



# NIGERIA

## **NATIONAL GENDER POLICY** FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

### **Situation Analysis/Framework**

PRODUCED BY

**THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF WOMEN  
AFFAIRS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
ABUJA, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF  
NIGERIA**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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	<b>PAGE</b>
List of Acronyms	vi
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
List of Boxes	x
Foreword	xi
Acknowledgements	xiv
Executive Summary	xvi

## PART I: POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND GENDER FRAMEWORKS

<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.1. Nigeria: Demographic Situation</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1.1. Geography and Governance	2
1.1.2. Population	3
1.1.3. Economic Activity Profile and Environmental Features	3
<b>1.2. Background Issues to the Development of the National Gender Policy</b>	<b>4</b>
1.2.1. Introduction	4
1.2.2. Statement of the Problem	5
1.2.3. Rationale for a National Gender Policy Framework	6
1.2.4. The Purpose and Aims of the National Gender Policy	7
1.2.5. The Guiding Principles of the National Gender Policy	9
1.2.6. Methodology	10
1.2.7. Limitations	11
<b>CHAPTER 2: POLICY CONTEXT AND THE EVOLUTION OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1. International and Regional Contexts	13
2.2. Evolution of Gender and Development Frameworks	15
2.2.1. Gender and Development Debate	16
2.2.2. Evolution of Gender Concepts	16
• WID Framework	17
• WAD Framework	17
• GID Framework	17
• GAD Framework	17
2.3. Globalisation and Inequalities	18
2.4. Country Experiences: Best Practices	19
2.5. The National Policy Context	20

<b>CHAPTER 3: GENDER PERSPECTIVES TO SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE SITUATION ANALYSIS OF GENDER STATUS</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1. Introduction	23
3.2. Culture, Family and Socialisation	23
3.3. Gender-based Violence	24
3.4. Gender, Education and Training	25
3.4. Poverty and Economic Development	27
3.5. Employment and Labour Issues	30
3.6. Agriculture and Rural Development	32
3.7. Gender, Environment and Natural Resources	34
3.8. Gender, Health and Reproductive Health Services	35
3.9. Gender and HIV/AIDS	37
3.10. Politics and Decision Making	38
3.11. Gender, Peace and Conflict Management	39
3.12. Information, Communication and the Role of the Media	41
3.13. People with Special Needs and Other Forms of Social Inequalities	42
3.14. Physical and Social Services	43
3.15. Legal and Human Rights	44
3.16. International Partnership for Development	47
3.17. Call for Change and the Policy Priorities	47

## PART II: THE GENDER POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

<b>CHAPTER 4: THE POLICY: FRAMEWORK, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>4.1. General Framework of the Policy</b>	<b>49</b>
4.1.1. The Vision	49
4.1.2. Main Policy Thrust	49
4.1.3. Policy Goal and Objectives	50
<b>4.2. The Policy Priorities</b>	<b>51</b>
4.2.1. The Policy Environment	51
4.2.2. Perceptions of Gender	
4.2.3. Institutional and Operational Framework for Implementing Gender Policies	52
4.2.4. Operational Framework for Gender Equality Structure	54
4.2.5. Evidence-based policy making	
4.2.6. Financial Sustainability for Gender Equality Policies and Programmes	56
4.2.7. Gender Mainstreaming	57
4.2.8. Political Will for Implementation of Gender Equality Policies	59

<b>4.3. Sectoral Policy Priorities: Policy Goals, Strategic Objectives and Implementation Strategies</b>	<b>60</b>
4.3.1 Culture, Family and Socialization	60
4.3.2 Gender Based Violence	61
4.3.3 Education and Training	64
4.3.4 Poverty and Women Empowerment	66
4.3.5 Employment and Labour Issues	68
4.3.6 Agriculture and Rural Development	71
4.3.7 Environment and Natural Resources	73
4.3.8 Gender, Health, and Reproductive Health Services	74
4.3.9 Gender and HIV/AIDS	77
4.3.10 Politics and Decision Making	79
4.3.11 Peace, and Conflict Resolution	81
4.3.12 Information and Communication	82
4.3.13 Other Forms of Social Inequalities – Vulnerable Groups and Inequalities in Society	84
4.3.14. Physical and Social Services	85
4.3.15. Legal and Human Rights	86
4.3.14 International Partnership for Development	87
<b>CHAPTER 5: INSTITUTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS</b>	
<b>5.1. Institutional Strategies</b>	<b>89</b>
5.1.1. The Gender Management System	89
5.1.2 National Machinery for Instituting the National Gender Policy	91
5.1.3. Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities of Stakeholders	93
<b>5.2. Operational Strategies</b>	<b>99</b>
5.2.1. Operational Principles of the National Gender Policy	99
5.2.2 Application to the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)	108
<b>5.3 Specific Operational Principles</b>	<b>110</b>
5.3.1 Gender as a Cross-cutting Issue	110
5.3.2 Gender Mainstreaming as a Tool for Institutionalising Gender Equality Frameworks	110
5.3.3 Adaptation of the Gender Mainstreaming Approach to NEEDS	110
5.3.4. Periodic Gender Action Plan	117
5.3.5 Macro-Micro Linkages in Policy and Practice	117
5.3.6 Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies	117
5.3.7 Assessment of Gender Impacts	119
5.3.8 Gender Indicators for Gender Impact Assessment	119
5.3.9. Gender Benchmarking	122
5.3.10 Resource Allocation and Resource Mobilisation	124
<b>PART III: CONCLUSIONS AND FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGIES</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 6: Conclusions and Forward Looking Strategies</b>	<b>125</b>

<b>6.1. Conclusions</b>	<b>125</b>
6.1.1. Political Will	
6.1.2. Gender as a Core Value for Transforming the Nigerian Society	126
6.1.3. Confronting Patriarchy	127
6.1.4. Coordination, Networking,	128
<b>6.2. Forward Looking Strategies</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Annexure</b>	<b>137</b>
1. Policies And Strategies For Enhancing The Policy Environment National	
2. Gender Policy Framework: Sectoral Prioritie	
3. Summary Data from Zonal Workshops (The Six Geo-political Zones)	
4a. Framework for Gender Sensitive Monitoring Process	
4b. Framework for Gender Sensitive Evaluation Process	
5 Nigeria National Gender Policy Fieldwork: Consultations at the National Level (Abuja – 30 <sup>th</sup> October – 3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2006)	
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>179</b>
1 Gender Violence Throughout a Woman’s Life	
2 Existing Gender-related policies in Nigeria	
3 The Beijing Platform For Action: The Twelve Critical Areas of Concern	
4 Millennium Development Goals MDGS	
5 The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)	
6 Gender Mainstreaming and Challenges to Gender Equality in Nigeria	
7 Data of VCCT Service at the Specialist Hospital Bauchi	
8 Women in Foreign Service	
9 School Enrolment Figures by Gender	
10 Boy to Girl Enrolment in Primary School	
11 Ratio of Secondary and Primary School Teacher – Year 2003	
12 Adult Literacy Rate (Age 15 and above)	
13 Access to land and credit facility by Gender	
14 Employment in International Aid Agencies	
15 Distribution of Female and Male in Some Elective/Appointive Positions (1999 – 2006)	

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CBCGE-	Community- Based Committee on Gender Equality
CCGE	Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Of Discrimination against Women
CIRDDOC	Civil Resources Development and Documentation Centre
CPA	Criminal Procedures Act
CPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicators Survey
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EFA	Education for All
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ETF	Education Trust Funds
FEAP	Family Economic Empowerment Programme
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FLP	Female Labour force Participation
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
FMWA	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
FOS	Federal Office Statistics
GCM	Gender Critical Mass
GE	Gender Equality
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GID	Gender in Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPG	Independent Policy Group
JPs	Justice of Peace
LEEDS	Local Government Economic Empowerment Development Strategy
LEEMP	Local Empowerment and Environmental Management Project
LGA	Local Government Area
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs

MP-MF	Multi-Partner Macro-Finance
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Programme
NAS	National Accounting System
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCCC	National Consultative and Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality
NCEMA	National Centre for Economic Management and Administration
NCWD	National Centre for Women Development
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic Health Survey
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NEPAD	New Partnership for African Development
NERDC	National Education Research and Development Council
NTTGE	National Technical Team of Gender Experts
NGAP	National Gender Action Plan
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations
NGP	National Gender Policy
NUC	National Universities Commission
SEEDS	State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
SME	Small and Medium scale Enterprises
SMEDAN	Small and Medium Enterprises Development
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UBE	Universal Basis Education
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United States Agency for International Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VVF	Vesico-Vaginal Fistula
WAD	Women and Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development
WRAPA	Women Rights Advancement and protection Alternative
WTO	World Trade Organization

## LIST OF TABLES

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Table 1.1	Distribution of Stakeholders at Different Consultative Levels
Table 1.2	Distribution of states by geo-political zones
Table 3.1	A Conceptual framework for Analysis of Gender and Poverty Reduction Strategies
Table 4.1	Policy Thrusts and Policy Outcome
Table 5.1	Responsibilities for Gender Equality
Table 5.2.	Composition and Mandates of The National Women’s Machinery on Gender Equality
Table 5.3	A framework for Mainstreaming Gender in National Development Policies



## **LIST OF FIGURES**

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- Fig 1.1 Federal Republic of Nigeria: States
- Fig 4.1 National mandate for Gender Equality (Government Institutions)
- Fig 4.2 Stakeholder Partnership for Gender Equality
- Fig 5.1 The Gender Management System
- Fig 5.2. National Mandate for Gender Equality (Government Institutions)
- Fig 5.3. Stakeholder Partnership on Gender Equality
- Fig 5.4 Operational Framework for the National Gender Policy: Application to NEEDS
- Fig. 5.5. Gender Mainstreaming As a Tool in Sectoral Development
- Fig. 5.6. Gender Mainstreaming Platforms
- Fig 5.7. Sectoral roles of stakeholders for Gender Mainstreaming
- Fig 5.8 Composite And Practical Steps For Gender Mainstreaming

## **LIST OF BOXES**

---

- Box 4.1      Protection of the rights of the girl child
- Box 5.1      Functions of the National Executive Council in instituting GEWE policy
- Box 5.2.     What should be done to strengthen FMWA-SD in its central role for  
implementing GEWE policies and programmes
- Box 5.3.     Functions of FMWA-SD for GEWE
- Box 5.4.*    Specific functions of Gender Critical Mass in Government ministries and  
Institutions
- Box 5.5.     Functions of NCWD in instituting GEWE
- Box 5.6.     The Functions of LGAs in GEWE Framework
- Box 5.7.     The Gender Mainstreaming Tools of the National Planning Commission
- Box 5.8.     A Gender Indicator Plan for SEEDS Benchmarking

## FOREWORD

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It is my honour and privilege to write the foreword to this important document that will re-direct the destiny of women and children as well as other vulnerable groups in Nigeria.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has a vision to (a) build a Nigerian Society devoid of gender discrimination, that guarantees equal access to political, social and economic wealth creation opportunities; and (b) develop a culture that places premium on the protection of the child and focuses attention of both the public and private sector on issues that promote full participation of women and children in the process of national development. Its mission is to serve as the national vehicle to bring about speedy and healthy development of Nigerian women in the mainstream of the national development process and ensure the survival, protection, development and participation of all children in preparation for meaningful adult life.

Nigeria as a member of the United Nations signed and ratified the various relevant international instruments, treaties and conventions without reservation. These instruments have always emphasized that member nations put in place all the necessary mechanisms needed to eliminate gender discriminations, ensure equality and human dignity to all, men and women. Yet there persists discrimination in the Constitution, national and state statutes, customary and religious laws. We all know that in Nigeria, traditions, customs sexual stereotyping of social roles and cultural prejudice continue to militate against enjoyment of rights and full participation of women in national development. The Gender Policy would help to eliminate all such barriers.

Further to this, its overall goal is to promote the welfare and rights of Nigerian women and children in all aspects of life: political, social and economic. This document is part of the responsibility to plan, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate the development of women in the country.

In concrete terms, the National Gender Policy for Nigeria will, among others:

- Contribute towards women's empowerment and the eradication of unequal gender power relations in the workplace and economy, in trade unions and in broader society;
- Encourage the participation, support and co-operation of men in taking shared responsibility for the elimination of sexism and redefining of oppressive gender roles;
- Increase the participation of women in leadership and decision-making;
- Increase awareness and gender sensitivity in all sectors;
- Defend and advance women rights;
- Ensure that through labour legislation and collective bargaining, the particular circumstances of women are considered and that measures are promoted to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender;
- Fight against stereotyping on the basis of gender in the workplace;
- Ensure that there is a gender perspective in all sectors of development.

Once adopted, the Policy will become an effective vehicle to eliminate unfair discrimination. The areas and sectors in which this Policy can make a difference in future are wide-ranging and include the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, NEEDS/SEEDS, NEPAD, The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and such sectors as agricultural, communication, transport. With the launch of the Policy, the various sectors will be equipped with strategic skills for engineering the implementation of this important empowerment document. Through the provision of a very clear and comprehensive implementation, monitoring and evaluation guidelines with regards to who does what will be spelt out to enhance accountability not just for the policy but for women's development.

The process that culminated in the production of this document started in August 2006 with the engagement of three Consultants and Technical Assistants by the Ministry; after which a work plan was drafted to ensure the early development of the Policy document. In line with the work plan, the Consultants undertook a review of most national and international documents on women and gender, met with gender focal persons at the various sectors, and had discussions with development partners and members of the civil society and individuals. Zonal workshops were also held in the six geo-political zones to ensure comprehensive and widespread ownership of the document.

The National Gender Policy will be an important new touchstone in the arsenal of national and states gender machineries, a sine-qua-non towards ensuring that both females and males benefit from policy changes vital for Nigeria to reach its developmental goals. It is expected to be an action-oriented transformation agenda to engineer women's empowerment in Nigeria. The policy will indicate one of the bold attempts by government to translate policies and principles into practice, vis-a-vis the entire value system of our society.

The new Policy framework, in conjunction with international instruments like the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration Goals will provide standards, which will set essential benchmarks to measure performance of our country as regards promotion of gender equality. As a ministry, we are challenged by values and we will use global standards to formulate and assess our progress and achievements. These instruments are goals in themselves and also tools for raising standards and informing the way policy and institutions work on the issues of women and children.

The need for a gender policy framework that will replace the current National Policy on Women is therefore in line with both national and international emerging concerns. The thrust of the gender policy will be providing composite gender policy guidelines for Nigeria within and outside government. It is expected that this Policy will help in gender mainstreaming and women's human rights in the country.

I would like to appreciate the role our various partners within and outside government have played in supporting this process, particularly UNICEF and the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Millennium Development Goals for co-facilitating this process. Other partners, including the ENHANSE/USAID Nigeria, are also appreciated. It is our prayer that the

cooperation that exists between these organisations and ours will continue to impact positively on the life of women and children in Nigeria.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inna Ciroma', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mrs. Inna Maryam Ciroma  
Honourable Minister for Women Affairs  
Federal Republic of Nigeria.

December, 2006

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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The contribution of a great number of groups, individuals and institutions to the process of conceptualising and drafting this document must be acknowledged.

First, we wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, for giving women the impetus to forge a higher vision within Nigeria's development space. His executive gestures in giving ample opportunity for women to show-case their aptitude for leadership in many areas of our national development and the numerous policies that his government has put in place to contribute to women's empowerment openly attest to his commitment to global and regional commitments, many of which he helped to shape. His extra-ordinary support for the cause of women in Nigeria is a legacy yet to be surpassed.

The Honourable Minister for Women Affairs, Mrs Ina Maryam Chiroma has, through her policies since assuming office, recognised the need for this transformative policy. Her vision which shaped the process, especially at this crucial time in Nigeria's development cannot be over-estimated.

Various key officers of many government Ministries, departments and agencies are highly commended for the manner in which they have cooperated to transform the mandate for women empowerment and gender equality, especially by empowering their various gender desks. They equally encouraged the process of drafting the Policy through our various consultations with them by providing relevant sector policy documents, programme reports as well as granting in-depth interviews.

Other partners in the process of consultation such as the Media, especially the NTA, various civil society coalitions at national and state levels, representatives of professional organisations both at formal and informal level, private sector organisations demonstrated immense support by contributing rich memoranda on their concerns and vision for gender equality, most of which confirmed the dire need for this Policy.

The different Ministries of Women Affairs in all 36 states and the FCT have been undoubting in the challenge to carry the mandate, in spite of great administrative and financial odds and against the backdrop of widespread misconceptions of their mandate. Your efforts therefore at supporting the process during the zonal consultations are hereby placed on record.

We highly appreciate the support of our development partners, including the United Nations family in Nigeria and especially UNIFEM, UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO and the UNDP; bilateral agencies especially CIDA, ENHANSE/USAID Nigeria, DFID; international development agencies especially the World Bank and international NGOs especially Action Aid, PATHS, SNR, and OXFAM, who contributed memoranda, granted interviews and provided documents on their best practices.

The three consultants that facilitated the process of drafting this policy are highly appreciated. They are Professor Olabisi Aina of the Obafemi Awolowo University who led the Team, Dr Bola Akanji of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research and Dr Fredrick Tyoor of the Benue State University. They demonstrated immense dedication, commitment and resilience, against the odds of time, to carry out a socially inclusive process and to shape the general opinion into transformative ideas. We thank their various institutions for releasing them for this important national assignment.

We thank the various individuals from the academia, the legislatures, UN system and NGO community who reviewed the document under a lot of pressure. Your input has greatly helped to improve the outcome.



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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### **1.1. Introduction**

Promoting gender equality is now globally seen as a development strategy that seeks to help women and men escape poverty, and improve their standard of living. Hence, the attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end in itself (being a human rights issue), but as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development.

Nigeria, like many other nations in the world, is responding to the clarion calls made variously by the United Nations to rid societies of all forms of discriminations, especially gender-based discriminations and violence against women, who are half of human resource waiting to be tapped for development. Following years of uncoordinated national response to the woman's question, Nigeria took a bold step in the Year 2000 when it adopted and passed into law the National Policy on Women, guided by the global instrument on the Convention of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocols, and the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Nigeria is currently reawakening its efforts at achieving gender equality. It becomes clear that women focused strategies alone could only slow down the pace of achieving gender equality in the facets of development. An overarching strategy for gender equality in development process is likely to be that which take women and men as partners in development, and more importantly, that which challenges the structure which continues to produce gender-based inequalities in the society, and balances power relations between women and men for growth and development both at micro and macro levels.

This Gender Policy Framework is structured into 3 parts, with a total of 7 chapters. Part I consists of Chapters 1 – 3. Chapter 1, which is the introductory chapter, presents the Nigerian demographic situation and background issues to the development of the National Gender Policy. Chapter 2 presents the policy context and the evolution of the gender and development frameworks, while chapter 3 presents gender perspectives to sectoral development and the situation analysis of gender status in Nigeria. Part II is structured into 2 chapters i.e. chapters 4 and 5. Part II presents the policy framework and its institutional and operational strategies, while Part III is a concluding section.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Despite past efforts of government at integrating the woman's question into the development agenda, gender inequalities remain pervasive within most Nigerian spaces. Hence, the current push for a different approach which would not only ensure women empowerment, but a sustainable development for the country through gender equality policy initiatives would could help balance power relations between men and women, and transform the institutions which continue to perpetrate gender injustice, poverty, and underdevelopment.

In the absence of Equal Opportunity Commission in the country, and weak legislative structures to protect the rights of women, development opportunities continue to elude women. Worst still, the existing policy documents, including the extant National Policy on Women failed to



challenge the structure, which continues to reproduce gender inequality and the overall disempowerment of women. Thus, using a development oriented approach, gender inequality is no longer seen only in human rights terms, but also as a cost to the development process.

New development imperatives continue to support the goal of gender equality, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality. Broad and systematic changes are therefore required to transform the institutional policy processes in such a way that they become gender sensitive and responsive. A new National Gender Policy is therefore required to chart the way for this institutional change, and social transformation amenable to the principles of gender equality.

Therefore, the purpose of the gender policy is to bring a gender perspective into all aspects of planning policy, developing legislation and transformation activities in Nigeria. Thus, the gender policy addresses the systematic inequalities between women and men in our society without ignoring the fundamental differences between them. More importantly, the gender policy prioritises the empowerment of women as an entry point to achieving gender equality, and seeks balance of power relations between men and women for the optimum benefit of both parties.

### **1.3. Methodology**

Drawing up this Gender Policy Framework involved a participatory process throughout the stages problem formulation; data gathering, analysis and validation of data; and policy formulation. Each stage involved consultations with stakeholders, including government officials, the civil society, and the development partners. The methodology used for writing this National Gender Policy therefore includes, but not limited to – desk review, field interviews, consultative meetings with stakeholders (both at the national and zonal levels), newspaper adverts and calls for memoranda from the public.

### **1.4. Policy and development context**

Gender equality and women's empowerment continue to be central themes in global treaties, covenants, and declarations because they are now seen as catalysts to people-centred development strategies which focus on poverty reduction, improved standard of living, and good governments that give men and women equal voices in decision-making and policy implementation.

The policy draws from the Beijing Platform of Action (BPA) in particular, as this provides a unique opportunity for women to become a critical part of the decision making process in matters relating to economic, political and social advancement the world over. With a central concern for the reduction of poverty among women, BPA touched on 12 critical areas of women's concerns, which include women's health, violence against women, media, increased resources for women, access to education, women's rights as human rights, improved economic and political participation and empowerment, the involvement of women in the decision-making processes, and the elimination of violence against women.

African governments have equally responded unequivocally to the burden of under-development by instituting continent-specific development goals and strategies, while also recognizing the firm commitment to gender equality as the bait to development. These are expressed in the

African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), adopted in 1981 and its Women's Rights Protocol of 2003; the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, 2001; and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) adopted in July, 2001. These initiatives are linked with other international agreements, and especially the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

### **1.5. Evolution of Gender and Development Frameworks**

The immediate challenges in defining a gender policy that will have direct effect on overall development goals as well as gender justice are to reconceptualise gender ideologies, especially gender equality, not only from the context of legal equality and human or women's rights, but within a broad development context. This has led to retooling of development frameworks that would fit into the expression of gender equality and gender equity. This has placed gender relations within macro-economic policy concerns, especially with the realisation that the power relations between women and men are critical to economic growth outcomes.

Concerns with gender relations have strengthened the affirmation that equality in the status of men and women is fundamental to the sustainable development of every society. Broad macro-policies in themselves are no longer sufficient. Rather, policies and their institutions of implementation must ensure equitable participation and benefit of all in policy processes.

The current link between gender relations and the economy has led to a paradigm shift, especially in development economics. To help locate the woman's question in development paradigm, the following concepts have emerged in successions - Women in Development (**WID**), Women and Development (**WAD**), Gender in Development (**GID**) and more recently, Gender and Development (**GAD**).

WID and WAD focus on women as the centre of the problem of development, that is, the exclusion of women from the development process, and hence the main strategies are women-focus programmes and projects, and a primary focus on women empowerment. Whereas, GID and GAD frameworks focus on the relations between women and men, and present the unequal relations of power that prevent equitable development, and women's full participation as the problem. The goal of GID/GAD framework is equitable and sustainable development, with women and men playing active roles as decision makers. For the latter, therefore, solution to underdevelopment is the empowerment of the disadvantaged, especially women, and the transforming of unequal relations in society. GAD approach therefore serves as the bedrock to the Nigerian Gender Policy framework, as it pursues both the empowerment of women, through a society that is just, and equitable.

### **1.6. The Policy Framework, Guiding Principles and Priorities**

The overall policy thrust is situated in critical empirical analysis of the situation of gender status within the Nigerian state, and in accordance with global, regional and national best practices. The vision is to achieve a just and gender-equitable society and economy with women and men contributing their optimal quota to the development process.

**The policy thrust** has the following four pillars –

- Policy reforms, with implication for mainstreaming of gender concerns at all levels;
- Gender education and capacity building, thereby ensuring technical expertise and positive gender culture;
- Legislative backstopping, thereby ensuring gender justice and human rights; and
- Economic reforms, which will help enhance productivity and policy efficiency, and with a lasting outcome for the empowerment of women and the vulnerable groups in our society.

**The guiding principles** of the policy are listed as -

- Making gender analysis an integral part of all policy articulation, implementation and evaluation
- All stakeholders, including government, the private sector, civil society organisations, and community based organisations, development partners, and individual women and men, are to take a role in the mandate for gender equity and equality.
- Instituting a gender policy that brings about cooperative interaction of women and men, and a gender culture which entails cooperation and interdependence rather than separation.
- Policy implementation is to depend on a cultural re-orientation that will be supported by policies and programmes of gender education, sensitisation, motivation and responsiveness, rather than only through legislations.
- Transformation of the policy environment within which gender equity programmes are to be implemented, thereby providing enabling structures and political will
- Reforming the existing structures of women development with a view to strengthening their capacity for a more robust mandate.
- Women empowerment is considered as integral to the achievement of gender equality.
- The Policy builds on existing structures and practices as well as draw from international experiences and practices.

### **The Policy Priorities**

These are sourced in the situation analysis of gender status across major development sectors. Using a gender perspective to development, gender role relations were described as a melting point between production and reproduction, and between economic growth and human development. In such a discourse, emphasis is placed on the triple roles of women – reproduction, production, and community management roles. Women tend to have more challenges in balancing reproductive and productive roles, and therefore suffer the most when the two spheres (reproductive and productive) meet at crossroads. Subsequently, 16 thematic areas were signified for an elaborate description of the situation analysis of the national gender status, which continues to present major challenges to the country's overall development. The major policy concerns emanating from these thematic areas are presented below.

#### **Culture, Family and Socialisation**

Many Nigerians (women and men) hold rigidly to ethnic based cultures, especially those, which cushion traditional gender role relations, and women's subordinate position in the Nigeria society. Significantly, a culture amenable to sustainable development must be dynamic, and

responsive to qualitative change. Situation analysis of Nigerian cultural groups continues to show the prevalence of harmful and discriminatory gender-based cultural practices, which impact on the family institution and its socialisation processes.

Although many micro-level women empowerment programmes were initiated under the WID policy programmes, gender inequality structures still persist; while sometimes, development efforts meant double burden for women e.g. women are over-worked and over burdened when development programmes failed to apply appropriate gender diagnostic tools and frameworks. A major policy goal is to eliminate cultural/religious gender-based biases and harmful cultural and religious practices which reproduce inequalities in gender role relations in the Nigerian society, and thereby giving a subordinate status to women compared to men.

### **Gender-based Violence:**

Gender-based violence is attracting much attention within the country as this continues to threaten women's human rights and have increased the vulnerability of women in the era of HIV/AIDS, particularly as women in most cases have less control over their health and sexuality. Females are not only married out, often too young, but worst still, without their consent, and at other times, they are exposed to domestic violence, and rape within and outside the family. In order to tap the potentials of women for development, gender sensitive policy that entrench equity between men and women is key.

Equal relationships between men and women in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the physical integrity of the human body, requires mutual respect and willingness to accept responsibility for the consequences of sexual behaviour, sensitivity and equity in gender relations enhance and promote respectful and harmonious partnerships between men and women. A major policy goal is to eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination, and ensure that women and men enjoy the same rights irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and class.

### **Education and Training:**

Women's education is a priority because it is the key to gender equity, justice and poverty reduction, improved skills and technological knowledge acquisition, improved nutrition, reproductive health and general socio-economic development of a nation. Despite government policy interventions and programmes, empirical evidences show that gender disparity in enrolment, attrition, and retention at all levels – primary, secondary, and tertiary. Specific to the South East, boy child education is dropping compared to girls'.

A number of policies now treat education as an instrument of development, and women education as a road to gender equality and social justice. Some of these policies include the Nigerian Constitution, the National Policy of Education, the Universal Basic Education Policy among others – all advocate acquiring of basic education as a means to meaningful contribution to development. Despite major strides and attempts at improving the education of the girl-child, there are still major constraints to female education, including - poor implementation of government policies; weak monitoring mechanisms to measure the implementation of programmes; poor budgetary allocations to educational sector; poverty; cultural and religious practices like early child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child labour among others. A major

policy goal is to ensure equal access of women, men, girls, and boys to both formal and informal education, and to improve demand and supply factors that hamper retention, completion, and high school performances, especially for the girl child at all levels - primary, secondary, tertiary; and in the informal setting.

### **Poverty and Economic Empowerment**

Widespread poverty remains the major challenge to development efforts. Some of the challenges of poverty are – unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, low status of women, environmental degradation, and limited access to social and health services, including reproductive health services. The outcome of these poverty generated conditions includes high levels of fertility, morbidity and mortality, and low economic productivity. Sustained economic growth and development is essential to poverty eradication, and more importantly, women empowerment is now seen as an entry point to gender equality in society.

Empirical data show that 70% of Nigerians live below the poverty level, many of who live on less than 1 US dollar per day. Also, over 47% of the labour force remains unemployed. Women are worse hit as the nation faces deepening economic crisis, mainly because they lack access to critical resources – education, capital, labour, entrepreneurial skills and more importantly, lack of control over the use of their valuable time. Hence, the percentage of women remains predominantly high among the core poor, while poverty seems to wear a woman's face.

Since Beijing, Nigerian Government has battled feminized poverty through women-focused programmes – Better Life for Rural Women; Family Support Programme; Family Economic Advancement Programme; National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); and more recently the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Many of these programmes failed to attract noticeable economic transformation that is beneficial to women because they remained at micro level frameworks. A major policy goal is to ensure that women have access to critical resources, and invest in their human capital as a means to reducing extreme poverty in families.

### **Employment and Labour Issues**

Generally, women, compared to men, lack access to employment opportunities because of low investment in their human capital, especially their low level of education, and lack of skills appropriate for formal labour employment. Women therefore dominate small-scale commerce in food, textiles, household goods and consumable. The few women employed in the formal labour market work within an environment which is non-responsive to their gender needs, while they are also discriminated against based on traditional gender-based division of labour which made women responsible for child bearing and rearing roles, and the care of the family as a whole.

