.
- Lack of a policy to deal with discrimination and acts of exclusion. This affects sexual relationships between female and male students and between female students and male staff members. Few universities in the region have a clear policy to combat sexual abuse and harassment. Several students have had to change courses because of this. Many endure the situation and remain mentally and psychologically unattached to higher education institutions.
- Increased numbers also require a support system to ensure that students cultivate an interest in academic careers and further studies. Special programmes to achieve this have yet to gain ground.
- Imbalances in access/participation in various disciplines/professions. This is still a challenge in SSA. The African Regional Study on Female Education in Mathematics and Science in Africa (FEMSA, 1997) confirmed that little has changed, even where females make up to 1/3 of the student population. The example of Makerere University admissions 1997/98 is attached as Appendix I .

(ii) Institutional Good Practice for Gender Equity in Higher Education

Firstly, there are **special programmes to admit more women into universities**. These are not wholly acceptable but have made a big difference.

The bonus scheme which allows all eligible female entrants at Makerere University to earn an additional 1.5 points is periodically praised or criticized in the press. It also has weaknesses in application. There are imbalances within the female student group - urban/rural, elite/mass schools, poor/rich parents. How can such a scheme target those who need it and not those who are already at an advantage? New methods are required to target the really needy group. However, this scheme has enabled the percentage of women undergraduates to rise from 17-20% to 35% which is a big increase in seven years.

Second is the **Women's/Gender Studies Strategy**. It has been demonstrated that the establishment of Gender and Women's Studies Units or Departments provides a framework within which gender-related or women-specific issues can be addressed at higher education level. The **Women and Gender Studies Department (WGSD)** at Makerere University is a case in point.

The WGSD was established in 1991. It started with running a Master's programme (MA in Gender Studies) and over 60 men and women have already graduated. They come from various disciplines - social sciences, physical sciences, agriculture, human medicine, law, and the wider humanities. They work in the public and private sector in varying capacities.

An undergraduate subject of Gender and Development has already been approved and just about to start. Pioneer students are working on Ph.D research proposals.

The WGSD is starting to make important inroads through **gender mainstreaming** within the University. Illustrations include:

- Staff teaching in other faculties in courses that have incorporated gender - e.g. nursing, agriculture and history.
- Some departments have learned from WGSD and devised own gender courses e.g. political sciences and sociology.

- WGSD staff have been asked to work with faculties (by the faculties themselves) to identify gender gaps in their curricula (e.g. agriculture).
- Public lectures are periodically held at the university e.g. on understanding the application of the Gender Empowerment Index established by the UNDP in its Human Development Reports.
- Lunchtime seminars within the faculty focusing on important gender issues. Sometimes this is attended by over 100 staff and students from various disciplines.
- University-wide multi-disciplinary Research Awards. These are about to take off under funding from SAREC (Swedish Research Agency for Cooperation with Developing Countries). This scheme will be coordinated by the department but any staff is eligible to apply so long as the project has a gender focus.
- Women's Studies Students' Association - debates on topical issues are held and varied groups of students and staff participate.
- Gender Awareness Seminars for the university's top management. A series of workshops targeting this cadre have stated (top central administrators, deans, directors). More series are planned for heads of department.

From the dividends so far gained, this promises to be a vital channel for addressing women's (and men's) issues at university level. Examples:

- A far-reaching memorandum to the University Council and Senate to appoint the WGSD as the lead agency to facilitate the process of mainstreaming gender has been realized. Focus will be on curriculum, research and method of delivery, and related issues.
- Senate is due to nominate a committee to work on the curriculum.
- Some faculties such as Education, Adult and Continuing Education have been given special roles.
- Extra - curricular activities have been highlighted. These are very important, as they are aimed at women students in particular, to encourage academic excellence. Steps to be taken include:
- Banning beauty contests on campus.
- Providing incentives such as prizes for academic excellence. (Dean's and Vice-Chancellor's prizes).
- Social guidance - WGSD has been officially given a slot in the orientation week for new students.
- Language use: there is clear evidence of gender-sensitive language in minute records, and general expression, at least by those who have been part of the awareness process.
- Staff development - efforts are made by the management to identify certain women to encourage them to undertake further studies.
- Appointments to committees and other university bodies - women are deliberately appointed/nominated, and at times, offered chair positions.

#### WGSD Outreach Programme:

This helps to sell the university to the wider society; to meet demands of non-traditional students; to attract men and women development practitioners to acquire and apply gender analysis skills; and to promote gender/women's studies as a field of study.

The programme has several levels:

- Gender Training for Development Practice for Eastern and Southern Africa. Over 70 people in the region have already attended such courses. They spend 4 weeks in intensive training, and write action plans related to their own work. They return after 6 months for another 2 weeks for a Gender Course of Training of Trainers.
- Evening programmes (of twenty hours' duration) offered in various fields depending on demand e.g. gender and the law, management, policy analysis etc. Over 300 people have benefited from these. As a result of this exposure several have taken up Master's courses.
- Collaboration with government mechanisms and women's NGOs is strong. This ranges from facilitation to joint ventures, in research, civic education, and publications.
- WGSD carries out consultancies especially in gender training, and evaluation of projects. Clients range from local groups to international NGOs and UN agencies.

The department has helped to legitimize gender and women's studies as a field of study, in the university and within the region.

The process of changing the whole university outlook has been initiated. One would like to note, however, that there is an enabling environment at state level. In the political arena, women enjoy special seats at parliament and form a mandatory 33 % of local council membership.

### **III. Women Graduates and Decision-making**

#### **(i) Barriers at graduate student level**

- A lot of interest is being shown by women in postgraduate work, despite the fact that they have to seek funding themselves. The major obstacle is role conflict between domestic life and career. Cultural norms/practice require that after graduation a woman should get married and have children. Many graduate students are mothers and/or housewives. The "African" experience means that it is virtually a taboo for men to assist in major domestic chores. Students are overloaded by work and seen to neglect their "duties" through further studies. Men respond negatively and some women students at Makerere University have had to abandon their courses mainly because of unsympathetic and uncooperative spouses.
- Weakness in the institutional infrastructure. No mechanism is available to identify potential women academicians and give them the required support.

In particular, such students do not have a formal network through which they can provide peer support.

#### **(ii) At Decision - making level**

- The main issue is the persistent, non-embracing, non-encompassing organizational culture. Examples include the setting up of social clubs. Women may join but should not make it a habit. Soon, questions like "how is your spouse" begin because men are not asked.
- Women constitute small numbers -the majority are at the bottom and very few go up the ladder to the top. There are very few women vice chancellors/rectors/registrars/ deans (See Appendix 2)
- Important positions in academic leadership. Deans/directors/heads are electable but women are out-numbered and in many cases lack the necessary exposure and/or willingness to face the challenge.

- Personnel policy is either gender-neutral, or gender-blind and does not take into account the effect of the domestic situation (e.g. the need for flexible training arrangements, research awards etc).

(iii) Higher Education and Preparation of Women for Decision-Making

The following are some suggested interventions:

- encourage women undergraduate students to take leadership roles e.g. at students' union, halls of residence and within academic departments;
- allocate roles that provide public exposure to women staff, e.g. officiating at public functions, chairing meetings, heading committees at different levels;
- ensure women utilize existing training opportunities and are given encouragement. They should get special consideration whenever awards are being made so long as this does not appear to lower standards. The Makerere University Staff Development Programme is already doing this;
- provide gender awareness training for men and women decision-makers so that they can better appreciate the barriers for women and work towards redress;
- include women academics and administrators on university delegations to different countries /institutions;
- university authorities should encourage political decision-makers to appoint university-based women to public boards/agencies.

(iv) Effect of the Value of Competence over Hierarchy

So long as the ground is level, there is no problem. But this is not the case since women are still fewer in numbers. In their reproductive period, women are also overworked and this does not always allow for fair competition. The competence variable is therefore not likely to make a positive difference. Many of those already in the university service meet the minimum requirements and only require a support system. Positive Discrimination of some sort is still required.

- Mentoring in the SSA has not been fully utilized. It is at the discretion of individuals. Many are focusing on their own career advancement. It is possible to provide systematic mentoring e.g. by officially sanctioning the policy whereby junior staff are attached to senior officers. In each case, an action plan of what is to be achieved annually could be agreed (published paper, attendance at a conference etc.) Group effort such as joint research, joint presentation of papers etc, can also strengthen the mentoring policy.
- The likely impact of decision-making where both men and women participate. This means tapping the talents of both genders and promoting a feeling of "ownership" by women in higher education as opposed to a context where decisions are taken by men only.

This could have positive effects on women at lower levels because many decisions in the higher education sector influence lower educational levels.

#### **IV. Cultural Barriers Affecting Women, Higher Education and Development**

(i) The fact that women in SSA have less chances of entering higher education has been documented. Societal beliefs and expectations lead to devaluation of women's education, especially at

the advanced level. Women are not seen as full members of their family due to the male child preference.

The value attached to the institution of marriage affects parents as well as girls and women, even in adult life. Some first-class graduate students give up studies in preference for marriage.

Gender awareness and effective use of role models and policy interventions can change this trend. Initial change has already taken place in all countries of the SSA region. Many parents want their daughters to enter higher education and the willingness to pay tuition fees is a clear indicator of this.

(ii) Women who have higher education qualifications can tackle developmental problems in several ways:

- through research and publications, thus providing evidence and suggesting solutions to developmental problems;
- through advocacy work, utilizing contacts, connections and networks (e.g. with legislators and policy makers). An example is the link between the Women and Gender Studies Department at Makerere University and the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in Uganda on budgeting issues;
- through combining theory and practical work and operating within the NGO and the wider civil society sectors. This has been achieved in many instances at national levels by highly qualified women. Various legal-oriented associations illustrate this - FIDA in various SSA countries, WILDAF etc;
- through teaching at different levels. This provides the opportunities to influence students who will, in future, serve as change agents in various areas in society.