Therefore, the Nigerian labour market is characterised by occupational sex segregation, gender-based discriminatory labour laws, gender unfriendly work environment, gender-based labour abuse; and insensitivity of the labour unions to gender-based abuses among others. A major policy goal is therefore to achieve equality and equity in employment opportunities and eliminate all discriminatory and abusive practices (on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, disability, or marital status) against the employment of women in the public and private sectors of the economy

### **Agriculture and Rural Development**

Despite the dominant role of petroleum sector as the major foreign exchange earner, agriculture remains the mainstay of Nigeria's economy. Agricultural sector provides the food for the populace, raw materials for the manufacturing sector, and a major foreign exchange earner for the country. In Nigeria, women who constitute about 50 percent of the national population, majority of whom reside in the rural areas, play pivotal roles. Despite the contributions of women in agricultural sector, their role in promoting economic and social change continues to be inadequately recognized and undervalued. This is mainly due to the patriarchal nature of the society, and especially traditional cultures and customs which forbid women from owning land, and gender-based taboos, and the sexual division of labour which keep women subordinate to men. A major policy goal to redress the subordinate positions of women in the Nigerian society is to remove all gender-based barriers facing women in agricultural production, and enhance the visibility and productivity of women's work in the agricultural sector.

### **Environment and Natural Resources**

The extent to which a nation meets the needs of its growing population depends on the extent to which it is able to manage and utilize resources within its physical and human environment. Demographic factors, combined with such factors as poverty, and lack of access to resources, excessive consumption and /or wasteful production have been found to often result in problems of environmental degradation, resource depletion, and thereby slowed down development. Women as primary extractors, managers, and users of environmental resources often bear the brunt of environmental degradation, resource depletion, and environmental neglect. Thus, appropriate policy is needed institute development frameworks that are gender sensitive in the harnessing of the country's environmental resources. In this respect, the major policy thrust is to remove gender-based barriers in the use and management of the national ecosystem; and eradicate negative environmental practices among women and men.

### **Health and Reproductive Services**

Nigeria has one of the highest maternal and child mortality rate in Africa – 704 per 100,000, and infant mortality rate being 105 per 1000 live births, and Under-5 mortality rate put at 178 per 1000. Women's reproductive roles continue to expose them to more health risks compared to men, yet the society has failed to give women's health care need the attention it deserves. Although, the government is undertaking a number of health reforms, including laws against harmful traditional practices e.g. FGM, widowhood rites, and child marriage, many cultural and religious practices still put the health of the woman in doldrums. Importantly, since women are more among the core poverty group, they are more likely not to be able to seek health in fee paying health institutions. In general, women's health is jeopardised due to ignorance, high cost of health care, inadequate facilities and personnel, exposure to harmful traditional practices, and lack of political will to implement pro-poor health policies, among others. A major policy goal is to improve access to health service and enhance better reproductive health care for all, and in particular the core poverty group who are mainly women.

### **Gender and HIV/AIDS**

Development will be impossible to achieve without a healthy populace. One of the major challenges facing the achievement of a healthy nation is the resent scourge of HIV/AIDS. While HIV/AIDS will continue to tax the capacities of nations, communities and households, the most

vulnerable of these groups is no doubt the women. For instance, women are at a disadvantage when it comes to access to information about HIV prevention, ability to negotiate safe sexual encounters and access to treatment for HIV/AIDS once infected. Consequently, HIV infection rate among women is rising faster than among their men counterpart in developing world. Yet, women are acknowledged as primary provider of healthcare for their families, their communities and societies and are likely to continue taking care of family and household needs, even when they are sick themselves.

However, because of cultural practices, social inhibitions, illiteracy, low social visibility, their health concern and needs are often overlooked by policy makers and implementers. Therefore, a specific gender policy that addresses the health problems of women will be adequate in dealing the problem. Emphasis in this case will be directed towards HIV prevention and control, mitigating the impact of HIV and widening access to treatment, care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS. Interventions for high risk groups such as sex workers and long distance drivers should be given adequate priority.

A major policy goal is to promote systematic and consistent gender mainstreaming into HIV/AIDS policies, plans, programmes, and activities at all levels; build gender analysis capacity of coordinating agencies; and create an enabling gender-inclusive environment in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and address the differential impact of the pandemic on women and men at all levels.

### **Politics and Decision Making**

Nigerian women's participation in politics has been very marginal and insignificant because of societal negative perceptions of the role of women in the public sphere, and especially their participation in politics, which is often seen as male domain. Major constraints to women participation in politics include general apathy to politics among women; religious and cultural biases against women participation in politics; lack of resources to compete with men in politics; low membership of women in political parties among others.

Although, women are gradually improving their membership in political parties, they only serve as supporters for male to acquire political positions. Women are often discouraged from participation in the electoral process because of political mal-practices, and unfavourable political environment characterised by political violence. A major policy goal is to achieve gender equity in political participation and representation, and to draw up mechanisms for the empowerment of women in politics.

### **Gender, Peace and Conflict Management**

Conflicts are unhealthy competition for power, resources and interests. By its very nature, conflict is counter productive. The festering areas of conflict ranges from resource control agitation and the natural resource degradation in the Niger Delta Region, ethnic upheavals among rival tribes like the Tivs and Jukuns of the middle belt, The Ifes and Modakekes of the Southwest and nationals of Nigeria and Cameroon in the Bakassi region, to religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians in communities where people have co-existed for centuries.

Despite the constitution provisions to protect the citizens in times and areas of conflict, women and children still remain vulnerable because such protections are not premised on robust and potent policy provisions. A gender sensitive policy goal is that which ensures that the women and men play active role in the prevention of conflicts and peace-building, and where conflict is unavoidable, to take appropriate measures to protect the citizenry, especially the vulnerable groups – women, children, and the disabled, and the elderly.

### **Information, Communication, and the Media**

The UN Commission on the Status of Women reconfirmed the importance it attached to the principles of freedom of expression from a gender perspective, in particular as related to women's full enjoyment of freedom of expression, equal access to the media, balanced and diverse portrayals by the media of women and their multiple roles, and media information aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women. Thus, respect for the human rights of women, including freedom of expression, is a fundamental principle of the international community.

The role of information and communication in national development cannot be overemphasized. Information fed to policy makers is crucial for making human-centred policies. Information availability is greatly enhanced by efficient communication technology. Marginalization of a segment of the population in access to relevant information deepens gender inequalities. Low levels of education of women relative to men have been the blight of development process in Nigeria. More importantly, is the overarching issue of organized data or information on gender issues in general. Gender issues are relatively new in the country and as such, gender-disaggregated data on issues of concerns to gender development are scanty. Therefore, given the importance of current and up-to-date data and information in gender policy formulation, analysis and effective programme planning, availability of appropriate database in various areas of gender concern is the key to the success of any programme on gender in Nigeria. The policy goal for this sector is the respect for the human rights of women and men, including freedom of expression, and the elimination of all negative/stereotypical presentation of gender issues at various levels of information dissemination and communication.

### **Other forms of Social Inequalities (Vulnerable Groups and Inequalities in Society)**

Women and men within this group are re-classified into dichotomous sub-groups because the power structures that apply in the mainstream population also apply among them, thereby creating multiple layer of inequality for women with special needs. This discrimination inherent in culture and legislative weaknesses is deep rooted in Nigeria and is rarely addressed by specific policy. Even where specific policies are in place, judicious implementation of these policies are lacking. Hence, a gender policy must recognize the need for targeting and creating an enabling environment for equitable participation of people in development without any recourse to people's circumstances. The policy goal is to ensure the realization of the rights of all persons with disabilities, and others who may suffer other forms of social inequalities in the Nigerian society, and ensure their participation in all aspects of social, economic, and cultural life.



### **Gender, Physical and Social Services**

The state is increasingly sharking in its responsibilities to its citizenry, especially in the area of provision of physical and social infrastructures and services, for example, access to potable water, electricity supply, efficient transportation networks, and even general security of life and property. The way these functions are being performed currently, erode the rights and security of the citizens – women and men. More importantly, women suffer the worse when these facilities are inadequately supplied, especially because of the cultural arrangements which put the burden of care, especially at the family level, on women. Traditionally, the *‘woman is traditionally the hewers of wood and the drawers of water’*. To change this, the policy goal is to provide for women and men an acceptable minimum threshold of universal access to water, sanitation, electricity, transportation networks, and general security of life and property

### **Legal and Human Rights**

Although the Nigerian Constitution guarantees equality between the sexes, and fundamental human rights, in reality, Nigerian women’s rights are ignored and infringed upon at different stages of their lives. The tripartite legal system - statutory/customary/Sharia - presents contradictory evidences on the legal status of women in Nigeria.

Although Nigeria is a signatory to many international human rights instruments e.g. CEDAW, the human rights of Nigeria women are still violated leading to gender inequality, and the inability of women to participate fully in the development process – political, economic, and socio-cultural sectors. It is important for policy to redress this unacceptable situation, and thereby present women and men as equal partners in the development process. The policy goal is to ensure that women and men have equal legal and human rights, and eliminate all gender-based discriminatory clauses in existing laws and legislations in Nigeria

### **National and International Partnership for Development**

Today, we live in an integrated world in which people, goods, ideas and capital flow across countries and geographical boundaries no longer matter. Reducing them will depend primarily on domestic policies in developing countries that are specifically designed to address the various inequalities among various actors in the domestic economy with a view to facilitating steady growth and development.

But global actions through the activities of international development partners can change external conditions and positively affect the impact of domestic policies. In this sense, global and domestic actions are complementary. Therefore, international development partners can play a key role in facilitating the design of gender sensitive developmental framework capable of bringing Nigeria out of the woods of underdevelopment. The role of international development partners will include capacity building through training and development for women. The policy goal is to ensure that partnership with national international organisations is guided by commitment to gender equality principles

### **1.7. Institutional and Operational Frameworks**

The National Gender Policy puts in place both institutional and operational frameworks that are to ensure that all gender equality imperatives are effectively implemented. The Gender

Management System (GMS), with its 4 pillars – enabling environment; GMS structures; GMS Mechanisms and GMS processes - is adopted for the management of the gender equality framework.

Importantly, the responsibility for gender equality is that of all government agencies, line ministries, state and community apparatuses as well as the civil society and the private sector. However, the Ministry of Women Affairs and its organs (both at the Federal, State, and Local Government levels) have responsibility for effective coordination of all gender equality and women empowerment institutions, and the implementation of gender equality and women empowerment programmes and activities.

The operational principle of the national gender policy is set within the macro-policy planning framework at any point in time, while the gender mainstreaming of all macro-policy guidelines, policy thrusts and strategies are the guiding principle.

The following are therefore central to the operational framework for gender equality and women empowerment frameworks instituted in the national gender policy –

- Decentralization of the mandate for gender equality to all institutions of governance and to all stakeholders;
- Promotion of gender mainstreaming as an institutional programme and societal culture;
- Gender monitoring with all macro-policies
- Institutionalization of the training and research in gender and development policy
- Financial sustainability for gender equality policies and programmes (i.e. a gender responsive budgeting in all government institutions and the private sector);
- Political will for implementation of gender equality policies, without which a national re-orientation and commitment to gender equality becomes difficult to achieve.
- Monitoring and evaluation that are well grounded in the use of standard gender indicators, both from the international, regional, and local perspectives.

### **1.8. Conclusions and Forward Looking Strategies**

The policy framework clearly defines the vision and mission of the national gender policy, its policy thrusts, and goals, institutional and operational frameworks. The policy clearly presents a layout of sector specific priorities, goals, and implementation strategies, all of which were derived from popular participation and consultative processes.

An important dimension of the development of this policy framework is to challenge existing structures, particularly; those structures that perpetuate gender inequality and gender injustice. Therefore, a more effective coordination is required bearing in mind the massive restructuring that would follow a true gender mainstreaming of government organs, and institutions, including those of the private sector. To be effectively coordinated, new structures must evolve, with a separation between women empowerment programmes and activities, in one hand, and those of gender equality, on the other. Independent institutions may become necessary in the future to regulate, monitor, and control gender role relations in the public and the private sector. More importantly, an institution which will help to ensure compliance with gender equality principles is needed as a watch dog for both public and private sector institutions. This latter vision is well articulated in the ‘forward looking strategies’ presented in the concluding chapter.

## **PART I:**

# **POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND GENDER FRAMEWORKS**

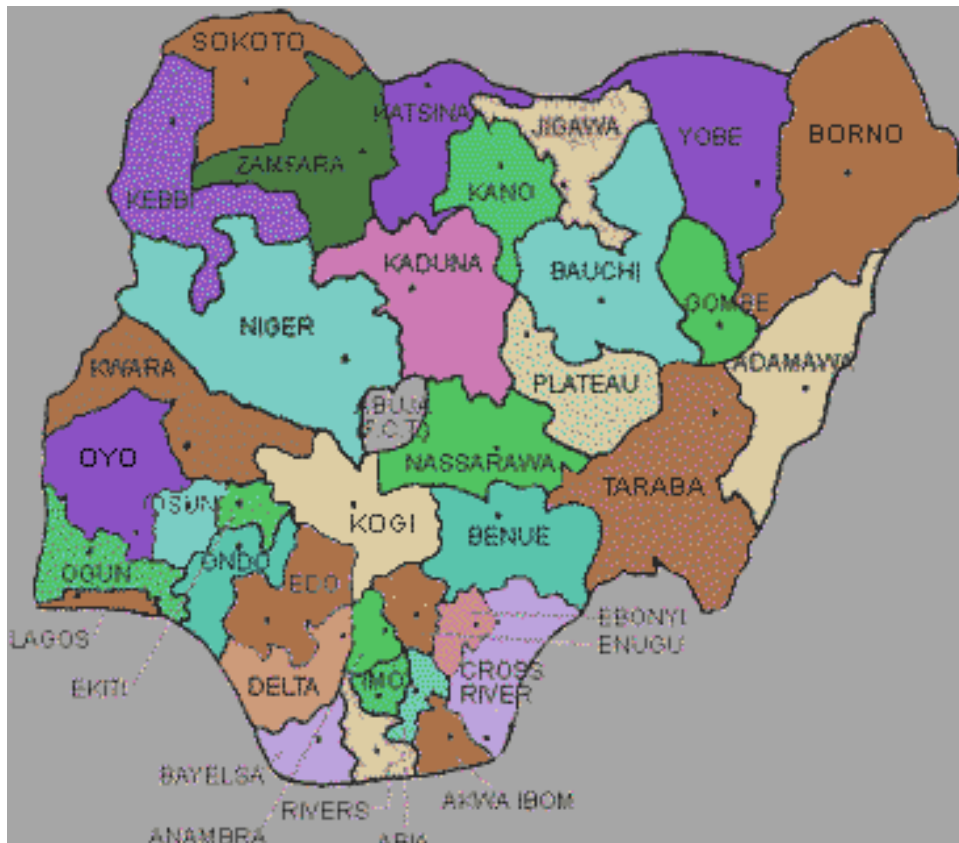
# CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY

## 1.1. Nigeria: Demographic Situation

### 1.1.1. Geography and governance

Nigeria lies between latitude 4°16' and 13°53' north and 2°40' and 14°41' longitude. It is located in West Africa bordered on the west by the Republic of Benin, on the north by the Republic of Niger and on the East by the Republic of Cameroon. To the south, Nigeria is bordered by approximately 800 kilometres of the Atlantic Ocean, stretching from Badagry in the west to the Rio del Rey in the east. The country also occupies a land area of 923,768 kilometres and the vegetation ranges from mangrove forest on the coast to desert in the far north.

*Figure 1.1—A Political Map of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*



Nigeria consists of 36 states and a federal capital territory (see Table 1.1). Each state is further divided into local government areas (LGAs). There are presently 774 Local Government Areas in the country. Since independence of 1969, Nigeria has been under military rule. However, Nigeria returned to democratic rule in May 1999 under a presidential system of government with three tiers of government-federal, state and local. The Federal Government comprises of an executive arm, a bi-cameral legislative arm and the judiciary. Each state has its own executive arm and house of assembly while each local government has a chairman and a council.

### **1.1.2. Population**

The total population of Nigeria according to 1991 census was 88,992,220. Applying the growth rate of 2.83 percent per annum, the National Planning Commission estimated the current population of Nigeria to be 126 million as at year 2004. The 2006 National Census exercise put the current population figure at 140 million (men being 72m and women 68m). Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the tenth most populous in the world. The population of Nigeria is still predominantly rural with approximately one-third living in urban areas and about two-thirds in the rural areas.

### **1. 1.3. Economic Activity Profile and Environmental Features**

The country is divided into six geopolitical zones with varied economic profiles. The North East, North West and North central zones have a picturesque mountainous land transversed by big river valleys. Mountains form parts of the undulating landscape. There are notable vegetation pattern within the zones, marked by short grasses and interspersed by short husky trees. The climate, soil and hydrology of the zones provide a conducive atmosphere for the cultivation of most staple crops, grazing land for animals and fresh water for fishing and forestry. The economy of the zones is agro-based majoring in such agricultural products as maize, millet, sorghum, yam, groundnuts, sugarcane, beans, guinea corn and cotton. Cottage industries are also predominant in the zone, cloth weaving from local cotton, dyeing, leather works, palm kernel crushing mills, metal and wood carving which includes the major environmental features of the South-South and South East zones are the mangrove swamps, rainforest, coastal sand ridges and humid tropical climate. Rainfall is seasonal and heavy. The zones are rich in natural resources, crude oil and other mineral deposits including marble, limestone, lignite, manganese, quartzite, gypsum, lead-zinc, gold, salts, coal, columbite, rubber, silica sand, timber, oil palm, kernel and clay. There are also agricultural resources and products that characterise the states in the zone. An overwhelming majority of the people in the zone are involved in two primary activities: farming and fishing.

Agriculture (including fishing for some states) is the main stay of the economy of the South West zone. Ogun State is one of the largest producers of kola nut in the country. It has an extensive deposit of limestone, which, according to scientists, can last for some five hundred years. The multi-million-naira cement factory in Sagamu is the largest cement factory in West Africa. Both this factory and Ewekoro Cement Factory depend on the local limestone resources for raw materials. There are also other modern industries producing high-quality beer, bicycle tyres, ceramic goods, clay bricks, carpet, and clothing materials.

Ondo State also situated in the zone is the leading cocoa-producing state in Nigeria. Osun state has the Osogbo Steel Rolling Mills and the Nigerian Machine Tools. Other industries in the State include the Cocoa Products Industry at Ede and the Supreme Oil Industry at Ilesha. In Oyo State, there are vast cattle ranches at Saki, Fasola, a dairy farm at Moniya in Ibadan and the state-wide Oyo State Agricultural Development Programme with headquarters at Saki. Two of the nation's largest seaports - Apapa and Tin-Can Ports are located in Lagos State

*Table 1.1—Distribution of states by official geo-political zones*

<b>Geo-political Zones</b>	<b>States in the Zones</b>
North East	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Yobe, Gombe, Taraba,
North West	Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Jigawa
North Central	Benue, FCT, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger, Plateau
South-South	Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Edo, Cross-River, Delta, Rivers
South East	Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo
South West	Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo

## **1.2. Background Issues to the Development of the National Gender Policy**

### **1.2.1 Introduction**

In the year 2000, Nigeria adopted and passed into law the National Policy on Women. The need for the policy was

*“to fulfil the yearnings as well as (promote) the efforts of Federal, State and Local Governments, Non-governmental Organisations, International Development Partners, the private sector, concerned corporate bodies and individuals to integrate women fully into national development, in order to remove those gender inequalities that have evolved through structures and processes created by patriarchy, colonialism and capitalism”.*

The document was therefore seen, in the main as a vehicle towards social equity, justice and an improved quality of life. The main guiding principles of the policy are the global instrument on the Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocols as well as the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The critical section or constitutional principle which tallies with the core goals of CEDAW is that of achieving equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law for women through the application of the anti-discriminatory clause that stipulates that:

*“All citizens without discrimination on any group whatsoever have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment”*

The focus of the policy was therefore, to the largest extent, the pursuance of legal equality for women and men and the removal of all obstacles to the social, economic and political empowerment of women. The face, and indeed, the emphasis of the policy is women empowerment. Page 10 of the policy document, in articulating the goals of the policy, clearly states that it (the policy) draws heavily from national and international initiatives related to Women in Development. To this end, several strategic actions in different sectors were developed to create women-focused programmes in education, science and technology, health, employment, agriculture, industry, environment, legal space, social services, politics and

decision-making and media relations. All these were geared to close gender gaps in the status of women and men in these sectors.

### **1.2.2. Statement of the Problem**

Over six years on, situation reports on the quality of life of women, children and their households, institutional processes and outcomes, access of women to public policy and political spaces do not show that significant strides have been achieved in most of the outlined respects. According to the Strategic Country Gender Assessment of the World Bank, gender inequalities remain pervasive in most Nigerian spaces. Although the country poverty profile indicates that poverty incidence is lower in female-headed households, the same profiles show that, in absolute terms, there is a greater number of poor women than poor men and that women are more represented among the core poor (FOS, 2004, MDG 2005). The Millennium Development report (2005) shows that while the country has achieved progress in certain areas such as closing gender gaps in education at the primary level, glaring gaps remain at higher levels while the status of goals 4 and 5 on maternal and child mortality have suffered a decline. According to the President, “this is unacceptable” given the immense capabilities in the country and the efforts that have gone into meeting these challenges. Even though the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Periodic Country Reports on the implementation of CEDAW, admits, in the main, that a lot of effort and success has gone into putting in place appropriate legislations and institutional processes for women empowerment and access to the law, there remains widespread concern on increasing, persistence and social acceptance of negative socio-cultural practices, low enrolment and educational achievement for girls, precarious conditions of the health of women and children, the low number of women in public office and so on. Thus, while some strides have been made in obtaining *de jure* equality for women, the same cannot be said of the *de facto* conditions of women and children.

Another concern of policy analysts and development agents is the recognition that gender issues have gone beyond the largely women empowerment approach and the narrow WID concepts of the 1980s to an all-embracing approach of gender and development – GAD. Indeed, the centrality of gender power relations, not only to the achievement of rights of women, but also to the overall sustainable, all-inclusive national development, is key to gender equality. In other words, the goal has shifted from women empowerment to gender equality, not only as a stand alone goal, but as a necessary compact for peace, security, well-being and poverty reduction for all, including women.

In addition, the policy scene, regional and global, has continued to change. There are new imperatives being admitted continually to support the goal of gender equality. Some of these include the Millennium Development Goals, the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality. At the same time, there are new challenges in the macro-policy arena that constrain a wholemeal application of a women empowerment approach. Broad and systematic changes are required that must transform the institutional policy processes themselves for gender sensitivity.

The operational framework of the National Policy on Women was also weak. Its main aim was to integrate women fully into national development, by fashioning out perceived relevant objectives and strategies into the sectoral components of the Policy. In other words, the programming framework was to address specific problems within sectors of the economy.

However, the operational framework lacked any link with existing sectoral policies and strategies as defined in the extant national development plan, at that time, the Perspective Plans or National Rolling Plans. The gender programmes, while laudable, were therefore, not conceived within the realities of the government's macro-policy plans, including its resource allocation framework. Women-focused programmes interacted with government only through the operations of the Ministry of Women Affairs and inter-governmental programmes of development partners. While this created a mismatch between government resources and activities, the projects were seldom institutionalized or assume permanence.

The lessons learnt during the past years have led to the conclusion that a different approach is needed to achieve the empowerment of women; that although the empowerment of women remains critical to the achievement of gender equality, gender equality policy initiatives must focus on imbalance of power relations between men and women and institutional transformation, as a means of social justice, empowerment and poverty reduction for all.

To this end, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, which is currently charged with the overall responsibility for this goal deemed it fit to *“adapt to this new development approach and to transform the current National Policy on Women to a more robust document that will address the concerns of women and men in a transformative way”*. A new National Gender Policy is therefore to be developed.

### **1.2.3 Rationale for the National Gender Policy Framework**

Gender discrimination remains pervasive in many dimensions of life worldwide, while gender gaps are widespread in access to, and control of resources, in the economic and political spheres. Promoting gender equality therefore, is an important part of a development strategy that seeks to enable all people – women and men alike – to escape poverty and improve their standard of living. Thus, increasingly, the attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end in itself (being a human rights issue), but as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development. No wonder, gender equality and women's empowerment concerns continue to play central themes in global treaties, conventions, and declarations.

The human rights doctrine/the liberal principles of the secular state culture was globally expressed in 1948 with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), whereby almost all the countries of the world agreed to a basic common standard of human rights. This document brought about a vision of a new global order that guaranteed all individuals basic human rights, while also prohibiting discrimination on grounds of race, religion, or sex.

The human rights regime, even as it exists in national constitutions, continues to meet a road block at the intermeshing of culture and religious practices which dominate patriarchal societies, and pre-date the regime of global human rights imperatives.

Beyond the human rights debates, is now the fundamental issue of global and national development which is intricately tied to the 'woman's question', while the status of women becomes an important variable in understanding the wealth of nations. Hence, over the past three decades, a fundamental shift has resulted in the ways that the disadvantaged position and



conditions of women have been analysed and addressed. Interest in the position of women in societies has gone beyond seeing women as ‘the problem’ of development, and/or as ‘subject of analysis’, to a focus on gender role/power relations, thereby focusing on men and women in an interactive way, as they both shape and are re-shaped by development processes and practices. The shift from the human rights approach to a development oriented framework in analysing and understanding the role of men and women in development comes from the back drop of seeing gender equality not only as an issue of social equity but also as a cost to the development process. This shift in understanding has led to changes in the ways that the institutions of development function and understand the gendered nature of social and economic processes and their outcomes.

However, the multiple legal systems in many of the African countries, and the co-existence of statutory, religious and traditional systems led to violations of women's rights in the areas of marriage, inheritance and divorce. At the national level, there are weak structures to support litigation, implementation and reporting mechanisms for the Protocol.

In Nigeria, as in many other African states, despite the constitutional provisions and commitments to regional and international human rights treaties and conventions, the rights of women and girls are grossly undermined and under-valued. This is overtly evident in the overall low Gender Development Index (GDI) for the country, and exacerbated in low participation of women in paid employment, politics, leadership and decision-making, and an equally high rate of physical and sexual harassment and assault, trafficking, marital rape, early/forced marriage, and different phases of harmful traditional practices against women and the girl child. In the absence of Equal Opportunity Commission in the country, and weak legislative structures to protect the rights of women, development opportunities continue to elude women. Worst still, the existing policy documents (e.g. the National Policy on Women) failed to challenge the structure, which continues to reproduce gender inequality and the overall dis-empowerment of women.

#### **1.2.4 The Purpose and Aims of the National Gender Policy**

The purpose of the gender policy is to bring a gender perspective into all aspects of planning policy, developing legislation and transformation activities in Nigeria. The gender policy should address the systematic inequalities between women and men in society without ignoring the fundamental differences between them. It prioritises the empowerment of women as a way of achieving gender equality and is based on the premise that gender inequality is about power relations between men and women, and that, any policy, plan or practice that seeks gender equality must balance these power relations for the optimum benefit of both parties.

The aim is to incorporate gender policy statements into all national goals and sectoral objectives, by analysing the ways and manner that gender inequality intervenes with the achievement of local, national, regional and global policy outcomes. Implementing the policy will therefore not be the sole responsibility of the national women's machinery but rather, a shared responsibility of all stakeholders. The gender policy will articulate the problems, the challenges, the imperatives, and there-from the vision, goals, commitments and outputs, strategies to achieve gender equality, as well as a framework of implementation and monitoring.

It is not a programme document. Rather it will assist the process of developing relevant action plans at the programme level in all sectors of the economy. It will address how the practice of gender equality principles will permeate the policy and practice at all levels of society. It will therefore focus mostly on institutional processes and activities that they will entail at the macro- and micro levels – household, community and state. Where ideas for implementation have crystallised through our numerous consultations, a broad indication of the intended programme of action will be provided under each policy commitment. An appendix to the policy document is therefore an action plan for its implementation and necessary institutional structures.

The gender policy is articulated within the framework of the nation's extant policy framework, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) which is not just an economic development plan, but a holistic policy for total national reorientation and transformation, towards poverty reduction and sustainable and equitable growth. Gender equality therefore will sit, among other important crosscutting goals, in the interface of NEEDS, SEEDS, LEEDS and their expected outcomes.

Most importantly, the gender policy will not only provide a blueprint for practice across the boards but will also work towards developing a common set of ideals in all cultural, socioeconomic and spatial contexts, based on a common understanding of gender concepts as they relate to policies, programmes and practice. In other words, this policy recognises the variant and often conflicting views and perceptions of gender and gender equality from cultural, religious as well as contemporary western values of development. It will therefore provide a clear vision of what the nation aims to achieve through gender equality, deriving from our common vision as a country as well as within the evolution of gender debates in the international arena.

Lastly, it is important to note that the goal of gender equality is a transformatory one, like all processes of change and may threaten entrenched interests of individuals, groups and organisations. However, the National Gender Policy for Nigeria is based on wide-spread consultation at all levels of national development and is packaged to undergo continuous fine-tuning, based on an active communication strategy, continued sensitisation and gender education as well as constant provision of facts and figures on gender status to promote evidence-based gender action plans. It is therefore, like NEEDS, a living document.

### **1.2.5 Guiding Principles of the National Gender Policy**

The current National Gender Policy challenges the present structure of gender role relations in both the private and the public spheres of life, and in particular the structures which continue to perpetrate gender inequalities, and the inability of the citizenry (women and men) to use their natural endowments and potentials to the optimum because of negative traditional gender role orientations and values which impede development. The policy is to facilitate institutional frameworks, which will ensure equal access to, and control over resources, for both women and men. This policy brings gender issues to the core of policy and planning for the government and its agencies, the private sector, and the civil society organisations and international agencies working in the country.