(iii) Targeting Cultural Aspects of Development through:

• **Research**

- Targeted research e.g. gathering, analyzing, and disseminating society's views and expectations about women through proverbs, folk/lore songs, poetry etc.
- Research findings feed into policy-making. This has been done with regard to girls' education at basic level. When universal primary education (UPE) was introduced in Uganda, two of the four children per family identified for free education had to be girls. Research on cultural factors that hinder the advancement of women fed into the reform of the law on Domestic Relations in Uganda. INSSTEP (the In-Service Secondary School Teacher Education Project) is also utilizing research findings to tackle specific female constraints at their level.

• **Training**

- Gender training changes attitudes: many Permanent Secretaries in Uganda trained by the Ministry of Gender have changed working habits and institutional policies and provide different solutions as a result.
- University Managers who attend a gender training workshop are more conscious of the need to avoid cultural biases in scholarship awards, appointments to committees, as well as in the use of language.
- Training women is likely to result in their positive self image as they are more able and/or interested to fight discrimination and to chart their life strategies.

- Where Gender/Women Studies, Departments or Units exist, input has been made through training students and staff as well as by implementing out-reach programmes.

## **V. Strategies for the New Millennium**

### (i) At National Level

- Re-assessment of schemes that currently aim at increasing female numbers in higher education is due. There is need for new approaches in order to reach the right target e.g. women in science, mathematics and engineering or increasing enrolments of both rural and urban women.
- Legislation will be important especially at institutional level, e.g. a policy to combat discrimination and exclusion.
- Mentoring should be formalized at institutional level. Junior lecturers to be attached to senior colleagues and specific objectives targeted.
- A policy to draw more women into Staff Development programmes must be established.
- Providing the missing link between higher education and the lower levels in the system is essential. Girls perform relatively well at lower levels but things change in higher education. They lose their motivation to be leaders and so strategies to maintain this are vital.

### (ii) At Regional and International Level

Many regional innovations in higher education could be strengthened by incorporating women's concerns:

- Exchange of staff/student programmes. The UNITWIN/UNESCO, Chairs Programme is an example as short-term attachments are profitable.
- Regional Conferences and other fora. For example, a conference on Gender in Eastern and Southern Africa was held in 1992 in Kampala. As a result of this, several projects have been carried out within the region.
- Existing gender networks such as FAWE and AAWORD need to be strengthened.
- For SSA, it is important that funding bodies sponsor women for advanced studies, especially in non-traditional fields.
- Sponsorship of documentation/publication programmes should be strengthened. These would give the support required for women academicians to be promoted.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The cultural context at higher education is clearly different from that of schooling at lower levels. Women teachers work comfortably at these lower levels. They dwindle in numbers at the top of the secondary school echelon and almost disappear in higher education itself. Girls perform very well at the school level. For example, in the past two years, girls have been at the top of the list in Uganda's examinations at primary, ordinary secondary and advanced secondary levels. Once they reach university, however, the excellent performance is lost. Those who enter with 3 to 4 A grades end up sitting supplementary examinations and leave with average or below average degrees. Those who perform very well do not necessarily take up academic work. Recently, at Makerere University, the



only first-class student to graduate Bachelor of Statistics decided to marry well rather than pursue a Master's degree, despite the availability of full sponsorship.

The conclusion, therefore, is that there is need to change the culture prevailing in higher education institutions so that women can "belong" there. This includes change in the organizational culture - those intangible 'things' that exclude one, without this being stating or put in writing. The culture can change through deliberate action. The issue is therefore to provide an appropriate transition to link the secondary and higher education sectors. The preparation must take place at the secondary level through, for instance, an Empowerment Scheme for girls at secondary level.

All things considered, advocacy and lobbying are constant requirements. Legislation alone cannot tap all potential women vice-chancellors and rectors. Again, efforts cannot just start at the higher education level. This is why the Makerere Women's and Gender Studies motto: *Empower Africa, keep Girls in School* is most pertinent.

## Appendix I

### Undergraduate Admission Figures (Sample Courses) at Makerere University (1997/98)

<b>Course</b>	<b>Percentage of Women (%)</b>
Civil Engineering	14
Electrical Engineering	36
Mechanical Engineering	17
Human Medicine	44
Veterinary Medicine	1
Law	54
Social Work/Social Administration	73
Education	52
Social Sciences	45
Arts	59
Bachelor of Sciences	34

Source: Admission Records: Makerere University.

### Appendix 2: MANAGEMENT AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

	Women as Percentage of Total %
Staff Cadre	
Academic	19
Administrative (general)	39
Heads of Departments	12
Deans/Directors	1
Professors	1
Council Membership	35
Appointments Board Membership	2
Senate	12

Source: Makerere University Personnel Records September, 1998

## A Workable Strategy

*Address by:* Dr Ralitsa Muharska  
St Kliment Ohridski University  
Sofia  
Bulgaria

One would say that improving the present situation of women in higher education is one of those issues that clearly needs immediate action on the part of the entire academic establishment. But, in reality, the people who are most likely to actually do something about it are, in my opinion, those involved with the functioning of centres and departments for Women's and Gender Studies. These academically based entities serve as an important gender-sensitizing force in their immediate surrounding communities, as well as in their societies. Certainly, this is the case for societies outside "the West" where gender sensitivity is practically unknown.

For such centres and departments, the adequate representation of women in both the student and academic bodies, as well as the defense of their interests, is not only a matter of political concern but also an issue of professional interest. Thus it has a dual motivation which should not be underestimated. It is from those who are most involved and motivated that initiatives and action can be expected - at least, they can be relied on to never let the university leadership forget or close their eyes to problems of gender equity. Yet, all too often, the positions of such centres is academically marginal - even in countries with decades of tradition in both gender studies and democratic pluralism. These are several reasons for this, most of which are political. Despite these facts, what I think these centres need most - and fortunately get in many instances - are powerful networks of support on the international level.

By way of example, I should like to share my experience in setting up such a centre and keeping it afloat during the last seven years. This experience, to my best knowledge, is rather typical of what has been happening lately in many parts of the world - the so called countries in transition, places as diverse as the former Soviet republics of Central Asia, South Africa, Haiti, the Balkans, Eastern and Central Europe. Therefore, they could be considered both representative and indicative of current trends which are important.

Before 1990, there was, of course, nothing like these centres in these parts of the world. So everything had to start from scratch and rely on little expertise, practically no funding, but a lot of enthusiasm. In fact, these centres were finally set up precisely because it became necessary to overcome the conservatism and resistance of the academic establishment. This was the case at Sofia University in Bulgaria (as well as in all neighbouring countries) since NGOs, which were rather loosely affiliated to the university, gave these centres independence, helped them with the problem of fund raising in a foundering economy, and promoted their academic credibility. It also made them, in a natural way, part of the restored - or, newly emerging - democracy after years of totalitarianism during which the women's movement in the respective countries, had done little to promote or improve gender awareness. In fact, communism had declared women's equality on paper but the reality was quite different. Women themselves were tired of that hypocrisy and their double burden.

Thus, without the support (financial, methodological and simply human) from already existing institutions of this type which were mainly in the West, as well as international organizations (the IFUW in our case), and foundations, both governmental and private, creating these centres for Gender Studies would have been impossible. As of 1998, there are such centres or departments in over 30 countries and in probably at least twice as many universities where Gender Studies had been unheard of until a few years ago.

As a result, it will be more difficult for leaders (academic or in other areas) in these contexts to disregard problems of gender equity in academia or in society at large. In my opinion, what really

empowers these centres is the fact that they are linked together in a recently established network (thanks to the Open Society Fund). Thus, experience can be shared - and I, for one, can testify how necessary this is when you are at first base wondering which way to go - efforts can be well directed and efficiency significantly increased.

And this is where I see the important role of international structures, particularly those in the UN system - namely, to establish and support such networks on a global scale, and not just at the regional level. In my view, this could be a worthwhile and workable UNESCO strategy for future action to further enhance gender equality in higher education. It seems to be in keeping with the general goals and policies adopted by this organization, and one could hardly overemphasize its positive impact, especially since it need not be very costly.

## **Femmes, enseignement supérieur et émancipation : réflexions sur une étude de cas brésilien.**

*Intervention de :* Prof. Maria Inácia D'Ávila Neto,  
Directeur, Institut de Psychologie,  
Université Fédérale de Rio de Janeiro,  
Brésil

Le titre de la présentation suppose davantage un débat qu'une constatation. Il est certain que les femmes doivent pouvoir bénéficier d'un accès favorisé à l'éducation, enseignement supérieur y compris, pour avoir plus d'opportunités dans le monde du travail et une voix plus forte dans la société. L'émancipation des femmes passe sans doute par l'éducation qui doit être au même niveau que la meilleure éducation que l'on puisse donner aux hommes, si nous souhaitons une société plus juste, plus équitable, plus équilibrée en ce qui concerne les rapports hommes-femmes. Dans un pays comme le nôtre où seulement 11 % de la population, sur un total de 150 millions d'habitants, accède au niveau supérieur d'études (selon les statistiques les plus optimistes), avoir une majorité de femmes dans l'enseignement supérieur peut apparaître comme une victoire vers l'acquisition, par les femmes, de plus de responsabilités et, par là même, d'un rôle plus décisif dans la société. Cependant, il existe encore une sorte de dichotomie entre professions dites féminines – secteur des sciences humaines, métiers d'infirmières, d'assistantes sociales - et professions dites masculines - génie, chimie, sciences dites dures. Cette dichotomie correspond presque toujours à des niveaux de salaires plus bas pour les professions dites féminines tandis que les professions dites masculines profitent des meilleurs revenus.

Les données relatives aux femmes occupant des postes dans la hiérarchie politique du pays – environ 4% des membres du parlement sont des femmes – sont plutôt faibles pour un pays où les femmes accèdent en majorité au niveau supérieur d'études. Il n'y a donc pas de ligne directe entre l'enseignement supérieur et l'accès à des postes à haute responsabilité pour les femmes. Certaines questions de base subsistent encore. Sans être naïves pour le comprendre, les femmes brésiliennes supportent encore une attitude issue d'un monde patriarcal ancré dans une colonisation ibérique, avec un double modèle pour les femmes : la vierge (et tous ses vertus) et la mondaine (et tous ses péchés). Ce double modèle subsiste d'autant plus que nous avons en même temps une dissynchronie des mœurs et des habitudes, qui relèvent à la fois de l'archaïque et du moderne. En un mot, les femmes dans notre société ont été pourvues d'un pouvoir mystique qui s'est accru au détriment d'un pouvoir politique presque nul. La question à poser est la suivante : quelle éducation - de l'éducation de base à l'enseignement supérieur - faut-il pour surmonter les préjugés vis-à-vis des femmes actives, des femmes politiques, etc.? De quelle manière pourrions-nous permettre aux femmes d'accéder à un marché du travail où certaines fonctions et/ou professions restent masculines, surtout quand elles peuvent donner aux femmes le degré de responsabilité nécessaire à un rôle accru dans la société?

Notre contribution à ce débat sera de montrer un vidéogramme tourné avec des leaders féminins auprès des communautés d'une municipalité autour de Rio de Janeiro, l'une des villes les plus grandes et les plus cosmopolites de l'Amérique Latine. La municipalité choisie compte environ 300.000 habitants. D'après des études internationales, elle est considérée comme l'une des régions les plus violentes au monde, dans le domaine de la violence urbaine. Les femmes interviewées sont, d'une part, deux leaders n'ayant pu accéder au niveau des études supérieures et, d'autre part, une troisième ayant surmonté les barrières de classe, sexe et ethnies, toujours superposées chez nous, pour atteindre un niveau plus élevé en obtenant un diplôme universitaire. Ces femmes ont des visions tout à fait semblables des possibilités de l'éducation, y compris de l'enseignement supérieur. Elles parlent des mêmes défis, des mêmes obstacles et se heurtent non seulement aux barrières de classe ou d'ethnies, mais aussi aux barrières de sexe dans une société où le travail - encore invisible - des femmes continue à être le double indispensable d'un revenu familial faible vis à vis des besoins quotidiens, en plus du « mandat divin » des tâches domestiques du foyer et de la maternité.

Nous sommes en train d'organiser dans notre chaire à l'université, avec les leaders, un entraînement sur les différents problèmes qui touchent ces questions-là, tout en essayant de nous approcher d'un enseignement qui puisse effectivement permettre une véritable émancipation des

femmes. Il y a eu une demande croissante de la part des leaders féminins pour la connaissance de leurs droits civils, en ce qui concerne la santé, l'éducation, le travail. Nos premiers rapports, y compris ce vidéogramme, nous amènent à réfléchir sur les relations entre enseignement supérieur et émancipation des femmes.

Nous avons bien compris que l'émancipation des femmes est beaucoup plus complexe qu'il n'y paraît : il s'agit de comprendre comment nous devons construire la citoyenneté pour faire apprendre non simplement le contenu des lois mais surtout les droits de chacun et de chacune, non pas dans un monde d'une égalité rhétorique entre hommes et femmes, mais dans un monde réel, sans dichotomies entre professions, et où le travail domestique/manuel/privé n'est pas un antagonisme insurmontable au travail public/intellectuel. L'équation pourra être plus complète si on ajoute la construction de la citoyenneté comme une cible à atteindre dans l'éducation des femmes à un niveau supérieur d'études qui les mènera à jouer un rôle plus important dans les processus décisionnels qui guident la société. Il s'agit, tout au moins, de la leçon que l'on peut tirer de notre étude de cas, dans un pays en route, comme le nôtre.

## **African Women in Higher Education: Issues, Barriers and Strategies**

*Published by:* Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)  
Nairobi  
Kenya

### **1. INTRODUCTION - BARRIERS**

**“The most urgent priority is to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for girls and women, and remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation”.**

*Article 33. World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand*

The discussion paper prepared for the thematic debate states that "much of the emphasis of this World Conference on Higher Education is to look at how our higher education institutions should adjust in order to function effectively" (Phillip Hughes 1998). FAWE, therefore, sees this conference and the accompanying discussions, decisions and follow-up as a tremendous opportunity to look honestly and clearly at the challenges confronting higher education. We are particularly encouraged by the call included in the above referenced paper "for proper account to be taken of criteria of equity and quality - not merely criteria of cost effectiveness" which we believe speaks directly to FAWE's concerns.

Despite a series of international declarations (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Convention against Discrimination in Education; the World Declaration on Education for All) that put equity at the core of educational provision, we must still acknowledge that in Africa at least the tertiary level has not seen much improvement over the past twenty or thirty years in the level of female representation. In fact, there have been cases where the situation has worsened despite improvements in female enrolment ratios lower down the educational level. Saint (1992) points to the fact that rising female student enrolments have not been mirrored by rises in the number of female faculty and administrators. It is frequently argued that the low proportion of female students at tertiary level is a direct result of the low enrolments at the primary and secondary levels. Similarly, that the low proportion of tertiary level administrators and teachers that are female is a natural outcome of the small numbers of women reaching that level of education. However, we suggest that this is only a partial answer and perhaps not the most important to the question of low female representation among the teaching and administrative cadres of tertiary education.

Despite the recent advancements in female enrolment, Africa still has the lowest overall levels enrolled in tertiary education and the lowest proportion female enrolment at tertiary level (World Bank 1994). This unfortunate characteristic of our education systems, has a number of untoward impacts particularly as we know that investments in higher education contribute to economic growth. These include an insufficient or inappropriate mix of skilled labour and an extraordinarily high proportion of aid being used for technical assistance.

Over the past 20 years tertiary education has experienced tremendous growth in sub-Saharan Africa. The most recent data (1994) indicate that overall enrolment has more than tripled with the gross enrolment ratio rising from 1.6% in 1980 to 3.6%. The rise in female enrolment and gross enrolment ratios has been greater than the overall rise with a result that the global relationship between male and female enrolment is now 2:1 rather 3.5:1 as it was in 1980 (UNESCO 1996).

As in many other areas of education in Africa, the discussion is somewhat hampered by the paucity of recent, reliable data. However, the situation with respect to student enrolment in higher education and the proportion of instructors at the tertiary level who are female is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Gross Enrolment Ratios and % Female among Instructors, Selected Countries, Most Recent Year**

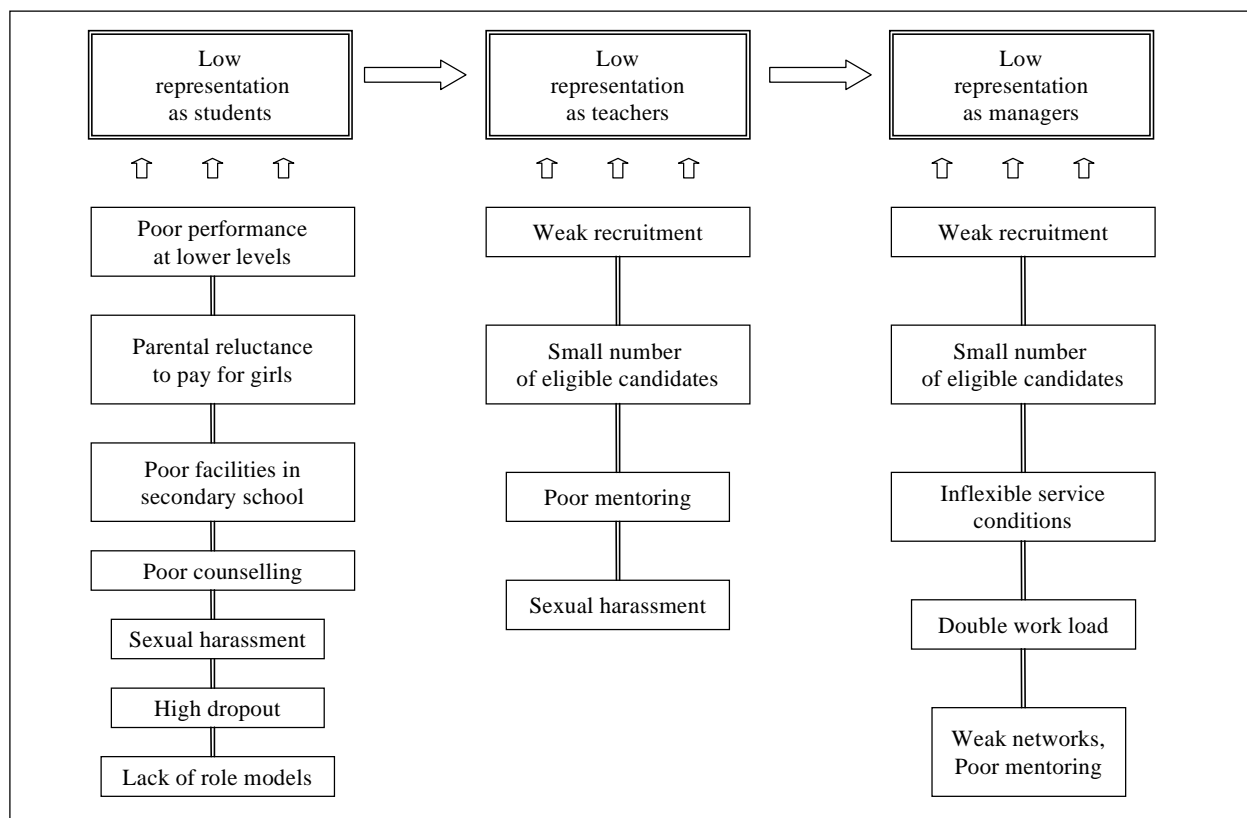
COUNTRY	GER, Tertiary Level		Year	%F Instructors, all Tertiary Institutions	Year
	Male	Female			
Benin	4.0	0.8	1993		
Burkina Faso	1.6	0.5	1993		
Burundi	1.2	0.4	1992	11	92/93
Central African Rep.	2.9	0.6	1991	8	85/86
Chad				8	84/85
Côte d'Ivoire				8	92/93
Equatorial Guinea				12	90/91
Eritrea	1.7	0.3	1994		
Ethiopia				5	91/92
Gambia	2.1	1.2	1992	23	94/95
Madagascar				27	90/91
Malawi	1.1	0.5	1993		
Mauritius				24	91/92
Morocco	11.6	8.4	1994		
Mozambique				20	93/94
Namibia	6.4	10.1	1994	50	1991
Niger				11	91/92
Rwanda				5	89/90
Senegal				13	91/92
South Africa	16.6	15.2	1994	37	1994
Sudan				16	90/91
Swaziland				40	91/92
Togo	5.4	0.8	1994		
Tunisia	13.4	10.6	1994	26	94/95
Uganda	1.9	0.8	1993	14	93/94

Source: UNESCO, 1997 (Tables 3.2 and 3.10).