To foster genuine and sustained development, the proposed National Gender Policy shall ensure that gender concerns are mainstreamed into all government policies and programmes. The macro-economic policy of government shall serve as an entry point, and as a driving-force for gender mainstreaming.

The framework to be adopted for the new National Gender Policy seeks to go beyond the central frame of the old National Policy on Women, which was very programmatic, and heavily concentrated on women's practical gender needs, at the expense of their strategic gender needs (the latter being the only organ to challenge the present patriarchal structure which continues to sustain gender inequalities, and the position of women as subordinate). Since women empowerment is a pre-condition for gender equality, the new policy (even though focuses on broader issues of inequalities in gender role relations, and unfriendly structural arrangements across gender groups), puts premium on women empowerment policies and programmes. By this, the new policy is eclectic in creating a niche with many of the projections of the existing National Policy on Women, many of which did not translate to practice because of lack of institutional support and drive. A strong point of the new Policy is to fashion appropriate institutional framework, which could capture macro- and micro-level issues. It is assumed that it is only in this way that policy and legislative issues can be complemented with micro-level practices (practices within homes, communities, and the socio-cultural environment) to help challenge gender inequalities, and reproduce a society where women and men become equal partners in the development process.

This National Gender Policy is to promote a cooperative approach within and across sectors, as gender becomes a crosscutting issue in development. This will thereby enable each sector to adapt and adopt gender frameworks into their policy thinking, planning, and practice as a matter of necessity and responsibility to the national mandate of ensuring gender equality in all national institutions, and projecting gender equality as a norm.

The main goal of this National Gender Policy is therefore to establish a clear vision and framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices that will ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government as well as in the workplace, the community and family.

In view of the mandate given, the specific objectives of the National Gender Policy are to:

- Create an enabling policy environment for translating government commitment to gender equality into reality.
- Establish policies, programmes structures and mechanisms to empower women and to transform gender relations in all aspects of work at all levels of government as well as within the broader society.
- Ensure that gender considerations are effectively integrated into all aspects of government policies activities and programmes
- Establish an institutional framework for the advancement of the status of women as well as the achievement of gender equality.
- Advocate for the promotion of new attitudes, values and behaviour, and a culture of respect for all human beings in line with the new policy.

- Strengthening the voice of women in civil society, in parliament and in other legislatures who have already made visible impact by challenging gender-blind laws and policies.
- Enhancing the work that is already being undertaken by the Ministries of Women Affairs and the National Centre for Women Development at the national, state and local government levels and those of other development agencies committed to issues of women empowerment, gender equality and equity for all.
- Guide the development of the National Gender Action Plan (NGAP).

### 1.2.6 Methodology

The assignment has been in four stages. The first was a broad review of relevant literature to inform the whole process. Second was to develop an appropriate and acceptable methodology in a participatory manner with the consultants, the Ministry and representatives of major stakeholders, against the backdrop of the time constraint for the assignment. The third stage was the process of national and zonal sensitisation and consultation, followed by a validation process with all stakeholders consulted. The fourth stage was the drafting of a policy, which also benefited from consultations with the Ministry at various points to establish not only a robust policy, but also a workable policy.

The methodology used for writing this National Gender Policy therefore includes, but is not limited to:

- Desk review of some national and international documents on women and gender;
- Meetings with gender focal persons at the various sectors;
- Consultation through interviews/discussions with development partners, civil society organisations, line ministries and key national institutions;
- Zonal consultations in the six geo-political zones of the country (North-East, North-West, North-Central, South-South, South-West and South-East) based on a Call for Memoranda (published in 'THIS DAY' of November 1 and The Guardian of November 3, 2006), discussions with key stakeholders and also collection of their memoranda
- Public enlightenment and sensitisation of stakeholders through the mass media (print and electronic) of the process to facilitate their input.
- Validation of findings from desk review and consultation with policy makers, civil society organisations, development partners, private sector organisations, professional groups, etc;
- Validation and technical review of a zero draft;

**Table 1.2: Distribution of Stakeholders at Different Consultative Levels**

Stakeholders	Number Consulted at National Level	Number of institutions / Organizations consulted at Zonal Level						Gender structure of participants	
		N.C	N.W	N.E	S.S	S.W	S.E	Female	Male
Government Institutions	20	15	27	14	12	13	22	86	37
Private Sector	7	1	17	1	1	1	2	12	18
Professional	6	6	1	4	1	2	13	21	12

Associations									
Civil Society Organization	16	14	16	32	23	15	12	78	50
Community-based Organization	Nil*	4	9	27	4	4	1	38	11
Development Partners	17	Nil**	1	1	Nil**	Nil**	Nil**	14	5
Total	66	40	70	78	42	35	50	249	133
<b>Total No. of Organisations/Institutions/Groups = 379</b>									

*Key:*

\* *Community-based organisations were consulted only at the zonal level;*

\*\* *Development Partners were consulted only at the national level*

### **1.2.8 Limitations/Constraints**

The very short time assigned for this assignment was the greatest limitation to the process. Drafting a national policy in three months is a Herculean feat, to say the least. It could also be a source of misgiving on the social inclusiveness of the process. However, recognising the fragile nature of governance in Nigeria at this point in time, it was indeed agreed that it is better to have a working policy document which could provide the basis for wider consultation and input than not to have any at all. The limitations of time which precluded wider consultation and especially, a longer sensitisation period is recognised. However, the “adapted” methodology sought to make up for this constraint as much as possible.

Like all projects in Nigeria, the limitation of funds was also a hindrance to more expansive methodologies such as surveys and other participatory field methods which could have reached deeper to the grassroots. However, this apparent lapse was rectified by the availability of numerous relevant academic and policy studies on gender situation analysis, compilations of best practices, bye-laws, acts and the availability of gender status data from periodic volumes. The internet was used extensively to provide access to existing best practices both from within Africa as well as from countries of the North and various policy frameworks that informed what we hope is a globally relevant policy framework. Funds also limited the size of the support team and the extent of analysis that was feasible. Notwithstanding, what comes out is the best under the circumstances. Being a “Living Document”, it is expected that, like NEEDS, the Policy will continue to be refined to meet evolving challenges of achieving gender equity and women empowerment in Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER 2: POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND THE EVOLUTION OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS**

### **2.1. International and Regional Contexts**

Promoting gender equality is an important part of a development strategy that seeks to enable all people—women and men alike—to escape poverty and improve their standard of living. Thus, increasingly, the attainment of gender equality is not only seen as an end itself (being a human rights issue), but as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development. No wonder, gender equality and women's empowerment concerns continue to play central themes in global treaties, covenants, and declarations.

The concern with gender relations has strengthened the affirmation that equality in the status of men and women is fundamental to every society. And this concern has prompted a refinement of the perspectives of what development should be and how to achieve it effectively. Development then becomes more than the creation of opportunities for people to earn sustainable livelihoods; it also then necessarily requires the creation of opportunities for men and women to seize those opportunities. Development requires good governments that give men and women equal voices in decision-making and policy implementation (Lopez, 2000)

The adoption of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 entrenched the guiding principles of the secular state and human rights culture globally, whereby almost all the countries of the world affirmed their commitment to a basic common standard of human rights. The UDHR envisaged a vision of a new global order that guaranteed all individuals basic human rights, while also prohibiting discrimination on grounds of race, religion, or sex. The human rights principles of the Declaration were later elaborated in a number of human rights conventions. Among these conventions are the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), both of which included a clause that guarantees the rights to non-discrimination between men and women. Others are the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952); the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957); and the Convention on the Consent to Marriage (1962).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly is often described as an 'international bill of rights of women'. It codified women's rights to equality in all spheres of life as a global norm. The Convention provides the basis for realising equality between women and men by ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in political and public life --- including the rights to vote and to stand for election--- as well as equal access to education, health and employment. State parties agreed to take all appropriate measures, including legislation and special measures, to ensure that women enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms. By 2001, CEDAW has been ratified by 170 countries including Nigeria, thereby making gender equality a universal norm.

As the world continues to show more interest in its own development, global policies, conventions, and agreements continue to accede to gender equality and women empowerment. Among these agreements are the following:

- Declarations and Platforms for Action of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All;
- The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Agenda 21);
- The 1993 Human Rights Conference;
- The 1994 International Conference on Population and Environment;
- The 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing Conference)
- The 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with Goal 3 poised to achieve gender equality in the education sector by 2015;
- The 2000 Dakar Declaration on Education for All (EFA);
- The 2004 Solemn Declaration of African Heads of State on Gender Equality within the AU policy framework (particularly the NEPAD Strategic framework)

The Beijing Conference of 1995 provided a unique opportunity for women to become a critical part of the decision making process in matters relating to economic, political and social advancement the world over. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) thus touched on 12 critical areas of women's concerns, which include women's health, violence against women, media, increased resources for women, access to education, women's rights as human rights, improved economic and political participation and empowerment, the involvement of women in the decision-making processes, and the elimination of violence against women. A central concern of BPA is the reduction of the incidence of poverty among women given the fact that over 70% of women live below the poverty line in developing counties (UN, 1995).

African governments have responded unequivocally to the burden of under-development by instituting continent-specific development goals and strategies, and recognising firm commitment to gender equality as the bait to development. As expressed in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), which was adopted in 1981 and became operational on October 21, 1986, member states established bodies to protect and promote human and people's rights. The most important obligation for each country is to adopt legislative or other measures to protect the dignity of Africa and its peoples. Although ACHPR document did not specifically cater for gender equality in member states, the Charter nonetheless, provided the basis for other bodies to consider the issue of women's rights and gender mainstreaming. A good example of this is the 2001 ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which has a section on the rights of women and children in member states. Also, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) adopted in July, 2001 was designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent, particularly issues such as escalating poverty levels, underdevelopment and the continued marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation processes, which were of serious concern to African leaders. Importantly, NEPAD has acceleration of women empowerment as one of its strategic objectives, as it anchors the development of African on its resources and the resourcefulness of its people, and ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development targets.

The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa is a Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). The Protocol which was adopted on July, 2003 in Maputo reaffirmed African's commitment to the protection of women's rights as enshrined in major

international instruments of human rights. The protocol endorses affirmative action to promote the equal participation of women, including equal representation of women in elected office, and calls for the equal representation of women in the judiciary and law enforcement agencies. As of 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2004, thirty countries, including Nigeria had signed the Protocol.

## **2.2. Evolution of Gender and Development Frameworks**

The global commitment to gender equality has led to the questioning of basic assumptions and concepts which guide development practice. With a focus on people-centred and sustainable development, came the question of how best to integrate the woman's question into the development process. Importantly, global and regional commitment to closing gender gaps has now become an important imperative for gender-equitable policy design and implementation, in order to ensure that the concerns of all (women and men) are being served and especially that gender justice is achieved.

Apart from the right-based instruments therefore, is the need for gender equality to be situated within the scope of macroeconomic development. This is because it is now widely acknowledged that the causes of gender inequality are rooted in the form of macro-economic policies and their institutional practices. Therefore, a gender policy must be positioned to address gender concerns, which threaten sustainable development in a nation state.

The immediate challenges in defining a gender policy that will have direct effect on overall development goals as well as gender justice are to:

- Reconceptualise gender ideologies, especially gender equality, not only from the context of legal equality and human or women's rights, but within a broad development context;
- Identify the summary effect of gender assignment on women and men within different economic sectors, social institutions and policy spaces
- Define a systematic way of continuous recognition and assessment of gender status and gender effects within all policy processes, that is frameworks for gender assessment;
- Fashion out necessary reforms of institutions that will sustain the above, for instance, reforms of the research, training and statistical systems;
- Put in place a system of benchmarking gender effects through monitoring, evaluation and checks and balances on policies and practices

This section therefore outlines development frameworks which guide the global attempts at integrating gender issues, and women's concerns into international and national development policies and practice. These frameworks are instructional to the development of the proposed gender policy for Nigeria.

### **2.2.1. Gender and the Development Debate**

The gender policy is premised on the theoretical underpinnings for gender equality from evolving debates about the place of gender relations in macroeconomic policy making.

- Growing debates since the early nineteenth century over the prevailing macroeconomic theories and practices have led to four important conclusions:
- First, that macroeconomic stability is an essential prerequisite for achieving the growth needed for human development.



- Second, growth does not trickle down; development must address human needs directly through deliberate policies.
- Third, no single policy will trigger development; a comprehensive approach is needed.
- Fourth, institutions matter and so sustainable development should be rooted in processes that are socially inclusive and responsive to changing circumstances. Because humans govern institutions, the power relations between women and men becomes critical in the outcome of growth.

The need for more human-centred macroeconomic development is hereby noted as a prerequisite, not only for gender equitable development but also for broad sustainable development and poverty reduction in the nation. The move in international levels to consider gender equality as a key element of development emerges from these principles.

Concerns with gender relations have strengthened the affirmation that equality in the status of men and women is fundamental to the sustainable development of every society. It has prompted a refinement of the perspectives of what development should be and how to bring it about efficiently. Development is hereby conceived as the creation of opportunities for people to earn sustainable livelihoods. This necessarily requires the creation of opportunities for men and women to respond to macroeconomic policy initiatives in ways that will expand their choices for sustainable livelihoods and for escaping poverty. Broad macro-policies in themselves are no longer sufficient. Rather, policies and their institutions of implementation must ensure equitable participation and benefit of all in policy processes. In that regard, for instance, sustainable macro-policy in the education sector implies, not only more and better schools, but also equal access to quality education for boys and girls. For this to occur, development requires that governments give men and women equal voices in decision-making and policy implementation and at the same time, target policies that bar educational access to specific groups.

### **2.2.2. Evolution of Gender Concepts**

Within the outlined debates of macroeconomic policy orientation, the ways that the concerns of women have been viewed and treated within policy set-ups have also continued to evolve. In relation to development policies in developing countries, this growing alternative thinking that shifts the focus of orthodox economics has strengthened the links between gender relations and the economy. Evolution of these concepts and theories over the past three decades are better known via the tag-names of Women in Development (**WID**), Women and Development (**WAD**), Gender in Development (**GID**) and more recently, Gender and Development (**GAD**).

#### **2.2.2.1. WID Framework**

Alternative paradigms began to emerge in the 1970s via the Women in Development (**WID**) approaches, which targeted the basic needs of Women. **WID** looks at the lives of women within the development space, or views women as objects of interest or subject of analysis (Feminist Africa, 2002).

#### **2.2.2.2. WAD Framework**

In the 1980s, women economists argued that macro-economic policies being implemented in developing countries in the context of structural adjustment (SAPs) were not gender-neutral in their effects. The Women and Development paradigm was paramount. **WAD** recognises the

problems that face women within their given space in social and economic spheres as problems for development. It calls for the initiations of special programmes within development to address the basic and strategic needs of women.

### **2.2.2.3. GID Framework**

In the 1990s, a lot of empirical models were developed and tested to show the impacts of gender relations on the economy (on the economy of care or reproduction, in relation to agriculture, employment, etc.). The relevance of gender to macro-economic analysis and policy thus became clearer. The Gender in Development framework

**GID** was introduced. **GID** did not go beyond recognition of inequalities and causes of such inequalities and, within this purview, programming for gender equality focused on empowerment tools, mainly targeted at women. The inadequacy of the GID approach gave way to the Gender and Development framework (GAD).

### **2.2.2.5. GAD Framework**

**GAD**, the latest of these concepts further sees gender equality not only as an issue of social equity but also as a cost to the development process. **GAD** recognises the centrality of closing gender gaps as the only way to move development forward in a sustainable way and integration of gender in the mainstream of development thinking as a sine qua non for pre-empting such ‘gender-blindness’. This is in the sense that, inequality of capabilities, assets and opportunities of segments of the population, short-changes efficiency of the mainstream of economies, reinforces national and global poverty profiles and impacts negatively on growth (Seguino, 2000). This shift in understanding has led to changes in the ways that institutions of development function so as to be aware of the gendered nature of social and economic processes and their outcomes.

The outcomes of this latest paradigm constitute some of the theoretical entry-points for gender-aware macro-economics (World Development Journal, 1995, 2000). These, in the main, focus on the need for macroeconomics to recognise the “reproductive or care economy” as a viable sector that strongly influences the outcome of macroeconomic policies. Social institutions reinforce the gender inequalities in rights to resources and institutions and policies and have exacerbated such inequalities.

## **2.3. Globalisation and Inequalities**

Two emerging processes are at the centre of this new evolution of thinking on the need for engendering theory and policies. These are:

- the wave of liberalisation policies around the world and their effects on poorer countries and their vulnerable citizens, the majority of whom are women.
- deepening global poverty and inequity that have accompanied globalisation, with its disproportionate burden on women

Development planning is therefore increasingly being conceived with the recognition of the need to close gender gaps towards the achievement of sustainable development against the backdrop of a globalising world. Hence, the global clamour for gender equality and all other forms of inequality, is no longer just a human rights campaign but as a necessary condition for sustainable development.

In response, mainstream theories of engendering macroeconomics are now focusing on the relationship between gender structures and the associated social forces as well as extant macroeconomic policies (trade, fiscal, monetary, exchange rates and so on). National, regional and global institutional structures of liberalisation, such as the WTO, NEPAD, MDGs and other multilateral agreements are being reassessed by gender analysts from a gender perspective with a view to calling for policy changes that incorporate gender relations. The same conceptual entry points common to all these reviews are

- social institutions, because they bear and transmit gender biases,
- unpaid reproductive labour which ignores the cost associated with reproducing and maintaining the economic labour force and
- choice and decision making processes because gender relations play an important role in division of labour and the distribution of income, wealth and productive inputs.

The immediate implications of these analyses towards addressing the challenges of economic instability, inequality and poverty, are that they are pointers to areas of shortcoming of current attempts where more work needs to be done to firmly entrench gender in macroeconomic theory and policy. Thus in Nigeria, a focus on policy institutions, liberalisation and privatisation policies and political structures for participation is most relevant to this debate and a National Gender Policy that is situated within this thinking will only help the country to achieve sustainable development.

The subsequent section presents best practices from selected countries as guiding frameworks for instituting a functional and workable national gender policy.

## **2.4. Country Experiences: Best Practices**

The challenge of drafting a national gender policy is not only peculiar to Nigeria. Several other countries in the world have at a point in time overcome this challenge. Irrespective of economic status, the entrenchment of a national gender policy in most of these countries has provided a fulcrum for sustainable development. Experiences of eight countries were reviewed in this discourse to appreciate the contents and processes of their respective national gender policy.

Gender mainstreaming in the public sphere is a common feature of these national policies. For instance, in the Nordic countries (Denmark and Sweden), gender equality goals is the duty of every Minister while the overall process is coordinated by the Minister of Gender Equality. In Canada, all federal departments are committed to ensuring and promoting gender equality in all spheres. A central issue for the three developed countries under consideration is the emphasis placed on gender issues in labour laws, and childcare practices.

Evidence from other African countries is very similar to those from the developed world. The South Africa Government in 1996 recognised gender mainstreaming in all spheres of life and thereby established gender units in all its departments. Tanzania, though among the poor African countries with similar status as Nigeria, has also mainstreamed gender into her public life. Mainstreaming gender into core public issues is therefore not a strange phenomenon, but rather a major impetus for sustainable development. Evidence from Ghana also confirmed that gender

budgeting is an integral aspect of national gender policy content. The entire national gender policy framework in the five African countries recognised empowerment of women, poverty, as well as gender imbalances in educational opportunities, as crucial issues.

Gender sensitivity in political seats and resource allocation sharing were adequately addressed in all the eight countries under review. In the advance countries, especially in Denmark, parliamentary representation showed that none of the two gender groups had less than 40%. Women participation is still very much a problem in African States. Hence, the 5 African countries under review saw it as a priority to have equal representation of both genders in the political sphere, thus making this a major component of their respective gender policies. This was the case in Tanzania, and Uganda where on increasing proportion of seats were being allocated to women.

In the process of formulating an appropriate national gender policy, some of the countries under consideration had course to review, reform, or repeal some existing laws as well as social practices which were discriminatory against women. For example, South Africa, in 1996, repealed all laws and social practices that subjected women to discrimination. Uganda also embarked on reforming its laws to reflect gender balance.

The task of implementing a gender policy in some of these countries warranted the establishment of a national coordinating ministry. In Denmark for example, the office of the Minister of Gender Equality was established and empowered to coordinate government policy. In South Africa, the Office of the Status of Women and Commission on Gender Equality was established to coordinate its gender policy. Ghana also established the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs to pursue her gender equality programmes.

The development of a National Gender Policy in Nigeria is therefore a step in the right direction. Nigeria is a signatory to all international treaties on gender equality. The experiences and processes of other countries are therefore viewed as a guide towards the development of an appropriate gender policy in Nigeria.

## **2.5. The National Policy Context**

Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where men dominate all spheres of women's lives. Women are in a subordinate position (particularly at the community and household levels), and male children are preferred over the female. The influence of the mother and the father is particularly significant in shaping and perpetrating patriarchy. The mother provides the role model for daughters, while the father demonstrates to sons what it means to 'be a man' (World Bank 2005:6)

Despite a general commitment to the principle of non-discrimination as enshrined in Section 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the country falls short of the desired result of giving males and females equal opportunities to advance socially, physically, educationally, politically and economically. Evidences abound that several negative aspects of gender relations, such as gender-based division of labour, disparities between males and females access to power and resources, and gender biases in rights and entitlements, remain pervasive in Nigeria.

By the Nigerian Constitution, civil and political rights (Chapter 4 of the 1999 Constitution) are actionable in a court of law whilst economic, social and cultural rights (Chapter 2 of the 1999 Constitution) are not. Section 43 permits both male and female Nigerians to own and acquire movable property. In spite of this, a large proportion of women in Nigeria are barred from owning land by customary laws of inheritance.

The history of development policies in Nigeria is equally relevant to the evolution of development and gender theories.

### **2.5.1. Gender Blind Policies**

The first twenty years of development planning in Nigeria as a Republic began with the Five-year National Development Plans. These plans were robust in that they were conceived purely within the realities of the country in terms of its resource endowments and its development priorities as an agrarian state and as a country, which must establish her identity within the comity of nations. Although gender was never an issue of development planning and regional approach to planning was adopted, orientation was largely welfarist. To this end, women's interests were subsumed within the national interest. However, inequalities were not perceived because of largely unified cultural orientation within the regions. But the trickle down approach was the character of planning. It was gender-blind.

### **2.5.2. Gender Biased Policies**

Since the 1980s, economic policies in Nigeria have been dominated by the pursuit of economic growth through structural adjustment and broad liberalisation policies. This has been made up of short-term economic stabilization measures and longer-term market reforms and liberalisation of all key sectors of the economy. The World Bank's policy Poverty Reduction Strategies have been broadly accepted and, although Nigeria has exited the strangle-hold of debt crises and enforced liberalisation, by virtue of substantial debt forgiveness and unprecedented foreign reserves, the extant macroeconomic development framework (NEEDS) is still fashioned, to achieve poverty reduction by subscribing to pro-liberalisation policy frameworks. These neo-liberal policies have been largely criticized as being biased against women and the vulnerable in general in that the market-driven approach are not sufficiently backed by redistributive and regulatory policies to ensure that human development and equity are not short-changed in the process of economic growth. As in other economies, the effects of these policies are growing and endemic poverty, in spite of huge national resources and even, sometimes, in spite of positive growth aggregates.

NEEDS is a Medium-Term Plan conceived to address poverty and achieve sustainable growth through home-grown strategies that aim at wealth creation, employment generation and value re-orientation. NEEDS is therefore not just a macroeconomic policy; it addresses critical social, political and cultural problems that have short-changed Nigeria's immense growth and development potentials. Although some measure of growth has been achieved (NISER, 2006), there has been continued and deepening poverty which is now believed and adequately documented to have a feminine face, not strictly in the money-metric sense (FOS, 2004) but in other multi-dimensional aspects of poverty (UNIFEM, 2005). The pro-neoliberal reform policies of NEEDS have been accompanied by privatisation of basic services including education and

health, labour retrenchments, informalisation of work, growing unemployment, removal of subsidies with the result of different opportunities for women and men in the productive sectors and in privatising of public enterprises, with implications for differential access of women and men to social services and to markets. At the same time, NEEDS has aimed at more than macroeconomic stability. Its macroeconomic framework of implementation therefore incorporates two important elements: The Social Charter and Reform of Public Institutions. The two extant structures are expected to change anomalies in the conduct of business of governance which underlie most of the problems of ineffective government in Nigeria. Similarly, the Social Charter is the social welfare dimension of NEEDS which should create a level playing ground, as much as possible, for the vulnerable to be able to participate in and benefit from the pro-market development strategies. Gender issues are subsumed within the latter. Ostensibly therefore, NEEDS claims to address gender inequality lies within this framework. As various analysts have posited (Ayorinde, 2005, Okojie 2006), the positioning of gender issues within NEEDS is fraught with many conceptual and operational weaknesses that derail its intentions. The more visible aspects of NEEDS may therefore be said to be those reforms that reflect more of gender-bias than gender sensitivity.

NEPAD is Africa's newly charted path to economic recovery and good governance. Although the policies and declared intentions of NEPAD recognize the need for the achievement of gender equality, the implementation of NEPAD is yet to fully conceive the path to sustainable gender equitable growth on the continent. Although a Gender Task Force has been initiated which has started to grapple with the process of mainstreaming gender, the prospects of success may be reduced for the mere fact that the strategy for gender integration was not integral to the articulation of NEPAD.

### **2.5.3. Gender-sensitive Policies**

The Millennium Development Goals, pledged in the Millennium Declaration are not only a unified framework for the Conferences and Plans of Action developed in the 1990s, but have been affirmed as the world's time-bound and quantified targets to address poverty in its many dimensions. Goal 3 of the MDGs, on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, while being of intrinsic value in itself, is also central to the attainment of all the other MDGs. To meet MDG 3 and all the other goals, there is the need to increase the capacity of development planners and other policy advocates to understand how gender relations work in their interface and at all levels. For instance, to achieve environmental sustainability, the roles that gender plays in the depletion and pollution of natural resources and the environment, and in particular, the constraints and competition in the access to and use of natural resources must be explored and addressed by complementary policies.

The challenge remains how to integrate the principles of gender awareness, sensitivity and responsiveness within the MDGs and other regional and global instruments into the extant national macro-policies such that gender equality becomes more than just the concerns of women and the few gender-sensitive institutions and people but becomes part of the goals of governance at all levels and within the populace.

### **2.5.4. The Policy Priorities**

The Beijing Conference (1995) set the decisive space for progressive policy attention to gender issues in development. Twelve areas of concern were identified as at the epicentre of negative gender ideologies and policy effects (BPA, 1995). These include (i) Education and Training (ii) Poverty and Economic Empowerment (iii) Politics and Decision-making (iv) Poverty and Economic Empowerment, (v) Legal and Human Rights Issues, (vi) Health and Reproductive Rights, (vii) Environment and Natural Resources, (viii) Gender Based Violence, (ix) Women and Conflicts, (x) Meeting the Needs of other vulnerable groups (People with Special Needs), (xi) Addressing other Social Inequalities and (xii) Role of the Media. Other policy themes that arise either from the framework of the MDGs or that are peculiar to Africa and the Nigerian state include Culture, Family and Socialisation, Information and Communication, Role of Science and Technology, The Niger Delta Problem and Resource Control Agitation, and International Partnership in Development. This summary set of sixteen themes constitutes the framework for setting policy priorities in the Policy.

A conceptual definition for gender within each of these priority areas is necessary to justify the thematic focus and the call for gender integration.

## **CHAPTER 3: GENDER PERSPECTIVES TO SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE SITUATION ANALYSIS OF GENDER STATUS**

### **3.0. Introduction:**

A gender perspective to development means recognizing that the relative positioning of women and men stand at the crossroads between production and reproduction, that is, between economic activities and the care of human beings or otherwise, between economic growth and human development. Emphasis on women in such a discourse recognises the important roles women play as workers in both spheres of production and reproduction. Women are therefore seen as most responsible, and with most at stake, those who suffer most when the two spheres meet at crossroads, and those most sensitive to the need for better integration between the two because of their dual roles. These theoretical perspectives are complemented with a situation description of the national gender status.

### **3.1 Culture, Family and Socialisation**

There are many socio-cultural practices that have reinforced gender inequalities in developing countries. Indeed the practice of gender itself is rooted in socio-cultural norms of society. Therefore the ways and manner that gender manifests on development cannot be separated from this space. While culture, religion and their trappings are known to be the enduring foundation of society, developed societies have used culture to improve on other aspects of their development by modifying cultural practices, often through legislation and sometimes, as in Great Britain, simply through a gradual entrenching of positive societal behaviour that needs not be written to be imbibed. In other words, therefore culture must be allowed to evolve and remove its negative orientations. In Africa and Nigeria inclusive, the culture of patriarchy, while not exclusive to this areas has been allowed to infringe very seriously on human rights of women, socialization of children and development practice through policy. Such norms have increased incidences of violence against women, early marriage, `negative traditional practices such as widowhood practices, female genital mutilations, negative sexual behaviour of men against their spouses and so on.

Aina (1998) presented culture as a strong explanatory variable in understanding the predominant gender ideology within the Nigerian society. Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where men dominate all spheres of women's lives. Although, gender stereotypes are breaking down, there is need for gender sensitisation of parents and teachers, who have a significant role to play in shaping societal perceptions of what is appropriate for males and females. Also worthy of note is the shrouding different exclusions and deprivations faced by women in cultural, religious and traditional beliefs. Such practices deprive them of access to information, education, and wealth-creating assets like land, credit facilities, and so on. The restrictions created by socio-cultural practices can be blamed for the poor participation of women in politics and decision-making processes. Such restrictions also affect their access to education and professions, which also limits their capacity to compete in the labour market for lucrative and more fulfilling jobs.

The progress so far made in the implementation of CEDAW is limited to the urban centres. Prejudices and customary practices that deny women the full enjoyment of their rights still exist



in rural areas due mainly to deep-ignorance and preference for the preservation of mundane customs, while in some cases religious doctrines have been wrongly used to further subjugate women.