With data from only thirteen countries on gross enrolment ratios, the table can only be illustrative. The overall levels of enrolment are low, well below the levels considered necessary in the modern technological world. Only five countries have male GERs above 5% (Namibia, South Africa, Tunisia, Togo, and Morocco). In all the countries except Namibia the female GERs are lower than those of males. The difference in gross enrolment ratios varies greatly, with South Africa being close to parity while Togo and Benin have female ratios one-ninth those of males.

The proportion of women in the higher education teaching force in these countries also ranges widely from 5% in Rwanda and Ethiopia to 50% in Namibia. Data on women in management at the tertiary level was not available.





The reasons for women's low representation are myriad and complex. Figure 1 attempts to summarize the key factors. Undoubtedly a certain proportion of the poor representation is a direct reflection of the wider social and economic factors that result in women's lowered participation in most areas. However, the under-representation is more severe at the university level than at other levels of education and as the Gender Dimension Task Force of the University of Dar es Salaam notes, the university cannot ignore its responsibility to address issues of inequity, even if they do not directly cause them (Besha 1997).

The causation is nested; a woman cannot become a vice chancellor if she has not had the opportunity to enter and complete university, to be a teacher and then enter administration. Girls' poorer chances for entering university result from a generally poorer standard of performance in school, which is in turn caused by subject choice, patterns of parental investment, domestic work load, lower teacher expectations and negative female stereotypes in textbooks (Hyde 1993). For the few that are able to make it to the university, there can be another set of hurdles to overcome. These can include sexual harassment from lecturers, fellow students and staff that, when it happens, can make the university environment a traumatic one for female students.

The transition from student to lecturer also sees a great deal of slippage. Although it is not a well-researched area, there is anecdotal evidence of women either turning down offers to join the faculty or of offers not being proffered in circumstances when they ordinarily would have been. For example, when a tradition exists that the top-performing students are invited to become assistant lecturers, somehow when this student is female, the offer never gets made (Besha 1997). Even those women who do join the teaching staff find that they do not have access to the informal networks through which much of the knowledge is passed on about how to progress within institutions like universities. Further, many women also find their priorities split between their families and the workplace due to the heavy domestic responsibilities they continue to bear, particularly if they are married with young children. This tends not only to lower their productivity during certain periods of their life, but also means they are not available for after hours activities during which connections are made and alliances built up.

This paper will be making the case for women in higher education by first detailing why it is important that females should be better represented in all areas and FAWE's strategy for promoting such participation. The paper goes on to discuss five areas - access, participation, pedagogy, administration and management and networking - that are considered crucial points of intervention to maximize women's representation in higher education. Several case studies are presented of actions and interventions undertaken by various institutions on the continent to support women on campus.

## 2. THE CASE FOR WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**“Adequate representation of national constituencies within student populations is desirable for the long run political stability of culturally diverse nations; particularly as they move towards more pluralistic political systems”.**

*Saint 1992, p xiv.*

As a membership organization made up of female ministers of education, vice chancellors and other prominent women educators, the Forum for African Women Educationalists sees women's full participation in higher education as a key building block in its drive to bolster the educational status of women in Africa. Although, the educational disparities between boys and girls show up long before entrance to a tertiary institution, the Forum is convinced that a higher profile for women in higher education will help transform the educational system at all levels to make them more relevant environments for both males and females.

This position is derived from a recognition of the following points: the highest level of education helps to determine the shape of the levels below it; the university's role in knowledge creation and intellectual agenda-setting demands that all sectors of society are represented; the university's training function (of teachers, scientists and social leaders) requires the full representation of females.

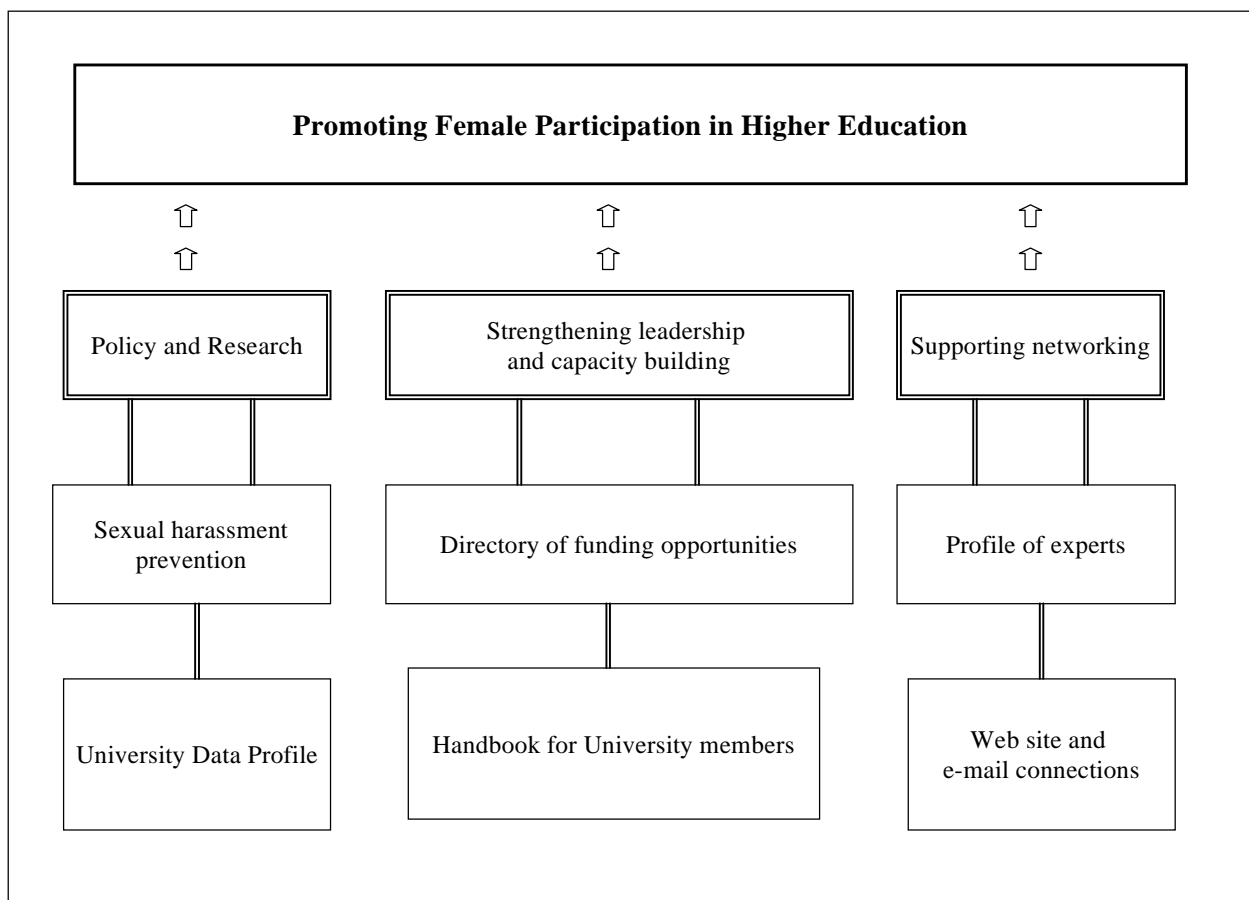
Furthermore, there are both efficiency and equity arguments that support concerted efforts to make sure that women have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from higher education. Given the substantial investments that are made in the education of girls at the primary and secondary level, it is only sensible to ensure that these investments are not under-utilized by ensuring that girls who qualify for further education at the tertiary level are able to get it and not inhibited either by financial considerations or prejudices about what is or is not appropriate for women to study.

FAWE's position is buttressed in general by the World Declaration on Higher Education with its focus on making higher education of sufficiently high quality and not only available to all who qualify but also relevant to the fast-changing world we live in. However, it is FAWE's conviction that a system that is characterized by (a) general under-representation of women, (b) poor female representation in science and technology departments and (c) poor prospects for the promotion of women in administration and teaching will compromise all the above.

As we move into the next millennium, African universities are facing a number of challenges and contradictions. Some of them they share in common with universities in other parts of the world and others are less typical of institutions elsewhere. These challenges include relevance, and maintaining quality in intake, output and process as they make the transition from elite to mass enterprise institutions; and contributing to and participating in the rapid technological and social transformations characterizing the latter part of this century.

At the same time there are a series of contradictions involved in the institutional framework of universities that make these challenges even more daunting. These include the tension inherent in being both dependent on government funding and being a prime critic of government; being desirous of full academic freedom at the same time as they are fully responsible and accountable towards society; to change and bring about change at the same time as they are charged with the responsibility of defending and actively disseminated universally accepted values at a time when there is crisis of values in many parts of the world.

FAWE strongly believes that the enhanced participation of women as students, teachers, researchers and administrators, while a challenge in and of itself, can only contribute to the improvement of tertiary education. They are using a multi-dimensional strategy under three broad areas (a) policy and research, (b) strengthening leadership and capacity building and (c) supporting networking. Two of the tools we have developed are on display here, i.e. a directory on funding opportunities for research and study for African women and a handbook designed for our university members but free for use by others provides guidance in developing strategies for promoting the participation of women as students, teachers and administrators. We are also collaborating with nine universities in developing a format for a University Data Profile that will help individual institutions document the participation of women in all areas. Further activities include our collaboration with the Association of African Universities during which we hope to conduct a survey and analysis of gender programmes in higher education in Africa and compile a profile of female African experts and their skills.