Many states have enacted laws to abolish harmful traditional practices against women. Among those enactments are Prohibition Laws against Widows and Widowers in Anambra (2005); Ekiti (2005); Enugu, Imo, Edo State (2004); Rivers (2003); Delta and Cross River State (2004). Bill outlawing FGM has been passed in Delta State Bill outlawing Female Circumcision and Girl-Child Marriages in Cross River State (2000) A Law Prohibiting Domestic Violence Against Women and Maltreatment in Cross Rivers State (2004).

In spite of the progress made so far in promoting women's rights, women still experience discrimination due to the slow pace at which laws relating to women's rights are passed by the legislature at different levels and the poor enforcement mechanisms of existing legislations. Cultural and religious practices that discriminate against women are still entrenched in the country, making behavioural change a major challenge for agents of change. This socialization context within which boys and girls are nurtured have continued to create and reinforce gender-biased about roles, responsibilities and capabilities. These filter into policy arena by way of how the policy needs of women and men are met through governance practices. It filters, for instance, into educational domains in terms of what levels of literacy, what types of professions and what roles in employment and political leadership, inter alia. There are therefore various socio-cultural, economic, political and religious impediments to the full implementation of the principles of CEDAW in Nigeria that need to be frontally confronted by a National Gender Policy.

### **3.2. Gender-based Violence**

A symbol of patriarchal authority is the extent to which women's human rights are threatened and that choices are limited for women to seek redress. Before Beijing there were no national data to give a clear picture. Given the focus of the BPA on this aspect, a national study was commissioned to document this phenomenon. Findings are that women's human rights are still being abused on a large scale with national prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was put at 40%, and up to 98% in some states. Babies and adolescents are still being circumcised thus exposing them to deadly complications. Although the Inter-Africa Committee has been leading the campaign against FGM, and about 50% of the mothers interviewed would still like to continue the practice.

Human rights violations such as the widowhood practices, discriminatory inheritance and male child preference are popular among most cultural groups while wife battering is common, affecting about 50% of Nigerian households. The NDHS 2003 reports attitude to wife-beating by women and men and shows that this practice is unlikely to abate at a fast rate. This is shown by the fact that 64.5% of female respondents agreed with at least one valid reason for wife-beating compared with 61.3% of male respondents. Some of the reasons advanced with the highest frequency include going out without telling the husband (52.8% women and 49.9% men), not cooking on time 33.3% of women and 17.2% of men), refuses sex with him (37.5% of women and 33.5% of men). These indicate that female respondents have no higher aversion to the practice than men.

Early marriage is still widely practiced in the North. In the South, there is a growing percentage of young mothers who are driven to it, not so much by culture, but by poverty. In some parts of Osun State, girls aged 10 years are carrying pregnancies. Since poverty is one of the underlying causes, an increase in the number of complications of VVF is to be expected. The number of cases per thousand births increased from 648 to 668 in 1997. Girls are also swelling the cadre of children contributing to the household economy but also increasing the chances of being abused. About 15% of young girls studied in the HTP survey left school to get married, 23.1% went in to learn a trade, and 24% to trade or work on the farm. Financial constraint was a major reason for leaving school (21%) thus showing the influence of poverty on the life of the girl child

The critical issue that necessitate policy intervention is the impacts of these norms and practices on the development spaces. All sectors of the economy have suffered from gender-bias with results of growing and deep seated inequalities which are in many cases avoidable. Some of the sectoral linkages with and manifestations of inequalities in different sectors are discussed.

### **3.3. Gender, Education and Training**

Education, be it formal, or non-formal, is a public good. It improves the individual's quality of life, and offers him/her access to employment, income and political power. Women's education is however a priority because it is the key to gender equity, justice and poverty reduction, improved skills and technological knowledge acquisition, improved nutrition, reproductive health and general socio-economic development of a nation. Basic education therefore, plays a crucial role in national development by encouraging social participation across groups.

The relationship of gender equality to growth has never been more evident than in the education sector. Where macroeconomic analyses of growth effects of education have been somewhat ambiguous, the microeconomics evidence of the returns to education are overwhelming and robust (Pascharopoulos, 1994 and Pascharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004). Research suggests that each additional year of education increases the average individual workers wages by at least five percent (Krueger and Lindahl, 1999). Substantial evidence also suggests that closing gender gaps in education (increased female education) is evenly associated with infants and children's abilities to escape mortality and malnourishment. The mediating factors include, hygiene, nutrition and child care practices. This is a key reason for focusing on female education in developing countries. Educating girls and women is therefore a particularly effective way to raise the human development levels of children.

There are other cross effects of engendering education policies. For instance, a rise in the income of women increases the likelihood of their children attending school, particularly when programmes have an education component (Albee, 1996 from Mayoux, draft 1997). Education also affects political positioning and improves gender power relations. Successful women entrepreneurs in Sudan, who enjoyed credit facilities from NGOs were reportedly treated with greater respect by their husbands and had more say in the household management unlike before (Mayoux Draft, 1997). Educated women also appear less likely to suffer from domestic violence. (Kabeer 2003).

A gender policy will contribute to the deeper levels of analysis, policy design and implementation that is often required to manage education policies to achieve overall national goals, not only of poverty reduction, wealth creation and employment generation but also of social inclusion and value re-orientation..

Empirical evidences on gender inequality in the education sector in Nigeria is replete. Inequality in education associated with sex was taken for granted in Nigeria for many years, as it was assumed that both males and females would have equal educational opportunities. In the past, a number of government policies such as free education at primary and secondary levels, government take-over of secondary schools in a number of states, the establishment of more government schools and provisions of bursary and scholarship awards by states and federal government to students at the tertiary level, were adopted in order to facilitate access to education by all students, particularly, female students. Although, there were considerable operational and financial difficulties encountered in implementing these policies, they seemed to have nonetheless yielded positive results in terms of an increase in the participation of girls in the educational system. Over time, the imbalances in gender ratios at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education seem to have reduced considerably.

Overall, female illiteracy in Nigeria is 44% of the general population, with adult literacy being about 33% (UNESCO, 2000). Fewer girls than boys are enrolled in primary and secondary schools, while non-completion and absenteeism are highest among the female population. According to a UNESCO Report (1995), 85 million of the 145 million children aged 6-11 not in schools were girls. Major constraints against female education at this level include cultural and religious beliefs, economic factors, and lack of access. Existing data shows that about 70% of women in Nigeria are illiterates, while 22.4% of women living in the urban areas have no education, compared to 50.2% in the rural areas. Enrolment rate is generally low in Nigeria (60% national average -74% for boys and 56% for girls- with a gender gap of 18%) For the primary schools, the rate of enrolment in 2005 for male was 56% as compared to 44.88% for female. Disparity in primary school enrolment presents a big gap between the North (52%), and the South (81.7%); the Urban (70%), and the rural (56%); and as low as 42% in the Northwest.

The tertiary education sub-sector presents a more gruesome picture. The percentage of females in higher education in Nigeria is 39.9%, while access of females to university education increased from ratio of 1 to 40 in the 1950s to 1 to 4 in 2001. However, a wide disparity exists in traditionally male dominated disciplines such as the field of Engineering. The ratio of girls to boys in technology oriented disciplines; especially the field of engineering is about 1:20 (female/male) (Situation Analysis Report, OAU Ife, 2002). In Education Sector, some of the gender issues identified are inadequate provisions of Facilities that respond to Gender needs in Schools, absence of Gender issues in School Curriculum, inadequate Vocational Education for Women, low enrolment of Women in Science and Technology. Also, there is lack of curriculum for teaching women and children their rights, particularly in secondary institutions.

There are also gender-related differences at the level of tertiary education. Males are more likely to go into science-based or mathematics-oriented disciplines than females. For example, 87% of the 10,239 students admitted for Environmental Design/Engineering subjects in Nigerian Universities were males (NUC). There were also more males than females in medicine (55% to

45% respectively). Conversely, 61% of the 6,298 students admitted for arts were females. This huge disparity exists despite reports by the National Universities Commission (NUC, 1997) that the proportion of female-to-male new entrants into agricultural disciplines in Nigerian Universities shifted from 18% female and 81.3% male in 1980 to 27.1% female and 72.8% male in 1992. The reasons for these disparities have been identified as parents being more willing to educate boys, a higher dropout rate among girls, and prevailing social practices that discriminate against girls.

In spite of tremendous progress made in the realisation of the Goal 3 of the MDGS, there are still major challenges facing the country in achieving gender equality in education and women empowerment. The attainment of the universal education goal is constrained by the high rate of attrition in primary schools which is due to many factors including : (i) engagement in income – generating activities by some children during school hours ; (ii) inability of parents to meet expenses for schooling such as school uniforms, textbooks, furniture, etc ; (iii) distant or inaccessible location of schools from pupils’ homes; (iv) ill-health arising from poor environmental sanitation, lack of portable water, lack of toilet facilities, etc; (v) religious and cultural factors which cause some parents’ preference for religious schools, such as Quranic schools, instead of western-type primary education; and (vi) early marriage of girls and teenage pregnancy. Although the UBE Act of (2004) was passed and laws prohibiting the withdrawal of girl –child from School have been passed in Gombe, Bauchi, Niger, Bornu and Kano States, Child Rights Act (2003), disparity in educational opportunities still pervade the Nigerian environment.

### **3.4. Poverty and Economic Empowerment**

Poverty analyses carried out in several countries have shown that women and men experience poverty in similar as well as in different ways. The ways through which women and men become poor can be different and their capacities to escape poverty are also often different. In order to reduce poverty levels, the specific needs of poor women and poor men have to be addressed. National governments need to improve their capacity to integrate gender in their poverty reduction efforts to achieve sustainable results. Women and men’s access to productive assets such as land, credit, technology and information are different. So are the outcomes of their productive activities. Although the gender division of labour within cultural contexts, superimposes on the structure of production within activity units, the assignment of gender roles however has not proceeded with a simultaneous assignment of resources. Therefore entitlement structures, which are similarly skewed by gender, determine the allocation of (productive) resources.

Despite Nigeria’s rich endowment with natural and human resources, it is now ranked among the poorest countries in the world. In the 2005 Human Development Index, Nigeria was among the 20 countries with the lowest human development index, and it was ranked 158 in a table of 177 countries (UNDP, 2005). An estimated 70.0 per cent of Nigerians are said to live below the poverty level, compared with 27.2 per cent in 1980, 43.6 per cent in 1985 and 42.8 per cent in 1992. Nigeria thus hangs precariously with a greater percentage of its population living on less than 1 US dollar per day without any sign of relief for the majority of the citizens. Approximately 47-48 per cent of the labour force remains unemployed and does not produce. With a labour force estimated at 33 million, this suggests that over 15 million are in need of

suitable employment (UNDP, 2004). According to the last census conducted in 1991, Nigerian women were reported to represent about 49.7% of the population. Although women represent about 70% of the food producers in Nigeria, they are denied access to social services and are categorized as poor because of low-income earnings. Consequently, poverty seems to wear a woman's face.

In the 10 years after Beijing, Nigerian governments have made efforts to address the poverty situation of the country and have initiated policies and programmes to address this issue. These policies and programmes include the establishment of the Peoples Bank, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and the family Economic Empowerment Programme (FEAP) during the Military rule up to 1999. Thereafter since the civilian democratic rule, programmes such as the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), loans for purchase of shares in companies, and micro-credit for farmers and small, and medium-scale entrepreneurs have been introduced to alleviate poverty. More recently, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) was introduced to address the economic situation of the people.

Despite various poverty alleviation strategies of successive governments, poverty continues to prevail in Nigeria. The scenario presented in this study shows that Nigeria's poverty situation continues to plague its people in spite of the installation of democracy. The indignity experienced by Nigerians as a result of poverty is intensifying the people's despondency towards the state and is subjecting them deeper into poverty and forcing them to rely on alternative survival strategies, which are often illegitimate. The state of the nation's social sector is deplorable as it continues to be inadequately funded. As the population continues to increase, rural-urban migration goes on unabated and poverty and inequality flourish. The continued neglect of the social sector translates into distressing health statistics, particularly of women and children, who are the most vulnerable.

Although the new democratic leadership claimed to be committed to putting a high priority on the health status of Nigerians, much more needs to be done as targets are not being met. It is now largely agreed that education is the shortest rout to poverty alleviation. But Nigeria's education system is in shambles, with high pupils to teacher ratios, negative environments and poorly equipped classrooms. The lack of qualitative education, reflected in Nigeria's poor performance in literacy and school enrolment indicators, is seen as a primary obstacle to the development of the poor. This is why Nigerians are largely ignorant about their human, civil and legal rights. Development in the education sector therefore means long-term reduction in poverty in Nigeria.

### ***Economic Participation of Women and Men***

Trade and entrepreneurial activities have continued to be engendered in the form of access, control and remuneration. While commercial agriculturists and traders (mainly men) supply their commodities to big national, regional and international markets, the smaller entrepreneurs (mainly women) are left to supply the local villages and rural markets. In response, women have been found to devise ways of going beyond local petty trading. These include illegal activities such as cross-border trade or acting as itinerant trade agents (Akanji, 2000). More and more, women are found in cross-border trade but rarely on the legal routes. In urban areas, commercial and trade activities of men and women are on different scales. Credit facilities for

entrepreneurship development also appear to be skewed, with policies of micro-finance targeted at women and that of high-capital finance targeted at men.

Indeed studies have shown that while both men and women participate in micro and small enterprises (MSE) as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and though the women are more in the MSE and SMEs, the structure of these enterprises favours men in terms of profitability, types of product, size of business and so on. In the industrial sector, especially the informal sector, the participation of women has always been stronger than that of men. However, several patterns distinguished male and female-owned or female-dominated SME activities, indicating a strong need for gender-sensitivity in planning for SME growth. Women's enterprises are concentrated and dominant in more traditional manufacturing activities such as beer brewing, knitting, dressmaking, crocheting and grass and cane work, as well as retail trading. Returns to female-dominated activities are lower than the average for the sector. In Kenya overall average return of enterprises owned by women is only about a quarter of the level earned in enterprises owned by men (Daniel, Meal and Musanga, 1995). Forty-five percent of female-owned MSEs are home-based compared to 19% for men. There are more evidences to the different operations of women and men. It is doubtful that male policymakers in the realm of monetary policies who craft micro-credit policies have the capacity to apply the necessary gender analysis tools to unearth the less obvious needs of such policies. That creates the need for a gender policy to compliment these efforts.

This scenario further reinforces the importance of the phenomenon of the informal sector in Nigeria's development. That the economic activities of women dominate the informal sector which is still undervalued in Nigeria. Yet these informal sector activities drive the livelihoods of most communities and household's livelihoods.

Another important dimension of economic empowerment is the dichotomy of the productive and reproductive sectors of economies. The reproductive or social reproduction activities are mostly unpaid and tagged non-market economies. Yet this non-market economy has been widely documented as subsidising the workings of the market economy in more ways than one. One important one being the nurturing of human capital to 'man' the market economy. All these dimensions have been ignored by policies because policymakers and other stakeholders are not conversant with the linkages with the outcome of macro-economic policies, including their importance in the sustainable reduction of poverty through gender-responsive policies.

The implication is that there are still institutional barriers to women's full participation in economic empowerment especially through trade. In general, liberalisation policies have often failed to consider these gendered dimensions of change – leaving women to devise strategies to combat the negative effects. It poses a challenge to policy in the area of effective agenda-setting policies and programmes. It is important that a gender policy emphasise these dimensions not only as justifications for gender-responsive policies but also to highlight the need for research and analysis that will put these under-researched dimensions at the heart of policy.

### **3.5. Employment and Labour Issues**

Employment patterns are also changing as a result of liberalisation, reinforcing existing policies and practices that have created gendered employment spaces. Many studies have been carried out

to examine the effects of economic reforms or economic growth or liberalization policies on female labour force participation (FLP). These are aimed at assessing to what extent these policies or eras benefit or disadvantage women. The findings show that globalisation is leading to greater unemployment of women—corporate downsizing is affecting women more than men. Although in the nominal sense, some of the findings have shown that FLP is increasing in a good number of countries, especially the newly industrializing countries, female influx into the informal sector outweighs their job losses in the formal sector but always under worsening conditions of pay and hazards. Another phenomenon is that of occupational segregation. Although again, employment theories foresee a phasing out of segregation over time because of increasing empowerment and education, however what has been ignored is the way that liberalisation reduces the access of the poor to education and training and therefore, gainful employment. The reinforcement of stereotype jobs, that is, persistent occupational segregation as observed in these ‘female fields’ does not support the theses that gender relations will change but rather that extant policies are reinforcing the stereotypes while at the same time threatening these female domains as the services are subjected to privatisation and higher levels of specialisation and technological practices.

The overriding thesis is that gender discrimination in the arena of work poses a problem not just to women but to the entire fabric of society. Women are a vital resource as shown by their ability to cope with and stand in the gap for families and societies in times of economic crises. According to the OECD, if society and all that underpins it are to run smoothly in the 1990s and beyond, women must be given a priority role in economic life and allowed to make the most of their untapped potentials.

The World Economic Forum’s Growth Competitiveness index rates Nigeria very low, with a ranking of 93rd out of 102 countries, a decline from its 2003 ranking of 87th. Similarly, the Economic Freedom Index describes Nigeria as “mostly unfree,” ranking it 141st out of 161 countries. Market competition operates within a rather weak institutional framework. Weak public institutions, widespread corruption, and a very strong informal sector slow the development of market competition. In addition, economic policy is implemented haphazardly in most cases. Foreign trade follows non-discrimination principles *de jure*. However, it remains greatly distorted by high tariff barriers and constraints such as bans on special commodities, uncertain custom procedures, corruption, and high berthing and unloading costs.

The domestic medium-term economic reform program (NEEDS) launched in early 2004 is aimed at addressing deep-rooted macroeconomic and structural problems and reducing poverty. Many Nigerians perceive the programme as just another version of the traditional structural adjustment policy, which was promoted by the international finance institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. Following the commencement of the second term of the present administration in 2003, the government embarked upon modest structural adjustment measures for macroeconomic stabilisation. However, poor infrastructure (power, roads, water), the high cost of transporting goods within the country, and extortion by police and customs often at illegal roadblocks, are still serious impediments to economic growth. Although, economic growth has picked up significantly because of the oil bonanza, the growing liquefied gas sector and the telecommunication sector, steady development in other areas will depend on effective measures to counter the detrimental effects of over-reliance on crude oil and liquefied gas production.

In both the formal and informal sectors, it is clear that women fare worse than men in the economic arena. Apparently, as a result of their exclusion from access to education and wealth-creating assets, women lack capital to engage in large-scale economic ventures. Limited skills and information prevent their full integration into the Labour market, and a vicious cycle of female poverty is thus prevalent in practically all sectors of the economy.

Labour laws and practices have not addressed the problems of gender in the workplace. Indeed, many negative employment practices continue to affect the chances of equitable gender participation because they totally ignore the need to make the workplace culture conducive to gender needs, as well as rid the workplace of biases. For instance, a civil service labour legislation in Box 1 typifies the discrimination that women face in the work place because employment practices do not consider the need to accommodate women's double burden of production and reproduction.

The Nigerian Labour Congress has done very well by instituting a National Women Commission and has adopted a gender policy to guide employment in both the public and especially the private sector in Nigeria. Similar good practices have been documented in different states of the country. This places the imperative on the National Gender Policy to consolidate these efforts and work towards gender-friendly national legislations in employment.

***BOX 1: Kano State Civil Service Rule 03303 :***

***“Any woman civil servant who is about to undertake a course of training shall be called upon to enter into an agreement to refund the whole or part of the cost of course in the event of her course being interrupted on the grounds of pregnancy”***

### **3.6. Agriculture and Rural Development**

The contemporary thinking regarding agriculture is that it is a sector capable of sustaining the economy through food security and industrialisation. Thus national policies reflect increased liberalisation in the sector. Increased commercialization of agricultural production, as is being promoted, is seen as a positive response to liberalisation macro-policies, including globalisation. Optimal response of operators in the sector is expected to 'hasten' the process of structural transformation. Therefore, any constraints to supply-response would naturally show down the rate of commercialisation. Conversely, optimal trends in the factors that are critical determinants of supply-response are positively related to the pace of transformation.

In the sense that such factors or the availability of factors of production vary by gender, it is expected that the rate of agricultural transformation will vary by the gender of farmers because of differences in capabilities. If the objective of liberalization in the sector is structural transformation, then all farmers must be involved in the transformative process. Women farmers



still make up at least 50%, if not higher of the farming population. Failure to carry them into the commercialisation-driven transformation has severe dampening effect on the overall achievement of a progressive agriculture and the achievement of agricultural recovery. Both male and female farmers must be endowed with the capacity to shift from subsistence to commercial production. Yet policies must also preserve the place of subsistence agriculture due to its importance to rural livelihoods especially of the core and extremely poor. Equity from the gender perspective and the perspective of the poor and vulnerable to policy shocks must be ensured. Policies that cannot ensure such equity in response are inadequate to move Nigeria agriculture forward.

In spite of this contemporary thinking, assumptions about gender roles and responsibilities continue to short-change development efforts by reinforcing stereotypes. These stereotypes emphasize dichotomies in enterprise participation by gender, whereas contemporary literature increasingly shows that the dichotomies hardly hold anymore because of changing economic orientation of men and women in rural households. Differences in gender performance or participation in agriculture and other non-farm rural enterprises which derive more from differences in productivity of women and men become critical to outcomes of agricultural policies and programmes. These differentials are based either on physical factors, distributional, skill and input imbalances (Akanji 1991, 1997). Drudgery of female tasks aggravate these differentials. Wage differentials in tasks also dampen incentives for higher productivity by women. Feldstein and Poats (1990) noted that technological innovations for agricultural improvement has left women's farm roles at a disadvantage, whereas it has been shown that women in farming households can be as productive as their male members when given access to appropriate (technological) resources.

Empirical facts to support the above abound. For example, in Nigeria's cocoa-food crop farming system, women do own cocoa-land and manage cocoa farms, using both their own labour and hiring labour on a share-cropping basis. They also constitute a large labour force for specific tasks on male-managed cocoa farms (Akanji, 1991, 2001). Estimates of family-labour contributions on cocoa farms show that about 56 per cent of total labour required in a year was provided by the farm family itself. In the oilpalm production system, the role of men as managers of production and women as managers of processing has been widely documented. But recent involvement of men in various phases of mechanised processing and aspects of marketing are also beginning to come to light (Mbanefor, 1995). In other parts of Africa, the same pattern prevails. Ongile (1997) confirmed this with respect to tea production. And for coffee, Saito (1992), reported that 33% of women surveyed in 750 households managed production compared with 26% of the men. More women than men also decided on the use of improved inputs and controlled proceeds from coffee plots. In Nigeria, 61% of women cited farming as their main occupation versus 24% of men. Yet, patriarchal attitudes and laws restrict women's access to productive resources such as land and credit and thereby, their participation in trade. With specific reference to land use changes, studies by Omorodion 1994, Price 1997, IFPRI 2001 *op cit*, found that gender is a significant factor in illustrating the land use changes that trail liberalisation policies. Factors such as population pressure, environmental consideration, economic conditions and culture, crosscut with gender to vary the access of men and women to land and thus to the expected supply response of agricultural output to liberalisation incentives.

Thus gender perspectives to agricultural policy formulation must be informed by specific research.

Although, various efforts have been made by several development agencies, women's situations in the sector have not significantly improved. Women still face restrictions from men on the type of crops to cultivate, and are restricted to those agricultural enterprises that have less commercial value. For instance, in the wake of the present high demand for export in cassava products, men have taken over from women who before then dominated the production of the crop, mainly as a food security crop for poorer households and communities have been relegated to the background of export-oriented cassava production. There is also discrimination in land ownership, poor funding of gender related agricultural programmes, low participation of women in community development programmes, extreme poverty and hunger among women in rural areas, lack of social amenities for rural women, e.g., roads, water, electricity supply and low capacity building among women in agriculture.

Women's great contributions have not hitherto been adequately acknowledged in the development of agricultural policy and programmes. This situation needs to be urgently corrected.

### **3.7. Gender, Environment and Natural Resources**

Environment is defined as the total physical and biological system within which humans and other organisms live as a whole, albeit a complicated system with many interacting components (UNEP, 1983). Environment thus contains all the natural resources that are essential for human habitation. Humans, in their quest for surviving and development, have caused immense environmental problems. Such environmental problems have been found to be crucial to human development and threaten the quality of life. There is therefore a strong relationship between environment and development and vice-versa. Reducing poverty today, without environmental degradation and social inequalities tomorrow, cannot be achieved or sustained without paying careful attention to gender-based differences (World Bank, 2002).

Environmental sustainability means meeting the following four objectives at the same time:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- Effective protection of the environment;
- Prudent use of natural resources;
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

Gender implications of these are that economic activities of men and women can be either a cause or effect, or both, of negative patterns of the above indicators. More often, women bear the responsibility and the burden of gender disparities in the environment sector. For instance, deforestation, primarily the conversion of agricultural land, continues at an alarming rate – about 13 million hectares per year (UN, 2006). This has been attributed to, among others, landlessness of the active agricultural labour force, largely women, and unsustainable agricultural and industrial practices of resource-poor people in their communities. Gender inequality in social programmes such as education, economic opportunities, and reproductive health services can cause large household size, leading to pressure on household subsistence and rapid depletion of available communal resources which leads to environmental degradation.

Policies and budgetary allocation to economic activities should therefore be made such that negative causes will diminish for both men and women, and negative effects are reduced on both men and women.

Regrettably, the state of the environment in Nigeria is highly deplorable having been despoiled by man-made or natural hazards such as flood, erosion, desertification, salt-water intrusion, deforestation, toxic wastes, oil spillage, agro-chemical products and bad land use. Most of these negative activities should be prevented for the advantage of the women who are the prime users of these environmental resources.

Women suffer grave consequences arising from environmental degradation than their male counterparts, ranging from unfriendly ecosystem, destruction of farmlands and fishing ponds, and contamination of well water for drinking to armed conflicts within the regions. Concerns being expressed by victims and those vulnerable to environmental pollution and degradation come out strong on matters that relate to lack of proper waste management and disposal facilities, high cost of domestic cooking gas, non-enforcement of the policy on environment, denial of the rights of women to own land, inability to avert oil spillage and its destructive consequences especially to women, and absence of environmental regulations. Women should therefore be effectively integrated in the management, protection, reservation and use of the environment for sustainable development.

### **3.8. Gender, Health and Reproductive Health Services**

The indices used here are the infant, child and under-five mortality rates as these express the quality of care that a child receives from the mother. This has been found to be a function of the mother's socioeconomic status or in other words related to the poverty levels of the household. Many of these show gender differences.

One indicator shows that while male life-expectancy at birth remained constant at 52.6 between 1993 and 1999, female life-expectancy was higher, constant at 53.8 over the same period. Current figures put female life expectancy at 57.2 years, compared with 54.5 for males. However, life expectancy is a stock variable, an average, which does not quickly capture changes and often masks age-sex-specific discrimination in health care. If life expectancy is an index of health, an important point then is the critical linkage of women's health with their social capability, specifically education as well as the poverty status of their households. It is clearly shown that social capability affects fertility rate, reproductive choices, child health status and by extension from all these, the economic situation of their households (NDHS, 2003).

The data show, for instance, that women in the higher socio-economic bracket have 4.2 children, compared with 6.5 children among the poorest women. Under-5 mortality rate is 3 times as high among children born to women in the lowest and second-lowest socioeconomic groups as compared to women in the most economically advantaged group; Nigerian women are more likely to receive antenatal care if they are more economically advantaged and are also more likely to have adequate knowledge of HIV/AIDS. Also, about 40% of children living in the most economically advantaged households have received the full course of immunisations compared with less than 4% among children from the least advantaged households.

Infant, child and under-5 mortality rates currently stand at 100, 112 and 201 per 1000 in the period after year 2000 compared to 113, 136 and 234 in the early 1990s. This is not a significant decline. In some years, the situation worsened between one year and the next. For instance, infant mortality was 87 per 1000 in 1990, thus the current figure of 100 per 1000 represents a worsening situation. However, the general trend shows that the upward movement of the figure is often associated with worsening poverty for all the zones while a decline in the figure is often recorded in the more affluent segments of the population. The overall picture therefore reflects the impact of worsening household poverty on child health. For instance, there was a gradual reduction of infant mortality, child mortality and under-5 mortality from 133, 143 and 257 for the poorest households to only 52, 29 and 79 for the richest households in 2003. The same figures are 61, 20 and 80 for the most educated mothers compared to 124, 166 and 269 for the least educated mothers.

The maternal mortality rate was 1000/100,000 in 1995 which is still one of the highest in the world today. Seventy-five percent of the cases are attributed to haemorrhages, obstructed labour, sepsis, anaemia, eclampsia, tetanus, and complications of illegal abortion which could have been prevented with improved education. Poverty breeds disease. The fact that the maternal morbidity rate is between 800 and 1600 suggests that a lot still needs to be done to improve women's health.

All these above reinforce the importance of education of women, not only on their own health and economic status but also on that of members of their households (dependants).

UNICEF's overall goal is to promote and protect the rights of children and women, through enhancing the capacity and commitment of Government and civil society. This includes reducing geographical, sectoral and gender disparities in selected programme areas, reducing infant mortality, and contributing to HIV/AIDS prevention, malaria control, micronutrient deficiency control, basic education, and access to safe water supply and sanitation. The issue of gender has been paramount in the agenda of development partners in Nigeria. Every agency's programme ensures that gender issues are mainstreamed. For example, the FMWA works with UNICEF on children's issues, women's health and poverty reduction programmes in Nigeria.