### 3. ACCESS – ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

**“Equal opportunities offered in circumstances of inequalities of endowment and environment will only perpetuate the existing patterns of inequality”.** *Nungu 1997, p. 6.*

#### 3.1 Affirmative Action

Affirmative action strategies to reduce inequities of access generally have a bad name; whether from the traditionalists who see them leading to the watering down of standards or among some women who see them as devaluing their credentials if all women are viewed as having entered under these strategies.

We would like to argue that there is a way to practise affirmative action strategies without any significant diminution of quality of intake or process. First of all some sort of affirmative action is absolutely necessary, whether with respect to gender, ethnicity or region of origin. It should be

acknowledged that most countries in Africa have educational systems whose reach in terms of quality and quantity of coverage is most uneven. Removing these disparities requires not only substantial investment but active multi-strand strategies with respect to teacher deployment, school building and affirmative action for entry not only to tertiary but also secondary institutions.

As to the argument from women who have been able to reach tertiary education, one of the consistent findings that have emerged from research into the social backgrounds of female students in tertiary and in some countries secondary institutions, is that they are predominantly from high status homes with a much higher level of education and income among their parents. Such women are already privileged and we must recognize that something must be done to help bright women from less privileged backgrounds make it through secondary and into tertiary institutions.

Having said this, it should be emphasized that affirmative action alone in the form of relaxed admission criteria can do little to redress balances. A study done in Kenya suggests strongly that almost 25 years of lowering cut-off points for female candidates or those from educationally disadvantaged areas have failed almost completely to alter either the overall regional representativeness of the student body or the overall pattern of female participation (Nungu 1997).

However, while recognizing that the improvement of primary and secondary education and the improvement of female's participation and performance at those levels are essential, there are a number of strategies, which used either in conjunction with or instead of affirmative action, can help bolster girls' transition to the tertiary level. These include pre-entry identification and support and a number of direct intervention strategies such as counselling on courses and performance criteria, the provision of additional course work and the encouragement of support networks among students themselves.

*"Preferential admissions policies to increase the proportion of low-income ethnic minority and female students will not adversely affect higher education if overall selectivity is high, if remedial assistance is available and if concomitant efforts are made to increase the average quality of secondary education "*  
World Bank 1994, p. 11.

### **3.2 Student Financing**

The cost of tertiary education does play a role in the low representation of women as students and this role is increasing with the gradual transfer of responsibility for fees to parents. A key strategy for preventing girls from suffering unduly either from attempts to rationalize the provision of tertiary education or from deficiencies in the secondary and primary systems that lead to their poorer performance is the utilization of scholarships and loans.

These two types of financial aid offer opportunities for girls who would like to continue their education and can also act to increase access by enabling qualified girls, who lack the family resources to obtain higher education. They can also encourage girls in secondary and primary school to improve their performance in the knowledge that funding opportunities exist at the tertiary level.

However, the differing conditions of loans and scholarships have implications for girls. The fact that loans must be repaid make them a less optimal option for girls because the subjects they study at university and the career paths they typically follow often mean that they earn less over their life time than their male colleagues. Consequently, loans would be more burdensome for them.

As scholarships do not have the repayment burden of loans and are often based on merit, i.e. level of academic performance, competition for them is fierce. This requirement often leads to girls and women being under-represented among beneficiaries, as the average level of academic performance among females is frequently below that of males, particularly at the secondary level.

To enable girls and women to utilize scholarships and loans in allowing them to take advantage of tertiary education, a number of strategies are recommended:

- make scholarship administrators more aware of the gender implications of the criteria they set; do they give qualified girls a fair chance of competition? For example, are notices sent to all schools and are scholarships available for a wide range of subject combinations?
- publicize the existence of these scholarships and loans widely among students themselves, particularly at the secondary level;
- dedicate a number of scholarships for girls and women who want to study mathematics and science at the tertiary;
- encourage tertiary institutions and scholarship and loan administrators to keep gender desegregated statistics on awards, performance of awardees and repayment levels;
- provide counselling and guidance along with loans; potential recipients should be advised about the expected level of repayments and the minimum income stream needed to support them. Some students, perhaps should be encouraged not to take loans, for example those intending to teach at primary level.

### **3.3 Accommodation**

There is a current debate about the nature of housing for students; whether institutions should provide housing, at what cost, what quality it should be, etc. However, housing is a serious issue for women, primarily with respect to safety. Women have been attacked and even raped within the confines of university-provided housing, sometimes by the individuals whose responsibility it was to ensure their safety.

Clearly each institution has to make its own decision as to exactly what type of housing it will utilize. However, what is important is that the institution makes it clear that it will not tolerate physical and psychological harassment of its students and acts in such a way that this policy is seen as being firmly upheld. This will involve not only the provision of security where needed, but also guidelines to students about maintaining their personal safety, and advice as to what to do when they are in dangerous situation or have suffered harm.

### **3.4 Information Needs**

An essential part of any programme to increase access is the availability of data on students and staff to enable proper monitoring to take place. The information needs for monitoring are fairly complex and would be best handled in an integrated fashion. For example, the characteristics of students, teaching and administrative staff would need to be included and linked in a meaningful way.

### **3.5 Recommendations**

Higher education should:

- explore strategies for expanding the pool of qualified females from which it can select students, teachers and administrators;
- transform the environment to make both males and females feel comfortable working and studying in higher education institutions;
- establish and maintain an information system that enables the institution to track the careers of all individuals.

In order to increase the number of female students attending the university, improve their performance, promote gender sensitization and eliminate various forms of gender discrimination, the University of Dar es Salaam has introduced a broad range of interventions. To increase the number of female students and improve their performance, they have:

- admitted girls with scores up to 1.5 points lower than boys, although above the minimum requirement for university entrance. This has increased their representation from 17% in 1995/96 to 29% in 1996/97;
- introduced a programme by the Faculty of Science to help Form VI leavers improve their A-level science grades and thus qualify for university entry;
- put all female undergraduates on the university's sponsorship list for consideration by both government and private sponsors. Female graduate students benefit from scholarships from the Directorate of Post Graduate Studies.

*Source: Mlama, 1997.*

#### **4. PARTICIPATION – PERFORMANCE AND NON-TRADITIONAL COURSE TAKING**

Unfortunately, getting into an institution of higher learning is only part of the battle. It is becoming clear that the systems that used to provide guidance and advice to students in their academic careers (e.g. tutorials and academic advisors) or maintained discipline in the halls of residence and in the classroom are atrophying. As a consequence, the university is providing insufficient support to its students about what they need to do to take full advantage of the resources available to them.

##### **4.1 Counselling**

There remains a particular need for women to be given information about and encouraged to enrol in non-traditional courses, i.e. courses which have historically enrolled few women. The converse is also true, i.e. men should be encouraged to enrol in courses that have been traditionally female dominated. However, evidence from the Kenyan universities (Nungu, 1997) and the University of Dar es Salaam (Beshu 1997) suggests strongly that men have moved more aggressively into courses like food technology and nursing than women have into engineering.

Apart from any formal programme that could be instituted, individual lecturers and departments need to understand their responsibility to encourage and most particularly, not to discourage, women from taking certain career paths.

##### **4.2 Safety and Security**

A key component of safety and security for women in higher education revolves around the issue of sexual harassment.

A few institutions have conducted extensive investigations into sexual harassment on their campuses. They include, the University of Cape Town, the University of Dar es Salaam, the University of Malawi and Kenyatta University. All documented the existence of sexual harassment, both physical and psychological, particularly among female students but extending to all cadres of women. Most of the reports have recommended guidelines or codes of conduct and some have gone further by producing posters and educational materials and recommending changes in security arrangements (lighting, wider availability of phones directly connected to university security forces, etc).

However, despite the acknowledgement that sexual harassment exists, there is still a lot of ignorance about what exactly it is and what impact it has on its victims. One important dimension that is missed is the power differential between the victim and the harasser. Either by virtue of being a lecturer and therefore having the power to withhold or reduce grades, or being a member of the male majority (for students or other staff), is what gives sexual harassment its role of intimidation. One cannot classify sexual overtures from female students towards male lecturers, for example, as sexual harassment, because there is no power of enforcement.

In some institutions, the power differential between males and females generally has grown to such a level and is supported by the status quo to such an extent, that even security guards and male

maintenance workers have been known to rape female students with impunity (Kiragu-Nyamu, personal communication).

A committee of enquiry into sexual harassment was initiated in late 1989 to look into the level and extent of sexual harassment on campus. The principal findings of the Committee were that while sexual harassment was not as bad at the University of Cape Town as elsewhere, the quality of life and education at UCT was devalued by the sexual harassment that did exist and that the provision of a 'safe and inclusive' environment was the responsibility of the University in order to allow all to achieve their full potential. Further, the findings indicated that there were concrete and practical steps that the University could take with respect to education and training programmes, such as a review of the disciplinary procedures, taking on board the recommendations of the Committee of Enquiry into Alcohol and Violence in the residences. The Committee of Enquiry recommended the following steps:

- challenging or preventing behaviour that is discriminatory and offensive by (a) adopting as official policy a statement that explicitly condemns acts or threats based on race, gender, religion or sexual preference, (b) making effective provision for students and staff to report violations and (c) widely advertising the policy on campus;
- developing an understanding within the university of the issues addressed by the Committee through (a) wide circulation of the report (b) meetings by the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of equal opportunity programmes with wardens and student leaders, and the heads of those departments, organizations, unions and units named as having sexually harassing behaviour by staff;
- changing the prevailing culture with regard to tolerance for and encouragement of sexual harassment and sexism by (a) developing an education programme in collaboration with student organizations and other campus organizations concerned with student life, (b) reviewing the programme and events of orientation week, (c) establishing a pilot peer counselling programme, (d) discouraging 'traditional' practices that involve sexist or sexually harassing behaviour, (e) training students as mediators and (f) establishing a 'code of conduct';
- encouraging the use of non-sexist language during teaching;
- contributing to the examination of current disciplinary procedures through requesting (a) the protection of students who report cases of sexual harassment and (b) encouraging mandatory counselling of students convicted of serious cases of sexual harassment or violence;
- furthering understanding of sexual harassment, sexual violence and peer harassment through (a) continued monitoring of the nature and extent of incidents, (b) sponsoring further research and (c) monitoring and improvement of programmes implemented to deal with sexual harassment, violence and peer harassment;
- training staff and students to deal appropriately with harassing or potentially violent behaviour.

*Source: Final Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Sexual Harassment, University of Cape Town, 1991. Published by Equal Opportunity Research Project.*

## 5. PEDAGOGY – RELEVANCE AND QUALITY

**“As a consequence of the economic downturn - and of the accompanying constriction in public budgets and reduced access to foreign exchange - the inputs to make physical plant and academic staff educationally productive have virtually disappeared. ... As a consequence, the skills more relevant to development - those acquired when theory is confronted with the demands of the real world - are exactly those that do not get learned”.**

*Aklilu Habte 1989, p 21.*

One of the key challenges facing universities in Africa is maintaining relevance, i.e. teaching courses where knowledge and skills are inculcated that can be utilized in the labour market with minimal further training and orientation. Simple though this may sound, the constraints are daunting. What is called for is not only an effective linkage with the labour market, so that information about available opportunities and needed skills are understood by teachers and administrators and effectively passed on to students, but also adequate resources available so they can gain some familiarity with relevant technology. For this to be possible, instructors need to be able to continuously upgrade and expand their knowledge of their field, through journals, attendance at conferences and the opportunity to do basic research in their area.

Most institutions fail in this responsibility, partly although not entirely, through a lack of the required resources. As a consequence, growing numbers of students graduate from universities, polytechnics and technical institutions without saleable qualifications and often have to embark on further training and skills acquisition before they are employable.

A related issue is quality; specifically, the intrinsic quality of instruction provided, of courses and ultimately of the degree conferred. What skills have been passed on and to what level of competence? Certainly this is just as important for male students and the problem has proved intractable in many institutions because it has so many facets. An important and common dimension is the financial one; there is not enough money to buy the books and instructional materials needed to cover course-work; not enough money to take students on field trips or arrange attachments; not enough money to retain the best lecturers and not enough money to ensure that the ones who remain on staff give teaching their whole attention. Finally, teaching is consistently under-rewarded under many promotion schemes.

One of the results of the loss of personnel and the divided loyalties of those remaining, is the attenuation of both formal and informal mentoring of junior members of staff. In healthy institutions, this mentoring is a valuable and essential aid in providing role models and in training staff and maintaining quality by providing guidance and advice to the less experienced.

## **6. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**“In establishing priorities in their programmes and structures, higher education institutions must: ... pay particular attention to the participation of women in scientific and technological higher education, as well as to their appropriate representation in managerial positions”.**

*Article 5. WCHE Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development of Higher Education*

In order for women to reach the more senior levels of university administration and management, they need to be recruited in greater numbers. The explicit identification and encouragement of qualified women applicants for every vacancy on campus will serve to emphasize that the administration is willing not only to consider women but also recognizes that women do have the qualities to enter and do well in management. This helps promote women's interests by reducing the sense of isolation for women already in the university; providing experience in going through the selection process even for those who do not succeed; providing role models for students and eventually forcing the acknowledgement of their presence and qualifications.

Unfortunately, the recruitment of individuals into administration, both male and female can be the province for nepotism, favouritism and political cronyism (Kanake 1997 & Sifuna 1997). In such an atmosphere, women may feel particularly disadvantaged as they have less time and opportunity to cultivate the kind of relationships that would help them in such a situation. However, such a system is detrimental to merit and hard work in general as it is clear to aspiring candidates, both men and women, that what matters is who you know and not what you know or the quality of your work. Both genders find this situation highly demoralizing.



There are a number of issues around recruitment which might have a differential or unintended impact on women. The manner in which vacancies are advertised; the location and timing of interviews, the composition of the interview panel, the nature of questions asked during interviews and so on. Even where some effort has been taken to ensure that these procedures are supposed to be gender-neutral, there still needs to be monitoring to ensure that practice follows policy.

After successful recruitment, an institution's labour practices and conditions may have unintended consequences for female staff. Some issues that are well known include the option for unpaid leave or part-time work during the most intensive child-rearing years; the existence of clear, confidential procedures for obtaining redress for sexual harassment and the existence of unambiguous guidelines for promotion and staff development.

Senior institutional management can do much to make women feel welcome by developing and upholding policies that send the message that sexual harassment or other types of physical intimidation are unacceptable; that procedures for recruitment are transparent and that the management holds itself accountable for the effective functioning of the institution.

### **6.1 Recommendations**

Establish and maintain clear and transparent requirements for recruitment, promotion and tenure.

## **7. NETWORKS AND LINKAGES**

**“Many women now consider belonging to an organization of some kind as one of the most important ways to escape the isolation and ignorance of 'thinking and acting alone'. Groups are mechanisms to enable those who belong to benefit from resources, knowledge and experiences harnessed by members”.**

*Nainuddu, 1992, page 16.*

FAWE, and individual FAWE members, recognizes that it cannot increase the levels of female students, teachers and administrators alone. Therefore, we have entered what we consider to be strategic partnerships and alliances with a number of organizations with congruent interests.

In the arena of policy we are working with organizations like the Rockefeller Foundation, the World Bank, UNESCO, Unicef, and a host of other institutions in range of diverse activities whose ultimate aim is the strengthening of primary and secondary education and the promotion of female participation at those levels.

Our joint activities include funding system wide reviews through the Strategic Resource Planning initiative wherein nine ministries of education have been provided with the tools and strategies to analyze their educational systems and identify options for the achievement of Education for All. We are co-sponsoring the Alliance for Community Action for the Advancement of Female Education along with Unicef and the Rockefeller Foundation to help marshal community-level resources to send girls to school and keep them there.

Apart from these global level initiatives, FAWE also works with small organizations or its national chapters towards the same aim. In Zimbabwe and in Sierra Leone we have sponsored girls in secondary school under bursary schemes that not only provide fees but in-school, peer and community support. At the University of Dar es Salaam, we have just awarded a grant to an innovative pre-entry programme designed to give qualified girls the necessary grounding that will enable them to tackle the science and mathematics courses at the University.

One of the strategies recommended in the FAWE handbook for its university members (i.e. Vice-Chancellors and deputy Vice-Chancellors) is the formation of networks and alliances on campus and between campus and the general civil society. This networking helps the individuals trying to promote the participation of women to link their struggle to gender issues in the wider community.

The alliances can be internal to campus but can usefully also extend to other educational institutions, educational organizations, and other organizations involved in women's rights and democratization. Issues of reforming legislation to reflect a more equitable treatment of women, particularly with respect to divorce, marriage, employment, inheritance, or of reforming the education system to promote access, participation and quality would benefit greatly from the input of university women and would in turn widen the base of their support.

Keeping gender on the agenda has benefited from a large number of activist women's groups on the campus. Groups like the Institute of Development Studies Women Studies Group, Women Research and Documentation Project, Women in Education Committee, Tanzania Women in Science and Technology and the Gender Management Committee have organized seminars, workshops and support groups to sensitize communities and address issues like sexual harassment.

*Source: Mlama, 1997.*

## **8. CONCLUSION**

In summary, therefore, FAWE believes that the situation with respect to the representation of women at tertiary level is one with a variety of causes but one that can be remedied with concerted effort by the institutions themselves in collaboration with wider society. By aggressively identifying qualified women as students, lecturers and administrators, the pool from which women can be brought into higher education will be substantially increased.

However, increasing the numbers is only the beginning. Women are opting out of careers in higher education because the environment can be hostile, sometimes aggressively so, towards them. A great deal of attention needs to be focused on making the conditions of work and study enabling and supportive for women. Clear codes of conduct should be established and upheld in such areas as sexual harassment, but also more general discipline in halls of residence and on campus.

Counsellors should be available for students, to provide advice not only about personal problems, but also about careers paths, sources of funding for study and research and general information about making the best of their university experience.

The university should pay more attention to what happens to its staff (both teaching and administrative) after they are recruited. Is a coherent and equitable staff development policy in place?

An essential requirement for all these programmes is the establishment of a flexible and effective MIS system that stores gender disaggregated information on staff and students in a manner that can be instantly retrieved by all those charged with the responsibility for monitoring the progress of equity measures.

The FAWE Handbook for its university members recommends the following six point plan of action for any institution wishing to transform its own gender relations:

- systematically documenting and publicizing the areas which women find problematic on campus and the extent of those problems;
- developing strong support networks among individuals, both women and men, committed to change on and off campus;
- installing a series of equal opportunity and affirmative action activities;
- undertaking gender sensitization and social mobilization in support of concerns of women;
- supporting the genuine development and proper functioning of mass participatory organizations that support women's concerns;

- changing existing structural organizational and institutional practices in order to accommodate the needs of women.

The plan is based on the experience of institutions that have already undertaken the process.

Further quantitative and qualitative research is sorely needed in all areas of women's participation in higher education. At the bare minimum, more detailed documentation is needed of who is entering higher education, where they come from, what they study and accomplish during their tenure and what they do afterwards. Apart from the details about the flow into, through and out of the institutions, we need to know more about the quality of their experience. How are female students affected by the prevailing environment and how does this vary by the faculty and department they are enrolled in? Why are women reported to be turning down appointments as faculty or administrators? What are the stories of the women who have made it to the very top of the academic ladder?