Women in Nigeria suffer preventable premature loss of life as a result of inadequate provision of health facilities, ignorance and cultural taboos. According to UNICEF rating, Nigeria has one of the highest mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa. Maternal mortality rate is about 704 per 100,000. As women's health suffers so also does the health of children, with an infant mortality rate at 105 per 1000 live births while the Under-5 mortality rate is placed at 178 per 1000. Women's health is closely linked with the health of the children because of the reproductive role of women. Women's reproductive role has continued to expose them to health risks, which the society has failed to address because of the non-recognition of women's role as social service for the benefit of all. Consequently, women are denied care, medication and protection in discharging their reproductive role.

Malnutrition is implicated in more than half of all child deaths worldwide. Undernourished children have lower resistance to infection; they are more likely to die from common childhood

ailments like diarrhoea and respiratory infections, and for those who survive, frequent illness saps their nutritional status, locking them into a vicious cycle of recurring sickness and faltering growth. Their plight is largely invisible: three-quarters of the children who die from causes related to malnutrition were only mildly or moderately undernourished, showing no outward sign of their vulnerability. Poverty, low levels of education, and poor access to health services are the major contributors to childhood malnutrition. According to UNICEF, Nigeria and Ethiopia alone account for more than one-third (37%) of all underweight children in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2001)

The average life expectancy for men is 43.1 while for women it is 43.6 years (UNDP, 2003). Nigeria's low performance in health care delivery is attributed to lack of resources (drugs and equipment) in hospitals and the poor quality of services at the community level (one doctor to 4,600 people).

There are plethora of policies enacted on the health sector, among these are the National Reproductive Health Policy & Strategy (2001), the National Food and Nutritional Policy (2001) The National Reproductive Health Strategic Framework of Action (2002-2006), the National Policy and Plan of Action on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation in Nigeria (2002), the Breastfeeding Policy (1994), the National Guidelines and Strategies for Malaria Prevention and Control during Pregnancy (2005), the National Strategic Framework and Strategic Plan of Action for Vesico-Vaginal Fistula (VVF) Eradication in Nigeria (2005), National Health Insurance Scheme Act (1999), National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development (2004), Maternal and Child Health Policy (1994); National Adolescent Health Policy (1995).

However, due to ignorance, high cost of health care, inadequate facilities and personnel and lack of political will to implement health polices, harmful traditional practices that affect the health of women (e.g., FGM), absence of male involvement in reproductive health care, vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDs, ignorance about reproductive health, high rate of teenage pregnancy and maternal morbidity and unsafe abortion, women's health remains largely at risk in Nigeria.

### **3.9. Gender and HIV/AIDS**

HIV infection is the most devastating new disease to have emerged in recent history. Although worldwide, approximately as many women as men suffer from HIV, this aggregate figure conceals marked differences in the implications of the disease for women and men. Some of these result from biological differences in sex between women and men, but more result from socially defined gender differences (WHO, 2006; PAHO, 2002; ECA, 2004b). Women are, for instance, at a disadvantage when it comes to access to information about HIV prevention, the ability to negotiate safe sexual encounters and access to treatment for HIV/AIDS once infected. Thus, as a result of these inequities, the HIV infection rate among women is rising faster than the infection rate among men in the developing world (Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, 2002, UNAIDS, 2001a).

In households where both men and women are infected, family resources are more likely to be spent on the treatment of the male head of the household. Men's and children's nutritional needs are usually placed above women's, which weakens HIV-positive women's immune systems (PAHO, 2002). Women are likely to continue taking care of family and household needs, even

when they are sick themselves. Both infected and non-infected women are usually the principal care-givers in most households and carry the greatest psychosocial and physical burden of care of HIV/AIDS infected individuals (UNAIDS, 1999 WHO, 2006). Women carry out an inestimable amount of un-remunerated health work, taking care of family members, friends and community members (Okin, 2000, Akintola, 2006). Women and girls are often forced to leave their paid jobs and schooling in order to be care givers (UNAIDS, 2001).

The gender dimensions are very clear and numerous. Aside from broad healthcare and reproductive health services, HIV/AIDS will continue to tax the capabilities of nations, communities and household due to the multi-dimensional approach. A gender-aware approach holds immense potentials in dealing with this global challenge.

Out of Nigeria's massive population of 130 million people, an estimated 3.8 million Nigerians are living with HIV. However, only 60,000 are receiving anti-retroviral therapy (ARV), according to UNICEF. That means HIV-positive Nigerians are dying young, often leaving behind dependents. UNICEF estimates that 1.8 million Nigerian children have lost one, or both, parents to AIDS - more than the figure in any other country in Africa. The responsibility of caring for AIDS orphans is pushing many extended families to breaking point in their ability to cope with the problem (UNICEF, 2004). Statistics from the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS, 2003/2004) indicate that more males (50.2 %) than females (49.8%) protected themselves from HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Available statistics show that women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS than men.

Several reasons have been adduced for this trend, including women's low literacy level, poor access to medical information and facilities, low-income earning, contributing to lack of access to anti-retroviral drugs, etc. Deliberate and sustained efforts should be targeted at reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic among this vulnerable group for the overall development in other sectors of the economy. Significantly, the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD) Report of 2002 states that "gender-specific problems of females which include high maternal mortality rates associated with pregnancy and childbirth and unsafe abortions, reproductive tract infections, including STDs, HIV/AIDS, cervical and breast cancer, and traditional practices inimical to good health, teenage pregnancy, poor access to health facilities and low level of socioeconomic development" are overlooked by policy planners and programme implementers.

A gender policy will not only consider the broad implications and necessary action to combat this scourge but will also address the gender-specific aspects of its manifestation and impacts which are critical to the country's ability to combat the scourge. Unless these gendered dimensions are considered, government efforts and concerns of the international community may remain ineffective.

### **3.10. Politics and Decision Making**

Over the years and with civilization not much has changed. The capitalist economic system being operated in Nigeria has adversely affected the status of women because women were disadvantaged in entering the changing economic market due to the dominant role of men in public affairs. The age-long societal view of the woman as the home keeper reduced the influence of women and therefore their role in public affairs. This, added to the traditional

patriarchal system, further reduced the status of women in public decision-making. It is common sense that those who make policies and make decisions will do what is more beneficial to them. The practice of early marriage, household work, and child bearing within the communities hindered the contribution of women on the economic and political sphere. In many societies the woman carries out those activities that can be seen as an extension of their services in the home such as care for the sick (nursing), feeding and processing of food, petty trading, agriculture and sewing.

Although, women actively participate in the membership of political parties, they only serve at the lower cadres of social welfare and serve as supporters for the male to acquire political positions. Women are discriminated from participation in the electoral process because of malpractices, unfavorable political environment characterised by political violence. For example a former commissioner for Women Affairs in Nassarawa state, Mrs. Maimuna Joyce Katai was brutally murdered on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003 during the House of Assembly elections. She was murdered as a result of an attack on her when she attempted to prevent political thugs from seizing ballot boxes at a polling unit.

Politics is said to be a game of numbers yet women's numerical strength has not impacted positively on the political life and decision-making structures of the nation. They are inadequately represented at the Senate, House of Representatives, state legislative houses and local government councils. For instance, of the 109 senators only three (3) are women; while of the 360 representatives, only 12 are women, of the 1002 state members of the House of Assembly only 12 are women. Out of the 49 cabinet ministers only 4 are women and of the 8953 councillors only 143 are women (Field Survey CEDAW 2006). The imbalance in political representation is so grave.

The survey validates the concerns that women are either completely absent or grossly under-represented at the highest decision making levels in the executive, legislature and judiciary in the country. There is a need to correct the situation to ensure full realisation of true democracy in Nigeria.

The table below captures graphically and more vividly the state of women's under representation in politics and highest decision making levels.

### **3.11. Gender, Peace and Conflict Management**

The bases of conflicts in Nigeria are closely related to her economic and political history. The causes of the conflict in different parts of the country are the evolution of dichotomous socio-cultural populations with their peculiar norms and practices, evolution of dichotomous production systems – mainly anchored on primary production and competing for natural resources. A tortuous political landscape has led to the development of a socio-polity with little room for mutual appreciation of diversity and a low capacity to organise around our differences. This produced, a system currently rooted in self-interest, corruption, low credibility of the elite and ruling class, low public accountability and denial of rights, in spite of constitutional provisions.

The festering areas of conflict are the resource control agitation and the natural resource degradation in the Niger Delta region, ethnic upheavals among rival tribes like the Tivs and

Jukuns of the middle belt, the Ifes and Modakekes of the south west and nationals of Nigeria and Cameroon in the Bakassi region. Religious conflicts have also consistently erupted between Muslims and Christians even in places where they have co-existed for centuries. The battle fields have moved from the sites of war into communities and homes, into cities as well as in formerly serene rural villages. Across the West African sub-region and generally in Africa, civil wars in one country continue to have its toll on others through arms trafficking, emergence of child soldiers, springing up of refugee camps across the landscape as well as sporadic unrests created by ethnic militias. There is increase in cross-border crimes and cross-border trafficking in women and children for the purpose of war, prostitution in military camps and the increasing crime rate resulting from trafficking in arms and propagation of small arms. Although the constitution provides for clauses to protect citizens in times and areas of conflict, women and children still remain vulnerable because the policy provisions for such protection are not robust enough. The weakness has been adduced to the lack of participatory methods of crafting emergency relief and conflict management strategies. Those who are mostly affected are excluded from the development of remedies and preventive measures.

All these are anomalous to peace and economic progress because conflicts are about unhealthy competition for power, resources and interests. Yet power relations, distribution of resources and organising around interests have their gender dimensions. While men are mostly involved in the negotiations and disagreements that lead to conflicts, there is widespread agreement on the impacts of these upheavals on the lives of women and children. Thus, while not being the subjects of crisis, they tend to be the objects at the receiving end of the upheavals of livelihoods. Therefore, it has been posited and recommended by the United Nations that the roles of men and women in creating and also in managing conflicts should be a subject of policy. Therefore, the ways in which fiscal policies can ameliorate the negative effects and in which policies in the political arena can mitigate the cause of conflicts should be subjected to a gender lens so that appropriate and sustainable strategies can be applied.

Certainly the picture of violence against women differs from time to time. They actively work to improve their situation and often actively support one side or another in conflict. Given that many conflicts arise out of social and economic inequality, it is not surprising that women take sides in order to better their lives, or to protect themselves and their families. Women become combatants, provide medical help, protect and feed armed groups. This can even put them at greater risk if they are caught.

In the present situation, it becomes necessary to mention specially, the Niger-Delta struggle that has remained almost intractable for sometime now, and has affected gender in several dimensions. This policy document does not claim the universal innocence of women, nor does it argue that women are inherently more peaceful, or that men are more warlike. Grappling with the concept of gender avoids such stereotypes, but leads to an examination of some conflicts women face.

The Niger-Delta conflicts over resources began simmering during the pre-colonial period. But today, the region has become far more volatile. Years of deprivation have pushed citizens into anger, hopelessness, cynicism and violence. It would be noted that despite wars women suffer violence from pre-natal to old age. **See Appendix II.** Despite wars and other forms of violent



conflicts, women suffer marginalization in several areas ranging from politics and decision-making to economic empowerment. Appendix III explains this situation.

### **3.12. Information, Communication and the Role of the Media**

Information is critical to any development space. It is the basis of choice of groups and individuals of livelihood options. Information that is fed to policy makers in terms of indicators of development is important for making human-centred policies. Information is currently greatly enhanced by communication technology. Thus there are freer information flows and faster responses to development issues. The concern is the relative availability of development information to women and men. At the level of policy, dearth of gender-based statistics has hampered the prospects of gender planning. Similarly poor access of women and the poor to media information limits their participation in development. Technology enhances networking and business partnership. Marginalisation of a segment of the population in access to information technology deepens gender inequalities. Low levels of education of women relative to men continue to be a cause of limited access to information technology which currently drives development.

The role of the media in promoting democratic values cannot be overemphasised. The media opens up the space for reducing marginalization on many fronts including on the basis of sex, ethnicity, class and so on. What the media projects therefore is an important force in promoting or hindering gender biases and stereotypes. The media also projects commercial values and it is the values that sell that the media has tended to project. The negative values of “sex-sell” have been projected in most economies, worsened by globalisation of values. This has allowed wrong representation of women, including female public figures, as sexual beings and objects before any consideration of their capabilities. Sexism has also been reinforced via the way the media projects gender relations. Therefore, the media will still be central to correcting negative values. But which kind of media? It is only a free and liberalised media that can be accountable to both women and men. The form or structure of the media is also important in terms of access by different groups of people. Where poverty, obscurity or livelihood preoccupations prevent women from accessing more popular media, a responsive state owes it to those marginalised to subsidise access or promote simple forms of media. So far in Nigeria, the media is just emerging after a long interregnum of repression. The space thus exists to reform the media to respond to gender issues in communication.

Situation analysis data show that the overarching issue for Nigeria at present is lack of gender data or information. Gender issues are relatively new in the country, thus gender-disaggregated data on issues of concern to gender development are scanty. Considering the importance of current data and information in policy formulation, analysis and effective programme planning, availability of appropriate packaged data in various areas of gender concern is the key to the success of any programme on gender in Nigeria. Baseline data and relevant information on critical gender issues will also enable quantifiable comparative analysis of progress and achievements in these areas and guide appraisal and charting of new and more effective paths (World Bank/FMWA, 2005). It should be noted that establishing a data bank was one of the goals set in the National Policy on Women, but it has never materialised. There is the need for such a data bank to be in place for the compilation of current gender data in government organs, research institutions and the universities. An additional function would be to ‘address issues

surrounding data labelled as “gender-disaggregated” that are mainly sex-based (that is, men and women, but without information on boys, girls, older men, older women, rich men, rich women, poor men and poor women, among others) (World Bank/FMWA, 2005: 52). Other issues to be addressed in ICT are restriction and limited opportunity for women in ICT, poor accessibility to information among rural women, negative impressions of women in advertisements and promotional sales, low literacy among women, low participation of women in ICT, gender imbalance in media ownership and poor access of women to information. advertisements.

### **3.13 People with Special Needs and Other Forms of Social Inequalities**

The United Nations recognizes the rights of people with special needs or disabilities and the vulnerable population to function effectively within their communities and nations. Most countries, including Nigeria, in subscribing to the Convention on the Rights of all Persons, usually guarantee the protection and promotion of basic human rights and freedom for the disabled, the aged, widows, children and other vulnerable groups in society. Despite these provisions, persons in this category are denied these rights to development because policies rarely address these needs, in spite of legal provisions. As a result, people in their category are often highly represented among the core poor. Women and men within this population are again segmented into dichotomous sub-populations because the power structures that apply in the mainstream also apply among them, creating multiple layers of inequality for women with special needs. This discrimination inherent in culture is rarely addressed. The girl-child is particularly disadvantaged in security of rights to education and safe livelihoods, due to negative culture of male-child preference. Widows also face challenges that are rooted in culture and legislative weaknesses and poor access to the law. In order to bring such marginalised females into the mainstream of development, the policy focus for meeting their basic and strategic needs must be sharpened. It is noted that legislations and policy guidelines are in place at some levels of government. What is often lacking is the implementation, worsened by the challenges that these groups face in confronting normal livelihood. A gender policy must recognize the need for targeting and creating an enabling environment for equitable participation in development for persons with special needs.

### **3.14. Physical and Social Services**

The overarching importance of social and physical infrastructure to sustainable livelihoods in rural areas cannot be overemphasised. Any meaningful poverty reduction programme is expected to be preceded by a needs assessment study, for appropriate targeting of the most vulnerable in the provision of social and physical infrastructure to support their lean livelihoods. For women and men, this targeting may require different sets of analysis and priorities. Hence the relevance of this issue in a gender policy.

With respect to a good number of major infrastructural facilities like roads, transport, housing and bridges, while men are more relevant to the provision and maintenance, women are more relevant to the provisions and maintenance of smaller facilities, and incidentally, those that are most impactful on basic livelihoods of communities and families, such as water, energy, health support, basic housing infrastructure and so on. The paradox is that it is within the latter that government’s investment has been short-changed, especially by liberalisation policies in public enterprises. The impacts of such sub-optimal conditions not affect just the providers (women) but also their entire households. Another dimension is that women’s contribution to such

provisioning as well as benefits from same are also limited by a lack of gender awareness of the workings of these infrastructural spaces. The Table 3.1 below illustrates the gender linkages in the infrastructure sectors.

**Table 3.1: A Conceptual framework for Analysis of Gender and Poverty Reduction Strategies**

Gender concerns	Gender Impacts
Unavailability of efficient infrastructure and gender roles in their provisioning	Household access to welfare infrastructure differs by gender of provider and gender of head of household
Inaccessibility of infrastructure and efficiency in domestic (social) sectors	Time use for welfare-related activities by gender of provider.
Un-affordability of infrastructure and participation in productive sectors	Ownership of productive capital for household provision, training and investment in the sector varies by gender  Participation in real sectors of the economy varies activities by gender

*Adapted from NISER (2005) Working Paper 1 on Gender mainstreaming in SEEDS. Submitted to UNIFEM, Abuja*

Water, for instance, is very critical to human survival and quality of life. Ready access to adequate and safe water and sanitation is a much better indicator of a nation's health status than the number of hospital beds. Yet, governments spend more on basic health facilities than on basic provision of water. The high mortality and morbidity resulting from communicable and parasitic diseases, such as cholera, filariasis and dysentery, have grave psychological impact on victims and their households and put pressure on health facilities when they could have been prevented through provision of potable water. Monetary losses on health care, transportation and the strains and stress of administering to the sick (or before death) are often significant for households and more burdensome on women than on men. In addition, when the distance between consumers and water supply sources is great and when head portage is the mode of transport, considerable stress and opportunity costs are incurred. Because the peak case rates of these diseases often coincide with major agricultural activities such as land clearing, planting and harvesting, these diseases represent one of the major causes of agricultural work and output loss in many areas of developing countries. The adverse effects impact more disproportionately on women and the girl-child who are mostly responsible for fetching water in virtually all parts of the country.

Another example of a less traditional gender-linked infrastructure is the building and construction industry. Globally, the building and construction industry provides a sensitive barometer through which the health or ill-health of the economy is measured and monitored.

Living conditions as a result of supply shortages have implications for poverty reduction or aggravation. Promiscuity, for example, has been blamed in part on high occupancy density in some Nigerian cities (Adeniji *et al.*; 1998). Poor reproductive behaviour that leads to unwanted pregnancies among couples and sexually transmitted diseases among others have been linked to this single factor. Healthy lifestyle presupposes adequate rest after a strenuous exercise or work otherwise, the body becomes stressed and immune system weakened. Opportunistic infections are known to thrive very well under weak immune systems. However, the inadequate space means that after labouring all day, women, more than men, are denied the opportunity to relax and sleep and get refreshed for the next day's hectic routine because of gender power relations.

An overview of the state of these above two types of infrastructure in Nigeria illustrated the reality. While most of the data are gender neutral, anecdotal evidence permits us to appropriately discuss their potential and real implications for women.

According to NDHS (2003) there was only a marginal increase in households access (4%) to safe water between 1995 and 1999, and there was an appreciable decline in urban coverage (9%). With the exception of the South-west zone, all the other zones enjoyed only paltry increase in coverage ranging from a mere 5% in the South-east to 11% in the North-west zone. A critical examination of the water supply sources showed the well topping the list (26.5%). Just about 25% of the urban households relied on in-house water connection while about the same proportion relied mainly on public water taps during the same reporting period. Other major sources of water were borehole (12.4%), surface water bodies such as rivers, springs and streams (5.8%), while 3.6% depended on tankers and other type of water vendors. With respect to the rural areas, more than 38% of the households obtained water from rivers, springs and streams. Well was the source of this vital resource to about 35% of the rural households followed by public tap (9.5%) and borehole (9.1%), respectively.

In the housing sector, women accounted for less than 10% of the working proprietors and active partners in firms operating in the industry. Men also occupied 94.10% of all the managerial positions as well as 85.16% of the clerical and related positions to the disadvantage of women. Yet, a study of building and construction sites showed that women's role in supporting basic operations accounted for more than 30% of the labour force in the sector, usually as mere menial workers on even more menial wages. The foregoing poor representation of women further demonstrates that women are not benefiting equally from the contributions of this sector to national development because policies do not recognise the gendered dimensions of operations and impacts of the sector. Many more gender linkages are implicated in the provision or otherwise of various forms of social infrastructure (NISER, 2005). The obvious imperative is that any gender policy must address these often obscure ramifications of development.

### **3.15. Legal and Human Rights**

There are clearly legal and human rights imperatives that should impose on these negative social practices and their influence on the development space. These include the global regional and national instruments discussed in chapter 2 of this document. The challenges is the ability of advocates within nations to influence policy and the ability of democratic governments to muster sufficient political will that is necessary to address gender inequalities through legislation but also through the wielding of fiscal and monetary policy instruments. For instance, the

constitution of the country is the first premise to ensure gender equity and social justice in clear and unambiguous terms. However, what we currently have is not sufficient to enforce fundamental change.

### **The Constitution**

The fundamental principle of equality is enshrined at least in intent, in the 1999 constitution. Section 17 provides that the state social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Section 15:2 expressly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties.

However, the use of exclusively masculine language implies that women are not full citizens in their own right. Of course, section 318 of chapter VIII, part IV on interpretation of the Constitution has no provision addressing this. Nowhere in the Constitution is it stated clearly that the rights of male citizens also apply to female citizens.

Additionally, the capacity to transfer citizenship is conferred on Nigerian men, but not on Nigerian women. Section 26.2 (a) provides for Nigerian men to confer citizenship by registration on their non-Nigerian wives, but there is not such provision for Nigerian women.

Accused persons or detainees are entitled to bail by virtue of section 35 (4) of the constitution except where the offence is a capital one that is still recognised in Nigeria. Accordingly, the police is given powers to grant bail at the pre-trial stage under section 17 of the Criminal Procedures Act (CPA), Section 42 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) and Section 341 of the CPC. The law enforcement agencies, especially the police and some judicial officers, have constantly refused to allow women to stand as sureties to detainees contrary to the law.

The law on domestic violence is clearly inadequate, particularly regarding wife battery. Domestic violence is currently classified under common assaults, which down plays the seriousness of this crime. According to Section 55 of the penal code, wife beating is allowed as long as it does not amount to grievous hurt. As defined in Section 241 of the penal code, "grievous hurt" includes emasculation, permanent loss of sight, ability to hear or speak, facial disfigurement, deprivation of joint, bone fracture or toot dislocation. This means that a man who beats his wife short of inflicting these injuries is acting within the law. How then is a woman's fundamental right to dignity protected under such circumstances? Section 353 of the Criminal Code makes an indecent assault on males punishable by 3 years of imprisonment. A similar offence of indecent assault on females is treated as mere misdemeanour, punishable by a maximum of 2 years imprisonment (Section 360), clearly a discriminatory provision.

Rape is yet another area in criminal law where women are discriminated against on the basis of marital status. Forced sexual intercourse or marital rape is not recognised as an offence.

The Tripartite Legal System which entails the use of the statutory / common law system, the customary and Sharia legal system further compounds the legal status of women in Nigeria. The patriarchal Nigerian society readily adopts the legal system, which is favourable to the relegation of women to the background. After the introduction of civil rule in 1999, Zamfara State introduced the Sharia system into the penal system of its state. Thereafter, 18 other states in

Northern Nigeria have enacted the Sharia Criminal Law, which makes adultery punishable by death by stoning. So far in Nigeria, only women have been found guilty by the Sharia Courts, while their male co-accused have been released due to lack of evidence.

Under the Yoruba customary law for instance, the immovable property of the head of the family, usually the father/ husband becomes the family property for the use and possession of the descendants, both immediate and after, on his death or intestacy. Daughters have the same rights as sons over their father's property. They are entitled to remain in the family house, which becomes family property to which all have rights of possession equally. These rights do not terminate on marriage and in the case of divorce, they return to the family house with their children (*Cooker V Cooker*, 14N.R.83). Conversely, as wives, women do not inherit their husband's property nor do men inherit from their wives. This is supported by the case of *Sogunro Davics V Sogunro Davics and ors* 1992 Z N.L.R. 79 at 80.

The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Nigeria has ratified, requires state parties, under Article 2 (F) and under Article 5, to take appropriate measures to abolish customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women. So also the African Protocol on the Rights of All persons is another strong instrument of state policy that has been used very little. Other United Nations Conventions is specific areas, for instance, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has many conventions that are capable of enforcing government compliance. The state must not be seen to have failed in its duty to ensure compliance with constitutional provisions and international instruments on women's rights and fundamental freedom.

### **3.16. National and International Partnership for Development**

This issue has become central to development of all nations due to the growing interrelatedness of different stakeholders within nations and between regions of the world. As a goal of the millennium compact, developed countries and developing countries are called to a partnership that will benefit all and reduce negative impacts of under-development on the rest of the worlds. It is also to promote social responsibility in a rapidly liberalising world. Clearly related to this is the shared responsibility of all stakeholders in promoting development issues. Thus, for instance, the public and private sectors have become partners in pursuing development goals. The Civil Society is increasingly taking on responsibilities for development by partnering with governments at different levels or by acting as the conscience of government. The efforts of development partners in providing funding and technical support for many poverty reducing programmes is also notable. The bulk of women empowerment programmes are being supported by donor funding.

While this is laudable, it raises the issue of the commitment of stakeholders to gender equality principles and practices enunciated in government policies and of national governments to the important issues of gender already embraced by most development partners. The political will of the national government must be demonstrated through integrated programming and participatory development practices in all especially in policy formulation, implementation and M&E. The barometer of this interaction and commitment is the relative budgetary commitment to gender-focused programmed in Nigeria. Another is the commitment to equitable involvement of women and men in positive employment programmes and a commitment to gender equity in

recruitment policies. These are areas where development partners have demonstrated greater commitment than national government. Examples of CIDA, DfID, SIDA and the UN Agencies, as well as international NGOs like Action Aid, OXFAM are commended in promoting gender equity in both programming and organisational practices.

### **3.17. A Call for Change and Policy Priorities**

Given all these compelling evidences linking greater gender equality with greater poverty reduction and economic growth, policy-makers have continued to look at gender in terms of the social sectors and to focus on gender inequalities in education and health. To close gender gaps in health and education though requires that women's economic agency is increased. And in spite of progress in closing gender gaps, which has boosted growth (albeit within specified sectors), African economic policy-making remains largely informed by orthodox thinking, which does not include gender as a variable in macro-economic analysis. For instance, policies such as trade liberalisation, privatisation, fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies recognise market-oriented work and ignore non-market work, most of which is the unpaid subsistence, reproductive and care work done by women in households. It is recognised therefore that trade policy-makers and trade negotiators need to focus not only on market access but also on the social and infra-structural needs of various groups that must access the markets, in a market-driven world. Although issues such as food security, public health, environment and labour standards are now included on the trade agenda, gender as a cross-cutting issue has not been integrated into trade policies and trade negotiations. It is important that officials engaged in trade policy-making, negotiations or project implementation are able to formulate gender-sensitive trade policies.

The challenges that inform current priorities in the gender policy include, but are not limited to, the sectoral gender concerns raised above which are corroborated by the views of the different stakeholders during the consultations for this policy. The key field findings are presented in Annexure 1, focusing on the policy environment that governs gender programming in Nigeria (the macro-policy space) and on the specific realities of gender inequalities and concerns in various sectors of the economy. These underscore the importance of not only macro policy issues but more importantly, the linkages of the macro and micro environment.

The NGP provides a framework for integrating these concerns into the mainstream of macroeconomic planning without overlooking its underlying gendered causes and effects from the socio-cultural and political perspectives.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE POLICY: FRAMEWORK, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES**

#### **4.1. General Framework of the Policy**

The overall vision and mission for implementation of the National Gender Policy (NGP) emanate from the perceived priorities from the situation analysis, field findings from stakeholders during national and zonal consultations, and in accordance with other global, regional and national best practices.

##### **4.1.1. The Vision**

The vision of the National Gender Policy is the achievement of a just and gender-equitable society and economy where women and men contribute their optimal quota to development at all levels of governance and has control over and benefit from all development interventions.

##### **4.1.2. Main Policy Thrust**

The unequal gender relations in the country is recognised and the fact that it cannot be addressed by focusing on women empowerment programmes alone, or by focusing on women alone, without the involvement of men, is a fundamental fact that drives the policy. It is also recognised that the nation cannot achieve any measure of sustainable growth and human development without removing gender gaps in productive capacities of all her economic agents, men and women. This is an imperative for policy efficiency in all sectors.

The main thrust of the National Gender Policy (NGP) is therefore to promote gender-sensitive and gender responsive culture in national policy making in general. It will promote gender mainstreaming in all public and private policies and programming priorities and in all organisational and community cultures in Nigeria. It will promote a



corporate responsibility for women empowerment and gender equality as a major plank of its implementation. Strategies for achieving policy thrust and outcomes are itemised in Table 4.1. below:

**Table 4.1: Policy Thrusts and Policy Outcomes**

<b>Policy Thrust</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
Policy Reforms	Mainstreaming of gender concerns at all levels
Gender Education and Capacity Building	Technical expertise and positive gender culture
Legislative backstopping	Gender Justice and Human Rights
Economic Reform	Enhanced Productivity and policy efficiency

### **4.1.3 POLICY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **Overall Policy Goal**

The overall goal is to promote gender equity and sustainable human and economic development in Nigeria.