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## **Women in Higher Education and Research in Africa**

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE)  
Association of African Universities (AAU)

### **FOREWORD**

As Africa enters into the 21st Century, one prominent feature of its universities that needs to be addressed is the stark minority of women in student enrolment as well as in staff employment.

This situation should be of concern to all stakeholders: African governments, the universities, funding agencies and other international organizations such as UNESCO, and the general academy of Africa.

It is with such concern that the Association of African Universities (AAU), in collaboration with the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), reviews in this paper the status quo of girls and women in education in Africa.

Preliminary results of recent surveys show that while various groups have initiated ongoing measures to correct the imbalance a lot more needs to be done.

The recommendations that are made in this paper to stakeholders highlight the areas where we believe future action for redress needs to be targeted.

The AAU wishes to recognize the contribution given by FAWE for the preparation of this paper. We also wish to thank the authors, Prof. Aba Bentil Andam<sup>1</sup> and Prof. Isabelle Adole Glitho<sup>2</sup> for their tireless effort in preparing the paper in a relatively short time.

**The Secretary-General of the AAU  
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## **PREAMBLE**

The universities, and other tertiary institutions, are the principal agents of national development, especially in Africa. This is because these institutions are responsible for generating the necessary humanpower and competencies. It seems evident that the pace of advancement of any nation will depend on the extent to which it can mobilize and utilize all it available human and material resources. Over the years, African universities have produced mainly male managers. More than 90% of staff of African universities, 80% of teachers and 75% of students are men. This accentuates the marginalization and under-utilization of women in national development. As the African population is more than 50% female, there is the urgent need for Africa, as well as its partners, to evolve strategies for ensuring the sustainable involvement of the African female population in all areas of development.

This paper, highlights some of the problems which restrain the access of African girls to university education. Some of the information presented represents the recommendations of a recent survey of women educationalists and students.

FAWE and the AAU, as two partners in the promotion of women's education at university level, propose to governments, institutions and funding agencies some ways of addressing the causes of under-representation of women in African universities.

## **THE PROBLEM**

The school, as a training ground for future leaders, also mirrors the values and prejudices which abound in society. Some of these societal attitudes arise from the conviction in many African societies that a woman's roles in and outside the home do not require a long preparation involving years of formal education. The result of this is that, in Africa, a low participation of girls in education is observed. The problem is worsened by the lower enrolment of girls in formal education, compared to boys, especially at the higher echelons of education.

Statistics from many African countries show that at the primary school stage there are nearly equal numbers of boys and girls. This ratio gradually dwindles with progression through the education ladder. At the secondary school level, this nearly equal representation is seen to change significantly, especially in the areas of Mathematics and Science studies.

As school children advance in age from childhood through adolescence, more and more girls drop out of school.

The status of education in Africa is highlighted in the report of the seventh Conference of Ministers of Education of African member states of UNESCO (MINEDAF VII) held in South Africa in April 1998.[1].

Disparities in male to female ratios are highlighted further when one considers the percentage of women in tertiary education. As far as student numbers show, there are fewer women than men in enrolment for university courses all over African countries.

For the 15-year period 1980-1995, the MINEDAF VII Report summarizes that:

- ♦ another aspect of tertiary education in Africa that is worth considering is the disparity of students in different fields of study. Various authors have given statistics on this and indicated how this has affected the science-based careers that women pursue after graduation [2,3,4];
- ♦ in the majority of African countries more than half the student intake is for Law, Social Science and Humanities. Female numbers in Law, Social Science and Humanities are much more significant than the enrolment of men;

- ♦ in virtually all countries of Africa, there are fewer women than men studying science and engineering.

The general trend is that women are to be found in the lower grades of employment in African Universities. Although there are a few cases of women Vice-Chancellors or Pro Vice-Chancellors, Ministers of State, Deans of Faculties and Directors of Research Institutions, the fact remains that their numbers represent very low percentages of the overall figures of leadership positions.

## **REASONS FOR THE LOW PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN TERTIARY EDUCATION**

A number of reasons have been advanced to explain the low participation of girls in formal education in Africa.

These reasons include: social impediments, lack of role models, lack of mentorship, lack of self-confidence, sexual harassment, gender insensitive regulations, among others.

### **Social and other Impediments to the Education of Girls**

In Africa, formal education is often perceived as simply a means to outside "careers". Thus, it is assumed that for motherhood, family care and home management, all that a woman needs are her God-given motherly instincts and the "apprenticeship" she serves by watching and imitating her own mother.

Gender inequality in universities can be seen in terms of the differences in boys to girls ratio from the primary to secondary School level.

The under representation of women in university courses is reflected in the scarcity of women lecturers at the upper levels of university management and administration. Added to this is an uneven distribution of women teachers between towns and villages.

Even in some big colleges there are sometimes at most three women science teachers. This may explain why young girls are not attracted by the study of science at college.

The observation from some countries was that the distribution of bursaries also emphasizes the gender difference.

Ultimately, women are in the minority in higher education in Africa because there are simply not enough girls in secondary school.

### **Lack of Role Models**

Another reason for the high drop-out rate of girls from formal education in Africa may be the lack of role models and mentors, and the gender-stereotyping of higher educational achievement. Some studies show that:

- ♦ when the primary and middle schools of villages did not have female teachers for many years, and girls were not exposed to educated professional women, often the aspiration of the girls was very limited;
- ♦ when mothers are educated, they want their children to enter higher education and their daughters share this ambition.



## **Lack of Mentorship for Women in University Establishment**

Mentorship, as a process in which "an experienced, often older person takes an inexperienced and usually younger person under their wing to encourage them, sharpen their awareness of their own potential and create avenues for them to reach some set goal" has been highlighted by Bryne [5] as an effective means of upward mobility within the employment sector.

In the university, mentorship operates differently for students and for staff. For staff, mentorship within the higher education establishment helps ensure that, from the experience of the mentor, the protegee gains access to fertile areas for research grants, avenues for publications and recommendations for inclusion on committees.

The combination of all these is often high visibility for the protegee. This can have a positive spiraling effect on his upward mobility. The general observation is that, as a group, women in higher education establishments do not often benefit from mentorship. For students, the lack of mentorship is one of the reasons for the high drop-out rate of girls from formal education.

## **Lack of self-confidence of Girls**

Some of the girls also allow themselves to be overwhelmed by all the negative filtering influences that they see and hear around them. They internalize these external impacts, and simply allow their self-confidence to be eroded.

## **Sexual Harassment**

On campuses, girls suffer sexual harassment from their colleagues and sometimes from their teachers. This is a serious problem in some African universities where no official policy for protection of women exists. Such sexual harassment contributes to discouraging some female students, particularly new students.

## **Gender Insensitive Regulations and Attitudes**

Gender insensitive regulations and practices are so ingrained in many establishments that it is sometimes subtle and not easy to identify. These include the reference to activities and personnel in only the masculine gender. Other forms are seen in the attitudes of leaders of the establishment, their use of vocabulary, and in the way they sometimes address meetings as "Well, *Gentlemen...*", even when there are a number of ladies present at the meeting. There are also male students who will refer to women staff as "Please *sir...*". These attitudes have their root in the days when university communities were exclusively male. They tend to put some women off and intimidate others.

## **REMEDIAL STRATEGIES**

Various strategies are being employed to address the problem of the under representation of women in higher education. Some of them are discussed below:

### **Quota System**

This implies lowering of entry requirements for girls for courses which do not ordinarily attract females. To do, this some university departments have taken all girls applying with the minimum qualification, without making them compete with boys for places. This has worked well in many instances to increase the number of girls in engineering and the physical sciences.

In citing the quota system as an intervention strategy, we are fully aware that this is a debatable issue. However, many girls who have been admitted in this way have been found to be quite assiduous and some have actually excelled.

### **Provision of Bursaries for Female Students**

In some instances, the provision of bursaries and scholarships has helped increase the number of women in universities.

For example, in one university, the intervention took the form of placing undergraduate girls on the list sent to government and private organizations awarding post-graduate scholarships.

### **Science Clinics for Girls**

This programme seeks to encourage secondary school girls to study science and mathematics. Started in 1987 by the Ghana Education Service to initiate a correction of the gender imbalance in science, technology and mathematics education, the Science Clinics have now become international activities in Africa.

During the science clinic, the girls participate in field trips, work on their own projects, receive guidance and counselling, and have opportunity to meet and interact with women scientists who serve as role models.

### **Commonwealth Secretariat Action**

From 1995 the Commonwealth Secretariat has adopted steps to reinforce its capacity to provide technical and functional assistance which acknowledge gender issues and take into account the specific needs of women in the key areas of their programmes. Prominent among these are the inclusion of gender issues in all mandates of the Commonwealth and in the Gender and Youth Affairs Division (GYAD) Secretariat; and equal and equitable participation of both men and women in the activities of the Secretariat

### **The Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Action**

Underpinning FAWE's work is an explicit effort to close the gender gap in education and to contribute towards the achievement of the education for all (EFA) goal.

FAWE's programme activities include: strategic resource planning and preventing wastage in education systems and strengthening female leadership at the tertiary level.

### **AAU/UNESCO Chairs on Women in Science and Technology in Africa**

Finally, it is important not to leave out the AAU Chairs. Two Chairs on Women in Science and Technology in Africa have been set up by AAU, with sponsorship from UNESCO, the Netherlands government and the Rockefeller Foundation to promote the participation of girls and women in science studies and careers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER ACTION**

To encourage women to take up positions and remain in higher education and research in Africa, the following recommendations are made to the stakeholders:

### **What should African universities do?**

To assist women, and encourage them to stay in the service of the universities, the university authorities should:

- ensure that they employ more qualified women and that the conditions of service are attractive enough to make women stay;
- provide training opportunities for women and ensure the provision of social facilities such as creches and day care centres for children of staff;
- make special provision of grants to women for research and attendance at conferences;
- make special efforts to put women on committees and advisory boards;
- put resources into the training of teachers, especially women teachers;
- introduce new courses on Gender Studies and gender perspectives in existing courses;
- revise gender-biased regulations, institute control measures punishment for sexual harassment. Universities have a responsibility to ensure the safety and security of everyone on campus. The existing culture which seems to tolerate and encourage sexual harassment must be changed;
- discourage sexist language on campuses;
- in instances of obvious disparities in numbers of women students in an academic department compared to men, a quota system can be put in place for a period to redress the imbalance;
- put in place remedial courses for female students who do not make the required grades set by entry requirements. This will ensure that the girls catch up academically.

### **What should governments do?**

It is recommended that governments should:

- recognize that women in higher education can make constructive input into the development of their countries;
- set up funds to provide preferential bursaries for first-year female students who enrol in science. If they fail at the end of the year, the general criteria may then be applied to them. This will encourage a number of girls to enrol in science right from secondary school.
- encourage schools to put in place and to maintain infrastructure such as recreation rooms for girls which promote their interest in their studies;
- influence curriculum change in schools to eradicate gender bias and to increase the female student intake;
- make deliberate efforts to ensure that every girl-child obtains a certain level of scientific and technological literacy to be able to make a meaningful contribution to national development as an adult.

It is of crucial importance to give attention to the development of this scientific culture if the people of Africa are not to be left behind in the common march of mankind towards scientific, technological and economic well-being.

Women have a positive role to play in ensuring a sustainable environment for development of higher education in Africa towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If women are to fulfil this expectation effectively, they must be empowered through sound basic education, which will equip them with the abilities for upward mobility and effective performance in higher education. This will enable them to meet their quota in participating fully as agents and beneficiaries of development.

### **What should funding agencies and institutions such as UNESCO do?**

Funding agencies and institutions such as UNESCO can help African countries to increase the participation of women in their universities by supporting programmes geared towards:

- helping to create public awareness of women's capabilities in the search for solutions meant to promote equality in the education of all children;
- advocating recruitment of women teachers and lecturers, especially in science and mathematics;
- supporting the creation and maintenance of centres for documentation and dissemination of information on women;
- supporting international networks of university women associations in Africa;
- ensuring that the institutions they support implement gender sensitive programmes in their establishments, including staffing procedures.

### **What should the Women themselves do?**

No one can help women more than themselves. Therefore, women must:

- avail themselves of opportunities for training and not shy away from responsibility;
- be prepared to sacrifice time and energy on the job and take on extra work, if need be;
- organize themselves into associations that are respected and listened to;
- women who are already in employment in higher education must strive to be mentors and role models for other women who join the establishment, especially younger ones;
- women themselves must be prepared to respond to the demands of work in a higher education establishment;
- university women associations should advocate to put in place effective means by which reports of sexual harassment will be received from staff and students and dealt with promptly.

### **CONCLUSION**

- At the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, African women and girls are still underrepresented in education, and indeed in leading positions of society;
- much has been started and is being done to address the problem. Much more needs to be done by all major stakeholders;
- early intervention at primary and secondary school is the only long term and fundamental solution to the problem;

- university leaders, government authorities, funding agencies and international organizations can also make a difference;
- the AAU and FAWE see this WCHE as a unique opportunity to mobilize and improve awareness of all intellectual and other resources available to each and all stakeholders to address the problem;
- the AAU and FAWE reiterate their commitment to continue cooperating with all those concerned with science-based development in Africa, which presupposes the scientific and technological emancipation and empowerment of women.

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## **ABOUT THE AAU**

The Association of African Universities is an international non-governmental organization set up in 1967 by the universities in Africa to promote cooperation among them and encourage increased contacts between its members and the international academic world; to collect classify and disseminate information on higher education and research, particularly in Africa, and to organize, encourage and support seminars and conferences between members of the academic, technical and administrative staff, students and university administrators in African universities, as well as between these and representatives of governments, productive, public and social sectors, other stakeholders and constituencies interested in higher education and research. It has a current membership of 148 institutions in 53 African countries, which includes public and private universities, research centres and other higher education institutions. To enhance the relevance and impact of its programmes the AAU entertains and seeks continually to strengthen and widen relations with other associations and networks, and enjoys relations of cooperation and benefits from support from funding agencies and governments.

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## **ABOUT FAWE**

The Forum for African Women Educationalists is a membership organization that brings together African women ministers in charge of national education systems, women vice chancellors of universities and other senior women policy makers in education in Africa. Founded in 1992, and registered in Kenya as a pan-African NGO in 1993, FAWE has 56 full members drawn from 30 African countries, 25 associate members comprising male ministers of education and permanent secretaries, and 25 established National Chapters with five in preparation. As an unprecedented group of influential African women policy makers, FAWE is well positioned to stimulate broad policy reform and create a conducive environment for increasing parental demand for girls' education.

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## Synthetic Report

The following main points were underlined during the debate:

1. The participants, while congratulating UNESCO for having organized this debate, felt that in the spirit of **gender mainstreaming** which is a commitment of the United Nations system and the world community as a whole since the Beijing Conference on Women (1995), the women and gender issues should have been integrated in an explicit way in the work of all of the commissions of this Conference, as well as in its different thematic debates. UNESCO should ensure that at the forthcoming World Conference on Science (Budapest, 1999) the women and gender issues should not be “ghettoized” as a special forum, but indeed included throughout the work of the conference.
2. Linked to this, the participants also expressed their disappointment that women represented only 20% of the delegates attending this conference, in spite of the fact that the invitation addressed to the Member States by the Director-General stated explicitly his wish that the delegations include 50%, or at least 30% women delegates. Here again, the World Conference on Science should show a clear improvement. Furthermore, it is totally unacceptable to continue to refer to women as a “minority” given the fact that they constitute more than half of the world’s population.
3. Empowerment of women needs to be accompanied by their **in-powerment**. As expressed by the Director-General it is time to “dare to share”: the equal sharing of wealth, knowledge and power.
4. In all areas of higher education management the aim should be equal representation of women with men in positions of policy – and decision-making.
5. Include gender studies as a field of knowledge and an integral element of the curricula in order to bring about **attitudinal change** in both men and women, for better understanding between the sexes, emanating from gender-sensitivity. This is important also as a tool for women’s (self)confidence-building.
6. The dual responsibility of women in domestic and work spheres (as professionals in career and in personal/family life) must be taken into account in terms of providing the necessary legislation and infrastructure (such as daycare centres for children, elderly, etc.) to make it possible for women to combine the two and ensure equal conditions and opportunities as those of men.
7. UNESCO should promote and/or strengthen networking based on the UNESCO Chairs programme to ensure that higher education meets the needs of changing societies, and as a bridge between universities and grass-root communities. The ultimate aim of these Chairs is to ensure that women become equal partners in the social development process.



### **Recommendations: Strategies for Future Action**

#### **To promote advocacy concerning the access of women to higher education and their participation in this sector:**

1. UNESCO should establish an international observatory on women and Higher Education to monitor their access, participation, and presence in decision-making
2. International NGOs should undertake a critical review of legal instruments to ascertain effectiveness with regard to higher education
3. NGOs, specialized or interested in women and higher education, should pursue training to perfect their advocacy skills in the field of gender at international, regional, national and institutional levels
4. Via NGOs specialized in higher education (e.g. regional rectors' associations and conferences), a *Charter of Commitment to Gender Equality* should be drawn up for signature by institutional leaders
5. UNESCO should support initiatives to evaluate and follow-up the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995). These may include symposia and regional activities and a special meeting should be convened in 2000.

#### **To promote the presence of women at the decision-making levels of higher education and their employment as graduates**

6. Institutions should set up a senior committee to ensure that goals concerning gender equality are attained
7. *Equal Employment Opportunity Offices* should be established in universities and higher education institutions to monitor the progress of women academics and administrators (e.g. appointment to chairs, HOD posts, senior management posts etc)
8. career orientation offices and graduate placement services should adopt special measures to ensure that women students are fully informed of opportunities and obstacles with regard to gender in different professions
9. higher education institutions and NGOs (notably those representing women and students) should make optimal use of role models and pathfinders as a means to inform and advise women students concerning their career choices. Special attention should be given to fields where women are underrepresented (e.g. sciences, engineering)

## **To promote action research and training**

10. the number of *UNESCO Chairs and UNITWIN networks which promote the gender dimension in areas of higher education* should be increased
11. UNESCO and other agencies to set up mobile teams of gender experts able to encourage endogenous capacity building at national and institutional levels
12. in certain contexts and instances, quota systems may be considered desirable as a means of moving towards full gender equality
13. a Code of Good Practice in each region should be elaborated to illustrate the promotion of gender equality across different cultural contexts
14. NGOs specialized in higher education and women should run extensive training sessions for students and recent graduates, *both men and women*, on feminine leadership with a view to creating a more human society
15. the principle of Lifelong Learning for women should be strongly supported and appropriate measures adopted to permit them to continue their studies, to re-enter the workforce and to harmonize their professional and personal responsibilities

## **Goals for 2010**

1. By 2010, a country's enrolments in higher education (i.e. both post-secondary education for the 18-24 year old age groups and mature students) should reflect **targeted maintenance or increase** in the number of women enrolled:  
*e.g. maintenance of 50% or more in countries where this is the case;  
a target of 20-30% increase in countries where the enrolment of women is low.*
2. University chairs, professorships and head of department posts should be filled by men and women on an equal basis. As many women now hold the required qualifications, targets to regularly increase their appointments until the 50% figure is reached should be established. This may involve the creation of new posts.
3. Ideally, 50% of all rectors/vice-chancellors should be women. In reality, statistics show that, on average, only 5-7% of rector/VC posts are occupied by women. Institutions should set a policy to increase this figure by 25% per year till 50% is reached. A policy of alternation may be useful in this instance.
4. 50% of the members of higher education governing bodies ( e.g. university senates, national councils etc) should be women. Targets to increase their presence on a regular basis till the 50% is reached should be set.
5. In certain cultural contexts, stronger efforts are required to avoid the exclusion of women from acceding to and participating in higher education. Such exclusion denies women the right to contribute to sustainable social and human development.