#### **The Policy Objectives**

The objectives are to:

- a. Establish the framework for gender-responsiveness in all public and private sector policies and programmes
- b. Promote the development and application of gender mainstreaming approaches that are compatible with the macro-policy framework of the country at any point in time
- c. Promote gender mainstreaming in all policy, programming and organisational cultures in Nigeria.
- d. Incorporate the principles of CEDAW and other global and regional frameworks that support gender equality and women empowerment in the country's legislative processes
- e. Promote equal opportunity in all areas of political, social, economic life of the country for women, as well as for men.
- f. Promote women-specific projects as a means of developing the capabilities of women, as well as men, to enable them take advantage of economic and political opportunities
- g. Sensitise all stakeholders to their roles and responsibilities in adopting the priorities of this policy

#### **4.1.4 The Guiding Principles**

- a. Gender analysis shall be an integral part of all policy articulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the country and gender perspectives will be considered in all development sectors

- b. All stakeholders shall take a role in the mandate for gender equity and equality. These include, the government, the private sector, civil society organisation, community based organisation, development partners, women and men as individuals.
- c. The implementation of the policy shall depend on a cooperative interaction of women and men. Gender culture entails cooperation and interdependence rather than separation.
- d. The implementation of the policy shall depend on a cultural re-orientation that will be supported by policies and programmes of gender education, sensitisation, motivation and responsiveness, rather than only through legislations.
- e. The National Gender Policy shall focus on transforming the policy environment within which gender equity programmes will be implemented, towards providing enabling structures and political will
- f. The implementation shall rely on a reform of existing structures of women development with a view to strengthening their capacity for a more robust mandate.
- g. Women empowerment is considered as integral to the achievement of gender equality.
- h. The Policy shall build on existing structures and best practices as well as draw from international experiences and practices.

## **4.2 THE POLICY PRIORITIES**

### **4.2.1 The Policy Environment**

The long history of women empowerment in the country is not in tandem with the current situation analysis with respect to all the gender issues suffered by majority of women in Nigeria. All efforts through special legislation, state bye-laws and gender specific policies at all levels of government and by the civil society are noted. The gender policy shall emphasise the continuation of these efforts and recommend that the best practices across the country be replicated as widely as possible. However the continued manifestations of the problems highlighted at the sectoral level points to the need to take a different approach to the current policy framework from that of the National Policy on Women. As noted by many individuals and institutions consulted and as deduced through the wide consultations, the problem of resistance to change lies more with the policy environment within which gender-specific policies are expected to be implemented. The gender policy shall therefore focus its attention primarily on addressing these challenges of the policy environment as a necessary condition for the successful implementation and effectiveness of gender-specific policies and programmes at the programmatic or sectoral level.

### **4.2.2 Perceptions of Gender**

A wrong perception of the concept of gender by policy makers, charged with the responsibility for policies. There is still evidence that gender education has not penetrated to all levels of the populace and so, the impression that gender issues are exclusively about women still persists. Similarly the impression that gender issues challenge accepted norms and values of marriage, family and religion is rife. Many stakeholders believe that gender concerns should be addressed only within the Ministry of Women Affairs.

## **Policy Goals**

The National Gender Policy shall emphasise the relevance of and establish the structure for gender education at all levels of government and among all population groups in the country

## **Policy Objectives**

- i. Ensure a fundamental transformation of the wrong perception of gender among all stakeholders in the next five years
- ii. Entrench a culture of gender sensitivity and equality principles at all institutions and structures of government, private sector and communities by 2010
- iii. Increase the level of awareness of problems of gender at all levels with a view to sensitising all stakeholders to its negative impacts

## **Strategies**

- i. Promote the review and transformation of all school curricula from early years education to tertiary level with a view to project gender issues correctly among all stakeholders
- ii. Ensure continuous capacity building through gender training specifically for policy makers and legislators
- iii. Promote regular sensitisation of boys, girls, men and women on the benefits of gender-sensitivity through mediums that will reach all levels including communities and households
- iv. Mainstream gender into all programmes of the National Orientation Agency and all special agencies of government charged with mandates for sensitisation and information.
- v. Review of the Constitution and all government documents such as sector policies, NEEDS policy and other monetary and fiscal policy instruments to address gender-blind clauses that result from poor gender education

## **Expected Outcomes**

- i. An improvement in the understanding and perceptions of gender among all policy actors within the next two years
- ii. The application of a reviewed gender-sensitive school curriculum at all levels of education within the next five years

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- i. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and the National centre for Women Development shall spearhead the effort for re-orientation by developing appropriate gender education guide for all levels of practitioners and identify strategies for the gender education, gender sensitisation, gender review of policies and so on.
- ii. The National Orientation Agency and the various Ministries of Information and Strategy shall integrate relevant aspects of the gender education and sensitisation and gender justice into their programmes
- iii. The Media shall have a strong role in projecting gender rights and gender justice in its various outlets
- iv. The Ministry of Women Affairs in partnership with the National Team of Experts will generate situation reports of ex-ante (baseline) and ex-post impact assessment of gender education programmes
- v. The government shall allocate sufficient budget for the programmes

- vi. Development Partners shall facilitate this effort by supporting the various programmes technically and financially.

### **4.2.3. Institutional Framework for Implementing Gender Policies**

The problem highlighted here is that of inadequate power and capacity of the national women's machinery to solely take on the responsibility for effecting gender equality in all sectors. Many problems seen to confront the Ministry include low technical capacity of its core staff, lack of an establishment framework that employs and retains gender specialists into the ministry, poor funding and large reliance on development partners, giving rise to concerns with sustainability of programmes. Also the poor perception of gender among other government agencies especially the core policy agencies does not give rise to the proper orientation to addressing the demands and needs of the Ministry. Similarly the framework for implementation is weakened by the fact of poor integration with the macro-policy framework. The challenge is to see gender equality policies and programmes as integral to macroeconomic development goals of the country and its operational strategies.

The responsibility for gender equality shall be the responsibility of all government agencies, line ministries, state and community apparatuses as well as the civil society and private sector.

#### **Policy Goal**

The National Gender Policy shall be committed to putting in place an institutional and operational framework that ensures that all gender equality imperatives are effectively implemented. The Policy shall also be committed to strengthening the capacity and the power relations of the Ministry of Women Affairs with other line Ministries and state implementation agencies.

#### **Policy Objectives**

- a. Promote an appropriate institutional and operational framework that links the macro-policy environment effectively with the micro level where women, men and communities are experiencing the manifestations of gender inequality by 2008.
- b. Promote the setting up of an establishment structure that will strengthen the functions of the Ministry of Women Affairs, giving cognizance to its new mandates by 2008
- c. Strengthen the capacity of Ministries of Women Affairs at various levels to carry out the mandate for gender equality programming and monitoring by 2008
- d. Strengthen the capacity of the National Centre for Women Development to pursue vigorously and in a focused manner the mandate for women empowerment as a necessary condition for gender equality by 2008

#### **Strategies**

- a. Articulate and advocate for a central role for Ministry of Women Affairs in coordinating all gender equality programming in both public and private sectors
- b. Advocate for specialist staff for the Ministry of Women Affairs and the National Centre for Women Development
- c. Put in place the structure and function of a Gender Equality Commission within the Ministry with the full responsibility to design, motivate, monitor and enforce structures of gender equality at all levels of government

- d. Advocate within government and at the highest level for a stronger political will and mandate of the Federal Executive Council in promoting gender equality

### **Expected Outcomes**

A full-fledged Ministry of Women Affairs with at least 50% permanent technical staff with relevant qualifications

Annual programme of in-house training on gender for all line Ministries is institutionalised

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Ministry of Women Affairs, together with the National Team of Experts shall design an appropriate technical structure and technical staff strength for its mandates in line with existing establishment rules and advocate for its adoption by the Federal Executive Council

The Ministry of Women Affairs, together with the Team of Experts shall design teaching modules for in-training of its staff at all levels

## **4.2.4 Operational Framework for Gender Equality**

Gender planning has always been at the periphery of the macro-policy framework. This affects the decentralisation of the mandate for gender equality and especially affects budgetary allocation. The implementation of gender equality programmes will be based on gender mainstreaming into all policy spaces in the countries social, economic, political and cultural spaces. The focus of the operational framework is to entrench gender planning within NEEDS/SEEDS/LEEDS or any other macro-planning framework of the country.

### **The Policy Goal**

To promote stronger macro-micro linkage of all gender planning structures in Nigeria with a view to strengthening the country's commitment and enhancing the outcomes of gender equality policies and programmes

### **Policy Objectives**

- a. Decentralise the mandate for gender equality to all institutions of governance and to all stakeholders in the economy by 2008
- b. Promote gender mainstreaming as an institutional programme and societal culture by 2008
- c. Increase the capacity for gender monitoring within all macro-policies by 2008
- d. Institutionalise the training and research in gender and development policy by 2010

### **Strategies**

- a. Ensure a gender-based review of all instruments of policy in the country
- b. Streamline gender specific goals, objectives and strategies into all sectoral strategies of the macro-policy framework
- c. Develop a unified gender mainstreaming process within the macroeconomic framework of NEEDS or any other macro-policy planning framework

- d. Promote an integration of women empowerment and gender equality principles, goals and strategies within NEEDS or any macroeconomic policy framework adapted by Nigeria
- e. Strengthen the mandate for women empowerment within the Social Charter of NEEDS
- f. Build capacity of all stakeholders in participatory policy development, implementation and policy monitoring especially from a gender perspective
- g. Ensure the involvement of all stakeholders (sector ministries and agencies, public and private organisations) in the mandate for gender equality

### **Expected Outcomes**

- a. A strengthened mandate for gender equality in all sectors of the economy
- b. A national macroeconomic planning framework that integrates gender equality as a core goal
- c. Strategies for gender equality identified in all MDAs policies and programming
- d. Gender-sensitive sectoral policy documents have been developed in all MDAs
- e. Gender mainstreaming into all national, state and LGA policies (NEEDS/SEEDS/LEEDS) or as the case may be
- f. Gender action plans and implementation strategies in all line ministries, departments and agencies
- g. Gender equality indicators integrated in the Annual SEEDS Benchmarking Exercise and Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ) surveys

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- a. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, National Planning Commission and other central planning agencies especially at state levels shall develop frameworks, indicators and implementation (action) plans for all the strategies
- b. The National Team of Experts will work with special agencies to develop a framework of gender mainstreaming and indicators for gender equality within all sectors and conduct research to guide gender equality programme within all sectors
- c. The Gender Equality Commission shall monitor the status of the indicators within all sectors and among all stakeholders
- d. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs shall develop Annual Gender Action Plans for all MDAs on the basis of the annual gender status reports
- e. The National Centre for Women Development together with National Team of experts will identify areas of research and conduct pertinent research to guide sectoral programmes for women empowerment

#### **4.2.5 Evidence-Based Policy Making**

Lack of empirical basis for gender planning in Nigeria has been seen as a problem for policy sustainability. Absence of an integrated structure for obtaining gender statistics and other relevant information as baseline reports to strengthen gender policy development has hampered the seriousness with which gender planning should have been regarded. Although feeble attempts have been made especially within the reform programme of the National Bureau of Statistics, the existing framework is grossly inadequate and shows a low level of understanding of the dimensions of gender that need to be captured in policy and through regular status

reporting. The current efforts of the National Centre for Women Development with respect to the creation of a National Gender Data Bank shall be built upon.

### **The Policy Goal**

Promote the culture and practice of evidence-based gender planning and policy-making in Nigeria with a view to achieving a broad-based, socially inclusive and gender-responsive data base for all engagements of governance

### **Policy Objectives**

- a. Strengthen the gender capacity within all national, state and local government data agencies by 2008
- b. Build capacity for gender-responsive field and other methodologies of gender based assessment by 2009
- c. Conduct periodic independent assessment of gender status and derive periodic gender action plans from this as input into all government and private sector policies on an annual basis.

### **Strategies**

- a. Complement the efforts of the NCWD to develop a National Gender Data Bank
- b. Harmonise strategies for mainstreaming of gender templates into all instruments of the National Bureau of Statistics and the Planning Research and Statistics Department of all government agencies
- c. Develop a comprehensive framework for evidences (data and other information) of gender status in all spaces in Nigeria
- d. Sensitise and build capacity for the above within private sector organisations
- e. Promote the institutionalisation of Gender Action Plans from status reports and as the basis for gender planning
- f. Develop and promote the use of gender indicators in annual benchmarking exercise of the National Planning Commission

### **Expected Outcome**

- a. Macro-policies that address gender inequalities will always be based on periodic evidence of gender status in the country
- b. Gender Statistics Unit shall be established within the National Bureau of Statistics with links to all other agencies of government and the private sector
- c. Government, through the commission shall mandate gender action plans from all institutions of government and all organised private sector institutions

### **Roles and responsibilities**

- a. The Ministry of Women Affairs, through the National Centre for Women Development, will have the mandate of maintaining a database for all indicators of gender inequality in all areas of the country
- b. The Ministry of Women Affairs shall build capacity for gender-sensitive methodologies for gender assessment

- c. All line Ministries shall adopt and refine basic indicators for their sectors, identify data needs and coordinate efforts to get same through their Planning, Research and Statistics Departments
- d. The National Bureau of Statistics, through a proposed Gender Statistics Unit shall liaise with the NCWD to collate all indicators and ensure that they are well reflected in all national, state and local instruments of data collection
- e. National Planning Commission shall ensure that gender indicators are benchmarked annually
- f. Development Partners shall promote the engagement of relevant expertise for the outlined processes

#### **4.2.6 Financial Sustainability for Gender Equality Policies and Programmes**

The funding of the National Women's Machinery has been grossly short-changed by poor budgetary allocation. This is not unrelated to the fact that Women Affairs is not a full fledged Ministry with a full status like other major Ministries. Also this development is due to the fact that the Ministry and its related Agencies now have the full responsibility for instituting and implementing gender-related programmes, with exceptions only in Health, Education, Social Welfare and to a limited extent, Agriculture. Also because of the poor perception of gender among policy makers and law makers, gender concerns, programming and budgetary allocation hardly gets the seriousness and commitment that it requires from other policy makers. Lastly the funding for gender programmes have always been spearheaded and sponsored by development partners, which raises the question of sustainability.

#### **The Policy Goals**

Entrench a culture of gender mainstreaming in the budgeting cycle within all sectors through an institutionalisation of gender-responsive budgeting within all state organisations

#### **Policy Objectives**

- a. Increase the capacity for participatory budgeting, including gender budgeting along all stakeholders by 2010
- b. Increase the partnership of government agencies, private sector with development partners in programming and funding gender equality programmes by 2008

#### **Strategies**

- a. Capacity building programmes on participatory budgeting at all levels
- b. Capacity building for gender responsive budgeting at all levels of government
- c. Capacity building for programme proposal development on gender equality programmes for strengthening partnership with development agencies
- d. Sensitisation of other stakeholders to imbibe the culture of gender-responsive budgeting
- e. Advocacy structure for monitoring and evaluation of service delivery for gender equity and women empowerment programmes at all levels of government

#### **Expected Outcomes**

- a. Gender responsive budgeting at all levels
- b. Increased capacity of all government policy makers for gender budget analysis



- c. Participation of equitable participation of women and men at all stages of the nations budget cycle
- d. Increased attention to gender equitable programming in the private sector
- e. Increased involvement of male and female stakeholders in budget monitoring activities

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Ministries of Women Affairs at all levels will conduct capacity building for gender mainstreaming for critical staff of other line ministries

Ministries of Women Affairs, through the Gender Equality Commission at all levels will monitor all budgets for gender compliance

Gender Equality Commissions and Community Based Committees will constitute gender budget monitoring vanguards at all levels within the population

The Team of experts will carry out gender analysis of all sector budgets at all levels of government annually

### **4.2.7 Gender Mainstreaming**

The prospect for integrating gender equality principles at all levels of government and in the consciousness of all Nigerians requires a systematic approach to ensure that gender thinking runs through all levels of policy planning, implementation, reporting and so on. It requires the repositioning of gender principles within all programme and organisational cultures. The ability to effectively do this has been hamstrung by a fluid notion of what gender mainstreaming is all about. As a result, gender mainstreaming has involved different approaches, mostly not well entrenched throughout policy processes. There is need for the Gender Policy to correct this weakness.

### **Policy Goals**

Entrench the practice of gender mainstreaming within the Nigerian policy space at both public and private sectors by promote the understanding of its rationale through the promotion of a unified gender mainstreaming process at all levels of policy and programming

### **Policy Objectives**

- a. Institutionalise the process and practice of gender mainstreaming from a Nigerian-specific perspective by 2008;
- b. Promote accessibility of all organisations and groups to resources and capacity building processes fro gender mainstreaming

### **Strategies**

- a. Adapt the existing framework for gender mainstreaming of the National Planning Commission in all sectoral policies of MDAs and for use by other stakeholders (private sector, non-governmental organisations, community based organisations)
- b. Harmonise all other available frameworks for gender mainstreaming in Nigeria, Africa and global level with a view to evolving a Nigeria specific gender mainstreaming framework
- c. Build capacity of all public officers and private sector practitioners in the application of the Gender Mainstreaming Framework of the NPC
- d. Develop specific frameworks for gender mainstreaming in organisational culture

- e. Promote the understanding of gender mainstreaming in organisational culture at all levels in Nigeria

### **Expected Outcomes**

- a. Gender is mainstreamed at all programme/project levels in the country
- b. Gender is mainstreamed in all organisational culture of both public and private sectors in Nigeria
- c. Culture of gender-responsiveness to all policy initiatives in the country

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

National Planning Commission will partners with Ministry of Women Affairs to facilitate the application of its gender mainstreaming framework for all sector policies and programmes  
Ministry of Women Affairs will spearhead TOTs in all sectors and organisations in the country based on the NPC and other adapted mainstreaming frameworks. The Gender Equality Commissions at Federal and state and community based gender equality committees will monitor compliance with the gender mainstreaming processes at all levels of government. National Centre for Women Development will carry out women empowerment programmes indicated in gender-mainstreamed policies and programmes

### **4.2.8 Political Will for Implementation of Gender Equality Policies**

The instability in political configuration of the country over the past three decades has limited the chances of entrenching any lasting culture, not least that of gender equitable principles and practices. The absence of political will stems partly from this and partly from the negative gender culture, reinforced by patriarchy, the co-existence of customary laws alongside more equitable modern laws and the recent reactivation of religious laws, with tendencies for mis-representation at all levels. All these have not allowed the basic principles of equity, fairness and social justice to be entrenched in the socio-polity. The gender rigidities experience at the level of government policy and its legal frameworks is the outcome. Coupled with the wrong socialisation of boys and girls, gender-biased educational curricula, gender-biased media culture, the political space for gender equity has remained limited. The challenge is to fundamentally address the political culture and build the political will for gender-responsive policies, implementation, and budgeting and inter-personal attitudes through democratic principles.

### **Policy Goal**

The main goal is to achieve a national re-orientation in the commitment to gender equality and increase the political will at all levels to apply gender equality principles

### **Policy Objectives**

- a. To re-orientate the culture of patriarchy and its implications for gender equity at all levels of government and the population
- b. To entrench a political culture of democratic and gender-equitable principles and practice in determining national priorities, national policies and their implementation
- c. To promote a political leadership structure that is inclusive of women and men

## **Policy Strategies**

- a. Advocate for the application of the 50-50 affirmative quota of the AU at all levels
- b. Strongly advocate the domestication of all CEDAW Protocols
- c. Promote greater involvement of women in political and executive appointments
- d. Build the capacity of elected women leaders to perform effectively
- e. Facilitate the participation of gender-sensitive leaders in the country's socio-economic and political structure
- f. Build capacity of women to be effective policy makers and leaders at all levels
- g. Work towards the full domestication of CEDAW and the AU Human Right Protocols
- h. Advocate for a comprehensive review of the Constitution to make it gender-sensitive
- i. Increase the awareness of both women and men of their rights under CEDAW and the Constitution and their capacity to access the relevant laws

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Ministry of Women Affairs will continue to strengthen her mandates and generate outputs in terms of indicators, gender education briefs, lobbying at the level of Federal Executive Council.

The SCGE and CB-CGE at state, LGA and Ward levels will liaise with various governments to promote gender sensitivity, as well as generate credible evidence, in partnership with the Team of Experts to justify gender-responsive policies and their implementation.

The NCCGE will work with political parties at the various levels to ensure that Manifestos reflect gender equality and women empowerment as priorities.

Women's organisation, development partners will support the candidacy of credible gender-sensitive persons to political office and public appointments. Other stakeholders will support the leadership/political bids of gender-sensitive persons, including knowledgeable women

### **4.3. Sectoral Policy Priorities: Policy Goals, Strategic Objectives and Implementation Strategies:**

**A total of 16 priority areas are highlighted for policy and action. These priority areas are adapted from international documents – the Beijing Platform for Action; the Millennium Development Goals and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), while also zeroing on issues that are peculiar to the Nigerian socio-cultural environment. In the subsequent section, major challenges for policy in each priority area are highlighted, and to redress gender discrimination and/or reduce gender gaps, policy goals are identified, followed by strategic objectives and implementation strategies for policy actions.**

#### **4.3.1. Culture, Family and Socialisation**

##### **a. Overview of policy concerns:**

Culture is generally defined as the shared ideas, norms, values and beliefs of a people, often expressed in form of customs, folkways, mores, language and other external symbols. Many Nigerians (women and men) hold rigidly to ethnic based cultures, especially those, which

cushion traditional gender role relations, and women's subordinate position in the Nigeria society. Significantly, a culture amenable to sustainable development must be dynamic, and responsive to qualitative change. However, for such change to be sustainable, it must be guided, planned, and monitored.

Situation analysis of Nigerian cultural groups continues to show the prevalence of harmful and discriminatory gender-based cultural practices, which impact on the family institution and its socialisation processes. Prevalent harmful practices are –

- Preference for male child;
- Discrimination against the girl child in matters relating to survival, protection, and development;
- Child marriage;
- Harmful widowhood practices
- Women's lack of inheritance rights, and lack of access to critical resources, including land, labour, capital, and entrepreneurial skills;
- Religious beliefs and practices that discriminate against women

Although many micro-level women empowerment programmes were initiated under the WID policy programmes, gender inequality structures still persist; while sometimes, development efforts meant double burden for women e.g. women are over-worked and over burdened when development programmes failed to apply appropriate gender diagnostic tools and frameworks.

Existing gender issues in the sector are therefore identified as –

- Harmful gender-based cultural practices;
- Gender inequity within family structures;
- Domestic violence against women in families;

Compliance with existing policy frameworks is central to the transformation of cultural and religious practices, which date back in history (see a list of existing legislation in this target area in Appendix 1). Even though many of the problems legislated against are often prevalent in many states in Nigeria, only few states have legislated against them e.g. child marriage, FGM, and domestic violence. It is important to give these legislations a national outlook, and if possible to enforce them in all the Nigerian states.

#### **b. Policy Goal:**

To eliminate cultural/religious gender-based biases and harmful cultural and religious practices which reproduce inequalities in gender role relations in the Nigerian society, and thereby giving a subordinate status to women compared to men.

#### **Objectives and Implementations Strategies**

*Objective 1: Make cultural and religious practices amenable to gender equality principles and practices by eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination based on culture and religion.*

#### **Strategies for implementation:**

- Reform customary marriage to eliminate huge dowry payment in cash and kind, and to make small dowry payment a mere cultural symbolism
- Legislate against forced marriage and uphold law against child marriage in all Nigeria States
- Abolish by law in all Nigerian states all negative widowhood practices
- Sensitise against wife inheritance
- Review intestate succession law to ensure equal rights of inheritance of male and female children
- Sensitise against food taboos which prevent women and children from eating certain food during pregnancy and/or after delivery
- Implement the laws existing in some States against child marriage; female circumcision (FGM), Malpractices against widows and widowers; domestic violence and maltreatment, and ensure that other States enact similar laws;
- Ensure that all Nigerian States adopt the Domestic Violence Prevention Bill(2005)
- Create new legislations against all forms of domestic violence where none currently exists.
- Grant women rights to family property (inheritance rights);
- Review child custody law such that custody is determined not by gender but by social responsibility.
- Advocate that men and women equally participate in all family and household responsibilities, including family planning, child-rearing, and housework
- Develop policies and laws that take cognizance of the plurality of forms of family, especially the single-parent households

***Objective 2 Strengthen and propel existing policies, which enhance child survival, protection, and development, and eliminate all forms of discrimination against the girl child.***

**Strategies for Implementation:**

- Grant children, irrespective of their gender, the rights to survival, protection and development as stipulated by the Child Rights Act (2003) (see Box 4.1. for pressing issues of concerns which some States in Nigeria are already taking actions against);
- Family re-orientation on child right through advocacy. This could be done through community level structures – Village Heads, Ward Heads, Community Development Committees, and organisations working with communities for development.

**BOX 4.1.**  
***PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE GIRL CHILD***

- Street trading and hawking
- Street begging
- Child labour, trafficking and all forms of abuse or violence
- Sexual exploitation of girls/women
- Harmful traditional practices such as FGM, and child marriage
- Fundamental rights of the girl-child to health, education, survival and participation
- Girl child disinheritance

### **4.3.2. Gender-based Violence:**

#### **a. Overview of Policy Concerns**

Gender-based violence has become a major issue in recent times. It reflects the extent to which women's human rights are threatened thereby leading to the voicelessness of women in many issues concerning and affecting their lives. Violence against women, particularly domestic violence and rape, is widespread which has increased the vulnerability of women to HIV/AIDS. In Nigeria, harmful practices meant to control women's sexuality have led to great sufferings. Notable among them is the practice of female genital mutilation which is a violation of basic rights and a major lifelong risk to women's health. Another major violence against women is the insalubrious attitude of wife-beating and women trafficking. The underlying force behind this behaviour is the wrong belief that women are inferior and are supposed to be treated as second class citizens in the society. In order to tap the potentials of women for development, gender sensitive policy that entrench equity between men and women is key.

Equal relationships between men and women in matters of sexual relations and reproduction, including full respect for the physical integrity of the human body, requires mutual respect and willingness to accept responsibility for the consequences of sexual behaviour, sensitivity and equity in gender relations enhance and promote respectful and harmonious partnerships between men and women

The law on domestic violence is clearly inadequate, particularly regarding wife battery. Domestic violence is currently classified under common assault, which downplays the seriousness of this crime. According to section 55 of the penal code, wife beating is allowed as long as it does not amount to grievous hurt. As defined in section 241 of the penal code "grievous hurt" include emasculation, permanent loss of sight, ability to hear or speak facial disfigurement, deprivation of any member or joint, bone fracture or tooth dislocation (Imam, 2000). This means that a man who beats his wife short of inflicting the above injuries is acting within the law. How then is the woman's fundamental right to dignity protected under such circumstances? Section 353 of the criminal code makes an indecent assault on males punishable by 3 years imprisonment. A similar offence of indecent assault on females is treated as mere misdemeanour punishable by a maximum of 2 years imprisonment (section 360), clearly a discriminatory provision.

#### **b. Policy Goal:**

*Eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination, and ensure that women and men enjoy the same rights irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and class.*

#### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

*Objective 1: Legislate against all forms of gender-based violence and discriminations*

### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Enforce the Sexual Offence law defined in Section 357 of the Criminal Code against women or a girl. For effective implementation, the practice of requiring corroboration for sexual offences shall be amended.
- Enforce the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (2003).
- Promote the awareness and enforcement of existing laws against pornography
- Enforce legislation against child labour as contained in the Child Labour Act
- Enact new laws to protect the rights of women, adolescents, and children in the following areas –
  - Right of women to secure international passport without permission from husbands or other men;
  - Citizenship rights to foreign men married to Nigerian women
  - Women's right to bail
  - Son's preference, which results in harmful and unethical practices as regards female infanticide and prenatal sex selection
- Increase public awareness of the value of the girl child, and concurrently, strengthen the girl child's self-image, self-esteem and status. This could be done through elimination of stereotypes in communication and educational materials, and make the school environment more gender friendly and responsive
- Ensure the domestication of CEDAW and the AU Protocol on the Right of Women

***Objective 2: Build the capacity of institutions and persons in support of transformatory change that will bring about a society free of all forms of gender-based violence***

### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Advocacy for law and legislative reforms to include new forms of gender-based violence e.g. rape within marriage; harassment of men by ladies (reverse harassment) etc.
- Human rights education at all levels – Primary, Secondary and Tertiary; and within informal structures;
- Capacity building for the judiciary and the extra judiciary stakeholders

### **4.3.3. Education and Training:**

#### **a. Overview of policy concerns -**

UNESCO rated Nigeria as one of the nine countries with the highest number of illiterate population in the world, with women constituting the larger percentage of this.

Women's education is a priority because it is the key to gender equity, justice and poverty reduction, improved skills and technological knowledge acquisition, improved nutrition, reproductive health and general socio-economic development of a nation. Despite government policy interventions and programmes, empirical evidences show that gender disparity in enrolment, attrition, and retention at all levels – primary, secondary, and tertiary. Specific to the South East, boy child education is dropping compared to girls'.

A number of policies now treat education as an instrument of development, and women education as road to gender equality and social justice. Some of these policies include the Nigerian Constitution, the National Policy of Education, the Universal Basic Education Policy among others – all advocate acquiring of basic education as a means to meaningful contribution to development. There are other policies specific to regions and zone, aimed at correcting development anomalies in educations.

Major constraints to female education have been identified as –

- Poor implementation of government policies
- High drop out rate of girls from school as a result of early marriage, teenage pregnancy and poverty of parents/guardian
- Weak monitoring mechanisms to measure the implementation of programmes
- Poor budgetary allocations to educational sector
- Poverty
- Cultural and religious practices such as early child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child labour etc

Female illiteracy being 44% of the general population, it is important to target them through non-formal school systems, and adult/continuing education.

### **b. Policy Goals**

To ensure equal access of women, men, girls, and boys to both formal and informal education, and to improve demand and supply factors that hamper retention, completion, and high school performances, especially for the girl child at all levels - primary, secondary, tertiary; and in the informal setting.

### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

**Objective 1: Ensure equal access to Primary and Secondary education by all children irrespective of gender, physical condition, geographical location, and socio-economic status of parents**

#### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Implementation of the Universal Basic Education Act, since basic education is seen as a fundamental human right of boys, and girls;
- Implementation of the Child Rights Act Sexuality Education Curriculum, UBE EFA
- Advocacy and sensitization on the importance of education, especially for the girl child
- Reduce the rate of girl-child and boy-child school drop-out
- Physical access to school should be within a 3-kilometres radius, to facilitate increase in female enrolment figures;
- Involve community participatory process in policy planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of educational programmes

**Objective 2: Increase female enrolment in science and technology education, Especially at the tertiary level**



### **Strategies for Implementation –**

- Liberal admission criteria for females into science and technology courses in tertiary institutions (use of affirmative action);
- Provision of scholarships and bursaries to girls to undertake courses in science and technology disciplines;

### **Objective 3: Improve the demand and supply factors that hamper the girl child Education**

#### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- i. Demand side strategies:**
  - Prohibiting child labour;
  - Removing religious inhibitions;
  - Legislating against early marriages; and
  - Allowing girls who dropped out of school because of pregnancies to continue their education
- ii. Supply-side strategies –**
  - Creating gender friendly school environment;
  - Making teaching methodology attractive to both gender, especially in such subjects as Mathematics, English, and the Sciences.
  - Providing role models for female students in schools

### **Objective 4: Mainstream gender into school curricula, and research (i.e. at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels)**

#### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Review of existing school curricula to make them gender sensitive;
- Development of gender resource materials;
- Training of gender experts for instructions in schools;
- Provide gender dis-aggregated data for teaching, and for policy and planning;
- Strengthen gender research and methodologies
- Institute mentorship programmes in schools at all levels
- Institute sexuality and leadership skills training in schools at all levels

### **Objective 5: Expand the scope of adult literacy and vocational training, irrespective of gender, disability, and geographical location**

#### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Establish informal educational training in local languages;
- Expand the present scope of adult literacy programme to cover rural communities
- Strengthen the existing vocational training centres

### **Objective 6: Resource mobilization for the sustainability of gender mainstreaming in education**

#### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Gender budgeting in the education sector;
- Allocate money from ETF (Education Trust Funds) for gender mainstreaming in the Education Sector, and for gender education in general
- Government financial support for new academic programmes in Gender Studies/ Gender and Development/Gender and Policy Analysis etc.
- Financial support for retraining of the existing workforce in Gender Mainstreaming Methodologies

### **4.3.4. Poverty and Economic Empowerment**

#### **a. Overview of policy concerns -**

Widespread poverty remains the major challenge to development efforts. Some of the challenges of poverty are – unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, low status of women, environmental degradation, and limited access to social and health services, including reproductive health services. The outcome of these poverty generated conditions includes high levels of fertility, morbidity and mortality, and low economic productivity. Sustained economic growth and development is essential to poverty eradication, and more importantly, women empowerment is now seen as an entry point to gender equality in society.

Empirical data show that 70% of Nigerians live below the poverty level, many of who live on less than 1 US dollar per day. Also, over 47% of the labour force remains unemployed. Women are worse hit as the nation faces economic crises, mainly because they lack access to critical resources – education, capital, labour, entrepreneurial skills and more importantly, lack of control over the use of their valuable time. Hence, the percentage of women remains predominantly high among the core poor, while poverty seems to wear a woman's face.

Since Beijing, Nigerian Government has battled feminized poverty through women-focused programmes – Better Life for Rural Women; Family Support Programme; Family Economic Advancement Programme; National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP); and more recently the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Many of these programmes failed to attract noticeable economic transformation that is beneficial to women because they remained at micro level frameworks. NEEDS, which is a macro-economic framework now presents the needed overarching framework for economic transformation which could help bring the 'woman's question' into the centre of economic policy and planning.

#### **b. Policy Goal:**

*Ensure that women have access to critical resources, and invest in their human capital as a means to reducing extreme poverty in families*

#### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

*Objective 1: Ensure equal access of women and men to critical resources (capital, labour, land, technology, and entrepreneurial skills); and reduce the number of women in core poverty group*

**Implementation Strategies:**

- Ensure gender equitable access to capital i.e. human resource development; bank loans; and large scale investment opportunities;
- Remove gender discriminatory practices in access to land, and landed properties;
- Facilitate access to improve technology and inputs, especially women who are in core poverty group.
- Build women's entrepreneurial skills through vocational skill training, access to information, and adult education programmes;
- Involve women in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes which address women empowerment
- Expose more women to entrepreneurial skills, and management of small scale industries through skill training, seed grants, micro credit schemes, loans, literacy education, women cooperatives etc.;
- Build a cooperative community for families and individuals affected by the specific problems of extreme poverty, and chronic unemployment through government and donor driven economic programmes
- Build business skills for women in extreme poverty
- Government should enhance the business environment through provision of basic infrastructures – electricity; potable water; good roads (all of which will save time and help harness women's energy towards higher productivity and economic development)
- Accounting for the value of women's work in National Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- Government to restructure the banking system to ensure gender equality principles in access to bank loans and other financial and business assistance from the banking sector, while micro credit should be additional and not the main source of financing for women's businesses

*Objective 2:*

*Build the capacity of women and men in low poverty group on investment opportunities and expose their marketable products to domestic and international marketing channels*

**Strategies for implementation:**

- Enlighten those in core poverty group, especially women, on different investment opportunities and expose their marketable products to domestic and international marketing channels.
- Support and encourage the development of small, medium and large-scale enterprises for women and men in core poverty group.
- Train those in core poverty group, especially women, in business development and management.
- Provide those in core poverty group, especially women, access to institutionalised credit, and information on bureaucratic regulations
- Set up technical support services in all tiers of government to assist those in core poverty group, especially women, in planning and managing their enterprises.

- Provide extension services for those in core poverty group, especially women with registered Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to enhance information exchange and problem identification.
- Build a database on women's micro enterprises by type and location.
- Sponsor those in core poverty group, especially women to specialised trade missions, study tours, etc, to expose them to opportunities and technologies in various types of industries.

#### **4.3.5. Employment and Labour Issues**

##### **a. Overview of Policy Concerns:**

Women (compared to men) lack access to employment opportunities because of low investment in their human capital, especially their low level of education, and lack of skills appropriate for formal labour employment. Women therefore dominate small-scale commerce in food, textiles, household goods and consumable. The few women employed in the formal labour market work within an environment which is non-responsive to their gender needs, while they are also discriminated against based on traditional gender-based division of labour which made women responsible for child bearing and rearing roles, and the care of the family as a whole.

Therefore, Nigeria labour market is characterised by –

- Occupational segregation by sex, with women concentrated in low earning employment;
- Few women occupy senior administrative/managerial positions;
- Gender-based discriminatory labour laws
- A separation of family and work roles, concerns and interest such that employers of labour including the government being less concerned with family-oriented issues, and therefore bear no social responsibilities towards child bearing roles and functions
- Unfriendly work environment, with child bearing/rearing roles left totally to women, and unrecognised by the state.
- Gender-based division of labour influences what roles men and women are given to play in the workplace, rather than a consideration for talents and individual capabilities.
- Abuse of women's sexuality, especially in the private sector where women are encouraged to use their 'so-called' natural endowments to bring about economic prosperity to their employers (example of this is found in the banking sector where women are employed in the marketing departments to mobilise and attract high deposits from rich men and men in positions of authority, and thereby forcing women to use improper means of generating money for the banking industry)
- Despite the glaring gender-based labour abuse, gender issues are rarely the concern of labour and trade unions, while women are generally inactive in labour unions

##### **b. Policy Goal:**

*Achieve equality and equity in employment opportunities and eliminate all discriminatory and abusive practices (on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, disability, or marital status) against the employment of women in the public and private sectors of the economy*

### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

***Objective 1: Build the human capital of women to allow them comparable opportunity (as men) in the modern labour market***

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- Encourage equal access to education and skill acquisition programmes for women in order to increase the demand for their labour at all levels, but particularly at the managerial and executive levels.
- Invest in human resource development by granting women and men increased access to information, education, skill development and employment opportunities, both formal and informal,
- Make vocational education and adult literacy programmes available to women and men
- Strengthen gender education in schools, and break gender barriers in acquisition of knowledge (e.g. more women and Science and Technology disciplines), and where possible introduce affirmative actions in school admissions
- Institute mentorship programmes both in the public and the private sector

**Objective 2: Eliminate all discriminatory practices against the employment of women in the public and private sectors of the economy**

#### **Implementation Strategies:**

- Eliminate all gender-based discriminatory practices in recruitment, training, promotion, and wages, with particular reference to the private sector.
- Develop a Workplace Gender Policy, which will help eliminate inequities and barriers to women in the workforce, thereby eliminating gender discrimination in hiring, wages, benefits, training and job security.
- Personnel policies and practices must comply with the principle of equitable representation of both sexes, especially in managerial and policy-making levels
- Eliminate all forms of gender based exploitations/discrimination at work i.e. gender-based abusive employment regulations in the Banking Sector; the Police Force; the Military; and gender-blind conditions in the Nigerian Prisons.
- Ensure effective implementation of national labour laws and international labour standards which protect women.
- Involve more women in the decision making process at the workplace such as board and management level and in trade unions.
- Review the tax codes to ensure equity in the principles of equal pay for work of equal value
- Use of gender responsive, and politically correct language in the work place
- Mass mobilisation campaigns to sensitise the public on gender issues, break traditional gender barriers and stereotypes, and the need for women to take active part in formal labour employment
- Ratification of ILO Convention on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for men and women workers – Workers with Family Responsibilities, Convention 156 of 1981 and enacts a law to support the implementation of this convention

### **Objective 3: Institutionalize ties between work and family roles and create a family friendly work environment**

#### **Strategies:**

- Government to institute measures which promote shared responsibilities of life for both women and men as a means of creating balance between family and work responsibilities thus facilitating women's active participation in public life
- Family and work roles to be seen as complementing rather than as operating at parallel lines. Hence, government should institute and implement a policy of providing child care in all workplaces both formal and informal in rural and urban areas, with both men and women serving as care givers in these centres.
- Institute both in the public and private sectors family-oriented labour laws e.g. creation of crèches in the workplace, granting of maternity and paternity leaves, payment of pregnancy care, flexible work schedule among others, in line with Nigeria's child survival policy (i.e. Baby-friendly initiative) and Nigeria commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the African Child

### **Objective 4: Create a gender responsive and friendly business environment**

#### **Strategies:**

- Creation of more jobs in the industrial, agricultural and service sectors through the establishment of a gender friendly investment environment
- Industries shall be encouraged to produce low cost labour saving devices for women to ensure more efficient utilisation of their labour.
- Create a gender friendly business environment through legislations, and business practices
- Make the school system, and the work environment to embrace gender friendly standards
- Government should enhance the business environment through provision of basic infrastructures – electricity; potable water; good roads (all of which will save time and help harness women's energy towards higher productivity and economic development)
- Accounting for the value of women's work in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), through the incorporation of women's informal labour services into the National Accounting System (NAS)
- Government to create a reward system for organisations in the public and private sectors of the economy that operate based on gender equity and equality principles.

#### **4.3.6. Agriculture and Rural Development**

##### **a. Overview of policy concerns -**

Despite the dominant role of petroleum sector as the major foreign exchange earner, agriculture remains the mainstay of Nigeria's economy. Agricultural sector provides the food for the populace, raw materials for the manufacturing sector, and a major foreign exchange earner for the country. In Nigeria, women who constitute about 50 percent of the national population, majority of whom reside in the rural areas, play pivotal roles. They are involved in agriculture as suppliers of labour, food crop and livestock producers, processors of food and fish products, marketers of peasant farm surplus and transporters of farm supplies and farm products between

the farm and home. This they do in addition to their domestic and household roles which they perform in a hostile and discriminatory socio-economic and cultural environment.

Despite the contributions of women in agricultural sector, their role in promoting economic and social change continues to be inadequately recognized and undervalued. The following factors are responsible:

- The male dominated culture in Nigeria which give women an inferior position in society;
- Customs that forbids women from owning land, taboos, and the sexual division of labour which keeps women subordinate to men; and
- The problem of unpaid productive activities performed by women at the domestic front.

Given the above, appropriate gender-sensitive policy that dismantles every form of discrimination against women in agricultural production and land use system will be a priority policy for implementation.

#### **b. Policy Goal:**

**Remove all gender-based barriers facing women in agricultural production, and enhance the visibility and productivity of women's work in the agricultural sector**

#### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies:**

**Objective 1: Remove all gender-based barriers to women's participation in the agricultural production and marketing**

##### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Remove all barriers to women's access to critical resources needed for successful agricultural production (i.e. land, capital, credit, farm inputs, technology, water, and agricultural extension services etc)
- Government to strengthen its agricultural policies, especially in the food crop sector to reverse decades of bias in favour of cash crop production.
- Involve women in agricultural policies, planning, and implementation of programmes and activities at all levels - Federal, State and Local Governments.
- Provide farmers, especially females, with accessible and affordable technologies in all areas of agricultural activities
- Government and relevant agencies to introduce environmental friendly technology to promote sustainable agriculture e.g. biogas and organic fertilizers; and make distribution to farmers gender responsive, and equitable.
- Link women farmers to local, national, and international markets, and build their skills to remain competitive
- Ensure active participation of women in policy, planning, and implementation of programmes and activities in the agricultural sector
- Women to form strong cooperatives, and act as groups to break traditional barriers in agriculture, especially in the area of land acquisition,

***Objective 2: Mainstream gender into the agricultural sector, including agricultural policies, plans, programmes, and projects***

**Strategies for Implementation:**

- Mainstream gender issues into policies, plans, programmes, and projects in the agricultural sector
- Create visibility for women's work in the agricultural sector
- Build the capacity of Agricultural Extension Workers in the area of gender analysis, and gender mainstreaming into programmes and activities
- Government shall facilitate the development and strengthening of women cooperatives for effective participation in agricultural programmes.
- Communities and Local Governments shall be encouraged to maintain a register of women farmer with the appropriate agencies for regular product evaluation and other benefits.

***Objective 3: Build institutions to promote the activities of women in the agricultural sector, for sustained economic growth and development***

**Strategies for Implementation:**

- Government, NGOs, and International Agencies working with women in agriculture should provide support for women-focused institutions in agricultural sector;
- Provide a private sector support for women in agric-business, and especially provide bank loans
- The government should provide enabling environment for agricultural production and agricultural enterprise
- Engender the field of agricultural studies, and build skills in gender research in the Faculties/Departments of Agriculture at the tertiary level
- Review and engender the 1978 Land Use Act, so that women can have access to land as a critical resource in agric-business.

#### **4.3.7. Environment and Natural Resources**

**a. Overview of policy concerns:**

The extent to which a nation meets the needs of its growing population depends on the extent to which it is able to manage and utilize resources within its physical and human environment. Demographic factors, combined with such factors as poverty, and lack of access to resources, excessive consumption and /or wasteful production have been found to often result in problems of environmental degradation, resource depletion, and thereby slowed down development. Women as primary extractors, managers, and users of environmental resources often bear the brunt of environmental degradation, resource depletion, and environmental neglect. Thus, appropriate policy is needed institute development frameworks that are gender sensitive in the harnessing of the country's environmental resources.

**b. Policy Goal:**

Remove gender-based barriers in the use and management of the national ecosystem; and eradicate negative environmental practices among women and men



### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

#### ***Objective 1: Ensure gender equity in the use and management of the national ecosystem***

##### **Strategies:**

- Involve women and men (equitably) in policy, planning, and programme implementation on all matters relating to the use and management of the environment, for example, reforestation;
- Eliminate all traditional practices which deny women, access and control over natural resources
- Carry out impact assessment of environmental programmes and project to ascertain impact on women and men, boys and girls, young and the elderly etc.
- Make environmental resources and management gender responsive
- Involve women in task forces to deal with natural disaster, resettlement of displaced people and victims of communal clashes.

#### **Objective 2: Build the capacity of women and men in the appropriate use and the management of the national ecosystem**

##### **Strategies:**

- Ensure the inclusion of gender issues in environmental studies in school curricula at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
- Carry out research to better inform environmental planners on ways of mainstreaming gender into the use and management of the national ecosystem.
- Increase through capacity-building and affirmative action, the proportion of women decision makers, planners, technical advisers, managers and extension workers in the environment and development fields.

#### **Objective 3: Strengthen policy response in the area of women-focused environmental concerns**

##### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Improve sanitary conditions and safe water supply in rural and urban slums
- Provide appropriate and safe waste disposal facilities in the rural and urban slums
- Enact laws against environmental pollutions, and ensure environmental protection
- Eliminate environmental practices that affect women's health negatively (environmental pollution, oil spillage, telephone radiation, erection of telephone masts in residential areas etc)
- Develop appropriate alternative and environmental-friendly sources of energy.
- Regular health check-ups against effects of environmental pollutions especially in the oil producing areas of the Niger Delta.
- Monitor regularly the implementation of development and environmental policies and programmes on women and evaluate their impact.
- Make gender issues a core part of EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) studies.

## **Objective 4: Evolve a multi-sectoral effort in removing gender-based barriers in the use and management of the national ecosystem**

### **Strategies:**

- Institute a multi-sectoral framework for confronting gender-based barriers in the use and management of the natural environmental resources;
- Provide incentives to Non-Governmental Organisations that are involved in environmental protection and management, especially as relating to gender issues.

Relevant agencies shall ensure that women are adequately represented in all activities designed to improve the environment, particularly in the reforestation programmes, and to ensure alternative sources of fuel energy to replace the use of firewood so as to check deforestation.

### **4.3.8. Health and Reproductive Services**

#### **a. Overview of policy concerns:**

Nigeria has one of the highest maternal and child mortality rate in Africa – 704 per 100,000, and infant mortality rate being 105 per 1000 live births, and Under-5 mortality rate put at 178 per 1000. Women’s reproductive roles continue to expose them to more health risks compared to men, yet the society has failed to give women’s health care need the attention it deserves.

Although, the government is undertaking a number of health reforms, including laws against harmful traditional practices e.g. FGM, widowhood rites, and child marriage, many cultural and religious practices still put the health of the woman in doldrums. Importantly, since women are more among the core poverty group, they are more likely not to be able to seek health in fee paying health institutions. In general, women’s health is jeopardised due to ignorance, high cost of health care, inadequate facilities and personnel, exposure to harmful traditional practices, and lack of political will to implement pro-poor health policies, among others.

#### **b. Policy Goal**

*Improve access to health service and enhance better reproductive health care for all, and in particular the core poverty group who are mainly women*

#### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

##### **Objective 1:**

*Help couples and individuals meet their reproductive goals in a framework that promotes optimum health, responsibility and family well-being, and respects the dignity of all persons, and their right to choose the number, spacing, and timing of the birth of their children.*

##### **Strategies:**

- Make comprehensive and a full range of reproductive health care services, including family planning accessible, affordable, acceptable, and convenient to women, men, and adolescents (girls and boys).

- Make family planning services available at both primary and secondary levels of health care delivery, and target men for improved family health;
- Involve men in reproductive health,
- Provide health services to meet adolescent health care needs, especially in the area of counselling, family planning, and other sexuality concerns
- Provide gender trained and gender sensitive medical personnel to handle gender issues in health care delivery
- Promote responsible sexuality that allows relations of equity and mutual respect between gender groups, and thereby enhancing the quality of life of individuals, especially women
- Integrate sexual education to youths programmes, and school curricula, with the aim of reducing adolescent pregnancies

***Objective 2: Reduce maternal/infant morbidity and mortality***

**Strategies:**

- Make immunization facilities available to women and children, especially in the rural communities;
- Make health care affordable, and accessible to women and children through upgrading of primary and secondary health care facilities
- Continuous training and retraining of Traditional Birth Attendants to ensure safe motherhood at the rural level
- Institute systems of monitoring and evaluation of user-centred services with a view to detecting, preventing and controlling gender-based abuses, and ensuring quality of service.
- Make services safer, affordable, more convenient and accessible for clients and improve logistical systems, quality drugs, while also ensuring privacy and confidentiality
- Build a strong and effective referral mechanism that could easily provide a link between and among Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary levels of health care delivery
- Prevent unwanted pregnancies, and reduce the incidence of high-risk pregnancies and morbidity and mortality
- Promote family planning as a means to preventing abortion
- Civil Society Organisations, especially NGOs, Community Based Organisations, and Development Partners to mobilise community support for victims of VVF, infertility, STIs, HIV/AIDS etc.
- Support and recognize the role of women as primary custodian of family health

***Objective 3: Draw up policies and programmes to confront socio-cultural conditions which predispose women to HIV/AIDS, STIs, VVF, abortions, and maternal mortality***

**Strategies for Implementation:**

- Enforce/Enact the law against child marriage in all states of the federation
- Empower women to have control over their own sexuality, and to negotiate conditions under which they have sex
- Where religious practices negate the right of a person to healthy living, evolve advocacy and enlightenment programmes for behaviour and attitude change.

#### ***Objective 4: Strengthen management of information system for the health sector***

##### **Strategies:**

- Gender dis-aggregation of health data
- Effective Health Management Information System

#### ***Objective 5: Adoption of a gender sensitive and holistic approach to health care management***

##### **Strategies:**

- Participatory approach which shall involve community, and especially women groups in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of existing health care management systems and programmes.
- Establish effective linkages and referral systems between primary, secondary, and tertiary health care systems.
- Gender education in schools and adult literacy classes
- Implement sexuality education at all levels
- Encourage more female admission into the medical profession (medical and Para-medics)
- Mainstream gender education into medical and paramedical professions

#### ***Objective 6: Engender budgetary allocation to the health sector***

##### **Strategies for Implementation:**

- Rational allocation of resources in the health sector, with specific funds allocated to gender mainstreaming in the sector
- Allocate funds to gender-focused programmes and activities
- Budget adequate funds to build the capacity of health professionals in gender education and gender mainstreaming issues in the health sector

### **4.3.9. Gender and HIV/AIDS**

#### **a. Overview of Policy Concerns**

Development will be impossible to achieve without a healthy populace. One of the major challenges facing the achievement of a healthy nation is the resented scourge of HIV/AIDS. While HIV/AIDS will continue to tax the capacities of nations, communities and households, the most vulnerable of these groups is no doubt the women. For instance, women are at a disadvantage when it comes to access to information about HIV prevention, ability to negotiate safe sexual encounters and access to treatment for HIV/AIDS once infected. Consequently, HIV infection rate among women is rising faster than among their men counterpart in developing world. Yet, women are acknowledged as primary provider of healthcare for their families, their communities and societies and are likely to continue taking care of family and household needs, even when they are sick themselves.

However, because of cultural practices, social inhibitions, illiteracy, low social visibility, their health concern and needs are often overlooked by policy makers and implementers. Therefore, a

specific gender policy that addresses the health problems of women will be adequate in dealing the problem. Emphasis in this case will be directed towards HIV prevention and control, mitigating the impact of HIV and widening access to treatment, care and support of people living with HIV/AIDS. Interventions for high risk groups such as sex workers and long distance drivers should be given adequate priority.

**b. Policy Goal:**

*Promote systematic and consistent gender mainstreaming into HIV/AIDS policies, plans, programmes, and activities at all levels; build gender analysis capacity of coordinating agencies; and create an enabling gender-inclusive environment in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and address the differential impact of the pandemic on women and men at all levels.*

**c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

**Objective 1:**

*Promote gender mainstreaming into HIV/AIDS policies, plans, programmes, and activities at all level towards the prevention, treatment and care for sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV/AIDS.*

**Strategies:**

- Build the capacity of HIV/AIDS coordinating agencies in gender analysis and gender mainstreaming into HIV/AIDS policies, plans, programmes, and activities in public and private sectors;
- Address poverty issues in HIV/AIDS prevalence as well as the HIV/AIDS-related causes of poverty
- Commit human, institutional and financial resources necessary for effective gender mainstreaming
- Promote health programmes that could easily detect, and treat STIs at the primary healthcare level
- Institute information, education and counselling for responsible sexual behaviour and effective prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, as an integral part of all reproductive and sexual health services
- Remove gender barriers to accessing reproductive health services, especially family planning and treatment for STIs for the adolescent group, especially the girl child.
- Enforce sexual harassment policy, and give public enlightenment on this policy, as a way of ensure safe school, and work environment for girls
- Introduce AIDS education in schools
- Ensure that the infected and the affected are not excluded from receiving formal education

- Ensure that testing, and treatment strategies address gender inequalities and stigmatisation
- Decriminalise prostitution and put in place measures to provide alternative means of livelihood for commercial sex workers.

***Objective 2: create an enabling gender-inclusive environment in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and address the differential impact of the pandemic on women and men at all levels.***

- Target women and girls in the current strategies and control of HIV/AIDS,
- Empower women and men in their response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic
  - Educate women and give them the information they need about their bodies and sex;
  - Provide women with skills-training in community about sex and how to use a condom, and foster inter-partner communication;
  - Promote women economic empowerment as a way of granting women the power to negotiate for sex
  - Grant women access to HIV and STI prevention technologies e.g. condom and microbicides
  - Treat violence against women as a public issue, and a woman’s right concern (and not just a private and/or personal issue)
  - Promote women’s decision-making at the household, community, and in the nation, as a prerequisite control over their sexuality
- Increase the participation of women in decision-making processes – political, public, and private sector, as a fundamental condition to combating HIV/AIDS

***Objective 3: Promote gender-responsive workplace prevention and care programmes in the public and private sectors;***

Strategies:

- Integrate HIV/AIDS prevention and control into workplace policies;
- Provide HIV/AIDS education in schools, workplace, and communities
- Make workplace policies non-discriminatory to the infected and the affected
- Incorporate HIV/AIDS awareness into legal training
- Review laws relating to the status of commercial sex workers
- Train the police services to deal with sexual violence and abuse

#### **4.3.10. Politics and Decision Making**

##### **a. Overview of policy concerns**

The Nigerian society being patriarchal, clearly manifests the social categorization of women implicit in femininity, as being inferior to men and, therefore, not capable of, or suitable for political leadership. As a result of this societal negative orientation towards women’s participation in societal processes especially politics, their participation in Nigerian politics has been very marginal and insignificant.

Although, women actively participate in the membership of political parties, they only serve as supporters for male to acquire political positions. Women are discouraged from participation in the electoral process because of mal-practices, unfavourable political environment characterised by political violence. For instance, of the 109 senators in 2006, only four are women; while only 20 out of 360 members of the Federal House of Representatives are women. Out of the 36 Speakers of the state houses of assembly, 2 are women; there are 47 women local government chairpersons out of a total of 774; and 143 female councillors out of a total 8,810 (FMWA, 2006)

The challenge of the continuing marginalisation of women in Nigerian politics is, therefore, that of devising appropriate strategies and tactics for eliciting the enthusiasm and concerted efforts of both male and female members of society for the goal of enhancing the participation of women in politics.

Major constraints to women participation in politics have been identified as:

- General apathy to politics among women
- Religious and cultural biases against women participation in politics
- Lack of resources to compete with men in politics
- Low membership of women in political parties among others.

#### **b. Policy Goal**

*To achieve gender equity in political participation and representation, and to draw up mechanisms for the empowerment of women in politics.*

#### **c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies:**

***Objective 1: To increase the level of women participation in politics***

##### **Strategies for implementation:**

- Sensitization of women to political participation
- Create an enabling environment for women to participate in politics
- Provide financial incentives and other waivers to encourage women to participate in politics
- Economic empowerment and adequate education of women for political participation
- Community mobilisation through women organisations
- Eradicate all discriminatory policies against women participation in politics
- Review the structure and operational guidelines of political parties, and ensure that gender is mainstreamed into the guiding principles, and operations of political parties;
- That all political parties embrace affirmative action to progressively increase the number of women candidates for elective positions, and ensure at least 30% representation of women in the 2007 national elections, and a progression to 50% representation by the year 2011
- Until gender parity is achieved, women political candidates to be supported financially by special funds put aside by the government for this.
- Project respectable female politicians as role models

***Objective 2: To increase the number of women in elective positions and decision-making process***

**Strategies for implementation:**

- Implementation of affirmative action in politics (30% of political posts to be reserved for women)
- Mainstream gender into party politics at all levels – federal, state, and LGAs
- Reform the existing traditional structures, which exclude women from participating in decision-making, and make them amenable to equality principles
- Sensitisation of the traditional councils to the rights of women to participate in politics
- Conscientisation of electorates on democratic principles and practices

**4.3.11. Gender, Peace and Conflict Management**

**a. Overview of Policy Concerns**

Conflicts are unhealthy competition for power, resources and interests. By its very nature, conflict is counter productive. Indeed, the bases of conflicts in different parts of Nigeria are closely related to their economic and political history. The festering areas of conflict ranges from resource control agitation and the natural resource degradation in the Niger Delta Region, ethnic upheavals among rival tribes like the Tivs and Jukuns of the middle belt, The Ifes and Modakekes of the Southwest and nationals of Nigeria and Cameroon in the Bakassi region, to religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians in communities where people have co-existed for centuries.

Despite the constitution provisions to protect the citizens in times and areas of conflict, women and children still remain vulnerable because such protections are not premised on robust and potent policy provisions. While men are mostly involved in the negotiations and disagreements that leads to conflicts, impacts of these upheavals on the lives of women and children is huge. Therefore, the roles of men and women in creating and also in managing conflicts should be subjected to gender lens so that appropriate and sustainable policy strategies can be applied.

**b. Policy Goals:**

***Ensure that women and men play active role in the prevention of conflicts and peacekeeping, and where conflict is unavoidable, to take appropriate measures to protect the citizenry, especially the vulnerable groups – women, children, and the disabled, and the elderly.***

**c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

***Objective 1: Promote peace, and ensure that women and men play active roles in the prevent of all types of conflicts***

***Strategies:***



- Constitutional bodies and the civil society to promote the culture of peace as a key condition for promoting human security and social justice;
- Involve women and men in peace keeping, and in conflict resolution at all levels
- Appoint women into peace keeping and conflict resolution committees at all levels
- Government to reduce conflict through equitable allocation of resources to zones, regions, states, and communities

***Objective 2: Take appropriate actions to protect the vulnerable groups – women, children, the disabled, and the elderly – during conflict situations***

**Strategies:**

- Government must be transparent in dealing with the various injustices which underline the uprising of conflicts in the different parts of the nation e.g. problems of resource allocation, and the neglect of the Niger Delta etc.
- Ratification of the African Union and United Nations Conventions and Protocols on small arms and light weapons
- Prompt evacuation of families from conflict zones
- Respect the sanctity of residential areas during armed conflicts
- Respect for the laws of war during armed conflicts

***Objective 3: Strengthen all institutions of peace keeping and conflict prevention***

**Strategies:**

- Mainstream gender into the operations of all institutions of peace keeping and conflict prevention;
- Strengthen the conflict management skills in public and private sector organisations
- Involve local communities in peace keeping and conflict prevention
- Strengthen the traditional structures of peace keeping and conflict prevention
- Make all institutions of peace keeping and conflict prevention amenable to gender equality principles

**4.3.12. Information, Communication, and the Media**

**a. Overview of Policy Concerns**

The UN Commission on the Status of Women reconfirmed the importance it attached to the principles of freedom of expression from a gender perspective, in particular as related to women’s full enjoyment of freedom of expression, equal access to the media, balanced and diverse portrayals by the media of women and their multiple roles, and media information aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women. Thus, respect for the human rights of women, including freedom of expression, is a fundamental principle of the international community.

The role of information and communication in national development cannot be overemphasized. Information fed to policy makers is crucial for making human-centred policies. Information availability is greatly enhanced by efficient communication technology. Hence, freer and more

efficient information flow enhances faster and better response to development issues. Marginalization of a segment of the population in access to relevant information deepens gender inequalities. Low levels of education of women relative to men have been the blight of development process in Nigeria. Therefore, what the media projects is an important force in promoting or hindering gender biases and stereotypes in development.

Situation analysis of evidence for Nigeria shows women are still being portrayed as sex objects, and as entertainment news. More importantly, is the overarching issue of organized data or information on gender issues in general. Gender issues are relatively new in the country and as such, gender-disaggregated data on issues of concerns to gender development are scanty. Therefore, given the importance of current and up-to-date data and information in gender policy formulation, analysis and effective programme planning, availability of appropriate database in various areas of gender concern is the key to the success of any programme on gender in Nigeria.

**b. Policy Goal:**

*Respect for the human rights of women and men, including freedom of expression, and the elimination of all negative/stereotypical presentation of gender issues at various levels of information dissemination and communication.*

**c. Objectives and Strategies for Implementation**

*Objective 1: Curb negative portrayals of gender roles and gender issues in the media.*

**Strategies:**

- Eliminate gender-biased media language
- Review and mainstream gender into existing media policies.
- Set appropriate machinery for media education and for censoring media information that portrays women negatively.
- Use of gender-disaggregated data in media reporting
- Commitment of media networks to gender equity reporting
- Government and private medial houses to establish self-regulatory mechanisms to ensure that the music, film and advertising use in their programmes are gender sensitive and respectful of women

*Objective 2: Equal access of women and men to information, freedom of expression, and media coverage.*

**Strategies:**

- Promote the culture of reading (especially news papers), listening to radio, and watching the television among women
- Improve the communication skills of women and the girl child
- Encourage women leaders to amend themselves to media coverage
- Promote gender and women issues in the media
- Government to enact legislation, regulations, and guidelines that address the exploitation of women, especially those raised by new information and communication technologies such as the Internet

- Ensure gender equality in the appointment of members of Media Boards and Heads of Media institutions

***Objective 3: Equal access of women and men to ICT as a critical resource for development***

**Strategies:**

- Remove gender-based barriers to access to information technology
- Involve women in ICT policy, planning and implementation of programmes and activities
- Government to support women and men in the informal sector to access ICT as a critical resource, and to allow them link with national and international markets
- Build the capacity of women and men in ICT use, especially through adult and continuing education programmes
- Mainstream gender into ICT and technology-based disciplines
- Engender ICT and Media research.

**4.3.13. Other forms of Social Inequalities (Vulnerable Groups and Inequalities in Society)**

**a. Overview of Policy Concerns**

For people with special needs or disabilities and the vulnerable population to function effectively in their communities, most countries including Nigeria guarantees the protection and promotion of basic human rights and freedom for the disabled, the aged, widows, children and other vulnerable groups in the society. Despite these provisions, persons in this category are often deprived of these rights to development because policies rarely address these needs, in spite of legal provisions. As such, majority of these people are poor in absolute terms. Women and men within this group are again classified into dichotomous sub-groups because the power structures that apply in the mainstream population also apply among them, thereby creating multiple layer of inequality for women with special needs. This discrimination inherent in culture and legislative weaknesses is deep rooted in Nigeria and is rarely addressed by specific policy.

Even where specific policies are in place, judicious implementation of these policies are lacking. Hence, a gender policy must recognize the need for targeting and creating an enabling environment for equitable participation of people in development without any recourse to people's circumstances.

**b. Policy Goal:**

***Ensure the realization of the rights of all persons with disabilities, and others who may suffer other forms of social inequalities in the Nigerian society, and ensure their participation in all aspects of social, economic, and cultural life***

**c. Objectives and Strategies for Implementation**

***Objective 1: Grant equal rights to all persons with disabilities and others who may suffer other forms of social inequalities in the Nigerian society, in matters relating to social, economic, and cultural life***

**Strategies:**

- Government to meet the needs of all persons with disabilities and those who suffer other forms of social inequalities across sectors (transport and other social infrastructure)
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against the disabled and those who suffer other forms of social inequalities i.e. the aged, widows, single mothers etc.
- Enforce the rights of the disabled and other vulnerable groups to protection, and non-discriminatory treatment
- Government to grant those with disability equal access to opportunities e.g. education, and employment, through affirmative actions
- Develop partnership with and strengthen Civil Society Organisations working with the physically challenged (people with special needs).

***Objective 2: Create conditions that will allow those with disabilities and other vulnerable groups to have equal access to opportunities – education, economy, politics, and cultural life***

**Strategies:**

- Provisions of the special needs of persons with disabilities, inform of – disability allowances, granting of special physical structures in public places, appropriate transport facilities etc.
- Government to create community-based rehabilitation centre to ensure the integration of the disabled into the society

#### **4.3.14. Physical and Social Services**

**a. Overview of policy concerns -**

The state is increasingly sharking in its responsibilities to its citizenry, especially in the area of provision of physical and social infrastructures and services, for example, access to potable water, electricity supply, efficient transportation networks, and even general security of life and property. The way these functions are being performed currently, erode the rights and security of the citizens – women and men. More importantly, women suffer the worse when these facilities are inadequately supplied, especially because of the cultural arrangements which put the burden of care, especially at the family level, on women. *‘The woman is traditionally the hewers of wood and the drawers of water’.*

**b. Policy Goal:**

***Provide for women and men an acceptable minimum threshold of universal access to water, sanitation, electricity, transportation networks, and general security of life and property***

**c. Objectives and Implementation strategies:**

***Objective 1: Equal opportunities for women and men to have access to basic infrastructural provisions – potable water, electricity, sanitation, roads, security of life and property***

**Strategies:**

- Government to assure basic provision of social amenities to poor rural and urban household, especially those living below the poverty line;
- Implementation of minimum nutrition standards for low income families, for example through the school feeding programme of the Ministry of Education

***Objective 2: Strengthen institutions in charge of the provision of social amenities to the poor*****Strategies:**

- Mainstream gender into the activities of institutions charged with the provision of social amenities – water, electricity, roads, and other social infrastructures.
- Integrate gender issues into the existing National Water Policy to enhance meeting women’s practical gender needs of sourcing for water
- Build the capacity of those charged with the responsibilities of providing social amenities to the citizenry, especially the poor

**4.3.15. Legal and Human Rights****a. Overview:**

Although the Nigerian Constitution guarantees equality between the sexes, and fundamental human rights, in reality, Nigerian women’s rights are ignored and infringed upon at different stages of their lives. The tripartite legal system - statutory/customary/Sharia - presents contradictory evidences on the legal status of women in Nigeria.

Although Nigeria is a signatory to many international human rights instruments e.g. CEDAW, the human rights of Nigeria women are still violated leading to gender inequality, and the inability of women to participate fully in the development process – political, economic, and socio-cultural sectors. It is important for policy to redress this unacceptable situation, and thereby present women and men as equal partners in the development process.

**b. Policy Goal**

***Ensure that women and men have equal legal and human rights, and eliminate all gender-based discriminatory clauses in existing laws and legislations in Nigeria***

**c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies*****Objective 1: Review existing laws to remove all gender-based discriminatory clauses*****Implementation Strategies:**

- A comprehensive review of the Nigerian Constitution and laws to remove all gender-based discriminatory clauses and sexist language
- Make labour laws to be gender responsive and sensitive
- Eliminate all gender-based discrimination by persons, organisations, and enterprises
- Engender customary laws with gender equality principles through advocacy, sensitisation, and lobbying of traditional rulers;

- Domesticate CEDAW and other international legal documents supporting equal rights of women and men
- Ratification, domestication and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the rights of women in Africa
- Equal access to the laws, irrespective of wealth and gender

***Objective 2: Strengthen and support legal institutions to carry out legal reviews to sustain gender equity and equality principles***

**Strategies:**

- Build capacity within legal institutions to mainstream gender into laws and other legal documents and practices;
- Incorporate the principle of equality of women and men in Nigeria’s legal system and make the administration of justice system women friendly
- Engender legal education and mainstream gender into legal research
- Introduce human rights education into school curricula at all levels
- Build the capacity of the legislature, the judiciary and other law enforcement agencies to uphold gender justice and gender equality principles
- Mainstream gender into the training of the police force, and make the conditions of work within the police force sensitive to gender roles and gender needs.
- Review conditions in the Nigerian Prisons to incorporate gender-based welfare conditions

**4.3.16. National and International Partnership for Gender Equality and Development**

**a. Overview of Policy Concerns**

One predetermined circumstance that most powerfully determines a person’s opportunities for leading a healthy and economically productive life is his or her country of birth. Today, we live in an integrated world in which people, goods, ideas and capital flow across countries and geographical boundaries no longer matter. Indeed, the advantages of participating in the global economy have been emphasized in recent years. But global markets are far from equitable, and the rules governing their functioning have disproportionately negative effect on developing countries. Reducing them will depend primarily on domestic policies in developing countries that are specifically designed to address the various inequalities among various actors in the domestic economy with a view to facilitating steady growth and development.

But global actions through the activities of international development partners can change external conditions and positively affect the impact of domestic policies. In this sense, global and domestic actions are complementary. Therefore, international development partners can play a key role in facilitating the design of gender sensitive developmental framework capable of bringing Nigeria out of the woods of underdevelopment. The role of international development partners will include capacity building through training and development for women.

- b. Policy Goals: Ensure that partnership with national international organisations is guided by commitment to gender equality principles**

**c. Objectives and Implementation Strategies**

***Objective 1: Build effective partnership between the Public and Private sector and the Civil Society for promoting gender equality principles and practices.***

**Strategies**

- Promote Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in developing structures for women empowerment and gender equality
- Strengthen the flow of information between Civil Society working with women and the public towards effective response to women's felt-needs
- Promote social responsibility within the organised private sector for funding women empowerment and gender equality
- Set up the Gender Equality Fund with public and organised private sector mandatory contributions, similar to the Education Trust Fund
- Set up monitoring structures within the private sector to promote government legislation on gender equality and women empowerment

***Objective 2: All international agencies working in Nigeria are to imbibe gender equality principles***

**Strategies:**

- Mainstream gender into the operations of the international agencies in Nigeria
- Allocate special funds to gender mainstreaming programmes and activities
- Provide neutral and impartial evaluation of government policies to ensure commitment to gender equity
- Maintain gender-friendly environment in organisations
- Practice gender equity principles in employment policies

***Objective 3: Build the capacity of international agencies in the area of gender mainstreaming***

**Strategies:**

- Make it a condition for all staff working with International Agencies in Nigeria to have gender mainstreaming skills;
- Make it a condition that gender is mainstreamed to all programmes and activities of International Agencies working in Nigeria

## CHAPTER 5

### INSTITUTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORKS

#### 5.1. Institutional StrategiesT

##### 5.1.1. The Gender Management System for Nigeria

The institutionalisation of this national gender equality framework is built on the ‘dual agenda’ principle, which makes embracing gender equity beneficial not only to individuals (women and men), but also produces an effective and efficient system, both at the macro (national) and micro (organisational) levels. The process of evolving a gender equity culture in institutions and organisations must be well planned out to achieve desired goals. In this essence, the Commonwealth Secretariats’ Gender Management System fits the process of this evolution (see Figure 5.1). Change, in this wise, is not seen in a linear fashion, rather, it is curvilinear and holistic.

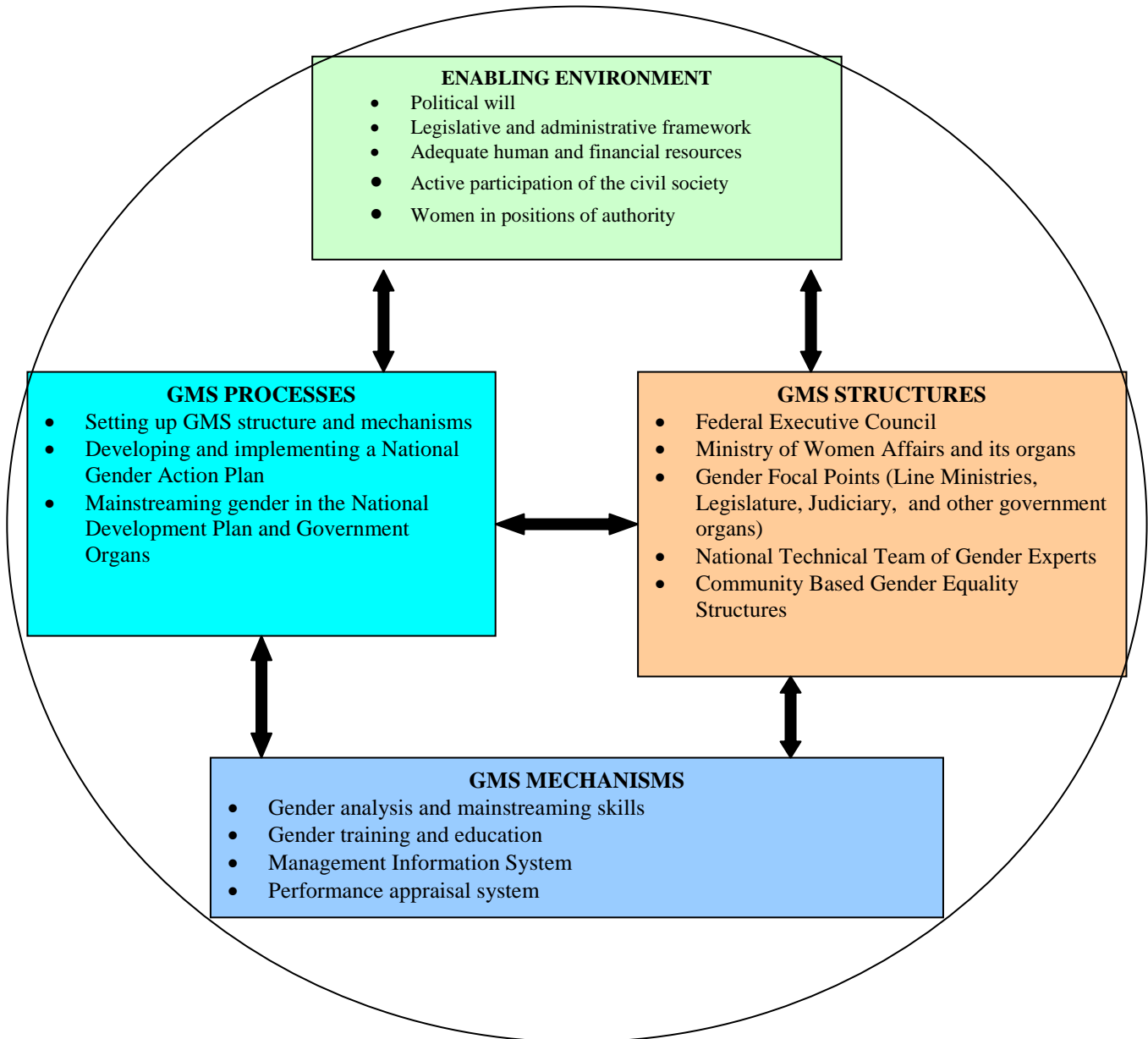
The Gender Management System (GMS) adopted for the management of the gender equality framework has 4 distinct component parts i.e. i. Enabling Environment; ii. GMS Structures; iii. GMS Mechanisms; and iv. GMS Processes. For the gender equality framework to function, and make intended impacts, the four identified pillars must not only function properly, but must feed into one another.

Although the country has been engaged in women empowerment initiatives over 2 decades now, the existing policy environment and structures need strengthening in order to have a success story of the intended gender equality initiative. Although the policy environment appears tolerant of the gender equality concerns, little has been done to change the structure which produces gender inequalities and other forms of inequalities in our society.

The new policy if adopted, will help to strengthen and operationalise 4 pillars of the Gender Management System for Nigeria – i.e. providing an enabling environment for the intended restructuring of gender role relations in our society; building structures which will facilitate the intended change, providing the needed technical skills that would bring this change about, and engaging in a due process of change by setting up agenda the requisite plan of action.



**Figure 5.1. The Gender Management System**



*Source: Adapted from the Commonwealth Gender Management System Handbook, 1999*

For the Gender Management System to be efficient, and effective, it must be operated under the following prerequisites -

- Skill in policy analysis and programme planning;
- Gender mainstreaming skills
- Strategic planning
- Communication skills
- Advocacy skills
- Networking skills to ensure all other stakeholders are brought on board
- Capacity building in management skills, gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, social analysis, data gathering and data analysis skills, report writing etc.

It is therefore important to work with highly skilled staff in operationalising the Gender Management System. The sectoral roles of stakeholders for gender mainstreaming are specified in Figure 5.4.

### **5.1.2. National Machinery for Instituting the National Gender Policy**

*“Create or strengthen national machineries and other governmental bodies; ensure that responsibility for the advancement of women is vested in the highest possible level of Government”..... Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995*

Institutional framework plays a crucial role in determining the success or failure of a policy process. Hence, this occupied a central place in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995. The first national machinery with a specific mandate for women’s affairs in Nigeria was established by Decree in 1989, as a National Commission for Women. It was upgraded to a full-fledged Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in 1995. By 1999 the Ministry experienced another restructuring and was then renamed Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development. By 2004, the Youth Development arm of the Ministry was moved out, although the Ministry was still left with a dual mandate i.e. Women Affairs and Social Development. Hence the name of the Ministry changed to Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, which is decentralised to Local Government structures through the Women in Development Units.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Development suffers certain institutional weaknesses which hinder the effective performance of the Ministry to-date. These hindrances are both at the structural and operational levels. First, the Ministry was established by a Presidential Decree, and therefore was never gazetted like other Ministries. This meant that the Ministry, up-to-date had not enjoyed the same institutional identity enjoyed by other Ministries, while its resource base is weak (since there is no adequate budget allocations and requisite technical recognition given to the Ministry). At the operational level, the Ministry battles with weak technical support. Each time the Ministry was reshuffled, and given new mandates, meant a substantial dislocation of the Ministry in terms of human and material resources. Worst still, the more consistent part of the Ministry – ‘Women’s Affairs’ – is faced with limited technical expertise to handle the massive responsibility of coordinating gender mainstreaming efforts across the sectors. The Federal Civil Service is yet to appreciate that the

Ministry deserves core technical group to move the Ministry forward. Worst still, there is lack of synergy between the Women's Affairs Ministry and other Line Ministries, in particular, the necessary coordination of all the sectoral organs for gender mainstreaming.

Up-to-date, the institutionalisation strategy adopted by the Nigerian Government is within the Women Empowerment paradigm. This, in itself, led to the credence given to the drawing up of the National Policy on Women (2000). Therefore, on the whole, less emphasis has been placed on gender issues and concerns. Although, women empowerment framework is an important and a compulsory entry point towards gender equality, it lacks the rigours of understanding, analysing, and strategising against the root causes of women's dis-empowerment, which are manifested in gender role relations, and which often dictate and direct women's access and control over resources.

However, women empowerment will continue to remain the core value of the Gender Equality mandate. This is because despite the constitutional provisions and commitments to regional and international human rights treaties, and conventions, the rights of women and girls are still grossly undermined and under-valued. This is overtly evident in the overall low Gender Development Index (GDI) for the country, and exacerbated in low participation of women in paid employment, politics, leadership and decision-making, and an equally high rate of physical and sexual harassment and assault, trafficking, marital rape early/forced marriage, and different phases of harmful traditional practices against women and the girl child. In the absence of Equal Opportunity Commission in the country, and weak legislative structures to protect the rights of women, development opportunities continue to elude women. Worst still, the existing policy documents (e.g. the National Policy on Women) failed to challenge the structure which continues to produce gender inequality and the overall dis-empowerment of women.

Institutionalising gender equality means transforming the social processes and structures which breed gender inequalities and social injustice. Such a framework challenges all forms of social discrimination, especially those based on gender, age, class, disability, ethnicity, and religion. Hence, the framework for institutionalising gender equality policies and frameworks must bear in mind both macro (inter-sectoral) and the micro (intra-organisational/ community) level institutional arrangements. This is because gender inequality is systemic, and in very subtle ways entrenched in the structures, norms and values of the state and the civil society.

Fundamental changes are envisaged to attain gender equality and women empowerment. This is because this will involve transformation of socio-cultural, economic, and political structures. It will require a new mode of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, and importantly creation of new laws and legislations which could back up and protect the emerging institutional changes.

With a consideration that gender issues are multi-sectoral and cut across all areas of development, it is imperative that interagency and inter- institutional linkages are promoted. Hence, the Institutional Framework for implementation of the National Gender Policy shall comprise macro and micro level structures, an in particular institutions within and outside Government, with the aim of achieving equity for women, men, boys and girls as participants, decision makers and beneficiaries in the economic, political, civil, social and cultural spheres.

Specific mandates are thereby given the respective institutions involved in the process of institutionalising gender into development frameworks in the country – public, private, and the civil society – all of which will be involved in policy formulation, coordination, resource mobilization and utilization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

### **5.1.3. Structure, Roles, and Responsibilities of Stakeholders:**

Figure 5.2 presents a schema which describes the structure of the national mandate for gender equality within government institutions. The roles of each of these institutions are also outlined in the figure and in Table 5.1. A brief outline of roles and responsibilities of these institutions is presented below.

#### **a. Federal Executive Council**

At the top of the gender equality institutional framework is the Federal Executive Council, which sets national policy goals and targets, and in particular, makes overarching policy pronouncements on gender equality and women empowerment.

**BOX 5.1:**  
***FUNCTIONS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN  
INSTITUTING GEWE Policy***

- Provide political will for the adoption of the National Gender Policy
- Mainstreaming gender into the general functions of NEC
- Engender discussions and the official language at NEC i.e. elimination of sexist language
- Ministers to give commitment to the full implementation of the National Gender Policy
- Give budgetary commitment to the implementation of the National Gender Policy

#### **b. Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development**

The structures and institutions involved in institutionalising gender concerns shall be coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Women, which has a seat in the Federal Executive Council. In matters relating to gender mainstreaming and general gender concerns, and women empowerment initiatives, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs shall have superior mandate compared to other Line Ministries, while maintaining equal ministerial status with other Line Ministries.

The Ministry shall spearhead all gender responsive development, while ensuring women empowerment as an entry point to achieving gender equality. The Ministry will have direct interaction on gender equality and women empowerment matters with the following - Line Ministries and Departments, the Legislature, the Judiciary, and other all Parastatals.

The specific mandates of FMWASD shall include, but not limited to those listed Table 5.1 (i.e. current mandate and strengthening of it mandates in specific ways). The Ministry's mandates fall into the following categories – policy advisory role (providing the knowledge base for benchmarking 'gender concerns' into macro-economic policies and other national reforms; gender mainstreaming role (mainstreaming gender equity and equality issues and concerns into sectoral concerns and mandates); coordination role (i.e. coordinating the activities of the gender constituencies in the country including Line Ministries at all levels, State Ministries of Women Affairs, the Private Sector Organisations (PSOs), NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working on women and children issues; International Development Partners, and other stakeholders).

It is important that the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development be restructured to have a more robust institutional support for its mandates (see Box 5.2).

**BOX 5.2.**

**What should be done to strengthen MWASD in its central role for implementing GEWE policies and programmes?**

- Strengthening of the National Centre for Women Development;
- Creation of the Gender Equality Commission (either as a department within the Ministry and/or as a separate Commission, but directly responsible to the Ministry)
- Establishment of a National Technical Team of Experts on Gender Issues (with membership of Gender Focal Points in all Government Ministries, Parastatals, and Specialised Departments)
- A Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality coordinated by the Ministry, with membership from the Private Sector, Civil Society Organisations, NGOs, and Community Committees.

The functions of the MWASD shall include, but not limited to those listed in Box 5.3

**Box 5.3. Functions of FMWASD for GEWE**

- Overall mandate for gender equality and women empowerment policies and programmes
- Coordinate all Gender Equality Efforts
- Coordinate specialised parastatals and departments working on GEWE – NCWD and GEC
- Initiate specific Policy Formulation on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
- Promote Institutional Development for G.E
- Coordinate Development of Sectoral Indicators and Gender Action Plans
- Coordinate And Monitor Implementation of The National Gender Policy
- Support gender education policies and programmes at all levels
- Overall mandate for the implementation of international conventions, treaties, and declarations on gender equality and women empowerment
- Coordinate the activities of the private sector, and the civil society organisations, including NGOs which relate to GEWE
- Make recommendations on GEWE to the Federal Executive Council, and the Legislative Councils
- Empower Women’s Organisations, CSOs, NGOs etc working on issues relating to GEWE through – capacity building, education, training, and provision of information and resources

**c. Line Ministries and Parastatals**

At the Federal and the State levels, Line Ministries, the Legislature, the Judiciary, and other organs of government shall be accountable for the implementation of the gender policy (see the list of specific mandates in Table 5.1.). In addition, the Line Ministries and other organs of government shall have responsibilities for the following general functions-

- Accountability
- Capacity building;
- Institutional reforms (statistics, legislations, curriculum, culture and religion)
- Local initiative and networking

Other specific functions of the Line Ministries are –

- Reviewing all policies, project and programmes for their gender implication;
- Mainstreaming gender into policies, programmes and budgets;
- Establishing a Gender Critical Mass<sup>1</sup> with specific functions (see Box 5.4)

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<sup>1</sup> The Gender Critical Mass (GCM) (of between 5 and 8 members) in each Line Ministry and/or other organs of government shall consist of a representative of each department/unit in the respective Ministry/Parastatals/or any other government institution.

**Box 5.4. Specific functions of Gender Critical Mass in Government Ministries and Institutions**

- Advise and brief the Minister and/or head of institution on all matters relating to gender equality and women empowerment in the sector
- Review sector policy
- Prescribe Sector Specific Changes
- Building the gender mainstreaming capacity of units and departments in the Ministry and/or institution;
- Developing Gender Equality Indicators for the Ministry and/or institution;
- Developing mechanism for linking and liaising with the civil society organisations (especially those relevant to the sector)
- Data Bank for gender disaggregated data for the Ministry and/or Institution (Gender Statistics);
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the implementation of gender-based policies and programmes in the Ministry and/or Institution
- Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation

**d. National Centre for Women Development**

The National Centre for Women Development shall retain its current mandates, but in addition, shall be strengthened to perform additional functions (see Box 5.5 and Table 5.1.)

**Box 5.5. Functions of NCWD in instituting GEWE**

- Advise and brief the Minister (FMWASD) on Women Empowerment policies and concerns;
- Develop and implement women empowerment programmes
- Develop women empowerment indicators
- Engage in research on the status of women
- Training and skill acquisition schemes for women
- Training in gender analysis and gender sensitisation
- Initiative and promote cross-sectoral action on cross cutting issues on GEWE e.g. girl child protection and survival issues; violence against women; gender and HIV/AIDS etc.
- Collaborate with tertiary institutions on gender education, especially introduction of Gender Studies programmes at graduate and postgraduate levels.
- Relate to MWASD on gender policy implementation etc.

**e. The Legislature/Judiciary**

Quoting from the old National Policy on Women, ‘the Nigerian legal system is made up of a tripartite system of laws (statutory, customary and the Sharia), which are sometimes contradictory. This has made it difficult to fulfil one of the basic stipulations of the Nigerian Constitution which requires that all citizens be treated as equal under the law’. To institutionalise gender equality principles, the Legislature and the Judiciary shall occupy a central stage in these reformatory efforts. The Legislature and the Judiciary shall therefore have mandates for the following –

- Gender Critical Mass with their respective sector;
- Review Existing Policies/Laws/Legislations;
- Prescribe specific changes;
- Mainstream gender into their respective institutions and functions,
- Promoting Gender Justice through their respective institutions, and functions
- Build in-house capacity on gender mainstreaming
- Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation

**g. Parastatals, Institutions and Commissions with specialised mandates**

A number of these Parastatals and institutions are listed in Table 5.1. and their respective mandates. Some of these Parastatals and Agencies are -

- National Bureau of Statistics;
- National Planning Commission;
- National Orientation Agency;
- Federal Character Commission
- Independent National Electoral Commission;
- Human Rights Commission
- Legal Aid Council
- Education Commissions (NUC, NERDC, NAPTIP, UBE, and Mass Literacy Agency etc)

**Special Technical Committees of the FMWA**

- National Council on Women Affairs
- National Consultative and Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality
- National Technical Team of Gender Experts (NTTGE);

The mandates of the listed institutions are clearly stated in Table 5.1. Common to all the institutions are the following mandates –

- Creation of Gender Critical Mass to propel gender mainstreaming and gender concerns in the respective institutions;
- Mainstreaming gender into institutional functions and roles;
- Benchmarking for gender equality
- In-house capacity building on gender mainstreaming and other gender issues
- Relate with Ministry of Women Affairs among others.

**h. National Consultative and Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality**

The NCCC on Gender Equality is a standing Committee of the FMWA consisting of all Directors of the FMWA and of other Line Ministries and Specialised Agencies on gender equality issues. The NCCC which is currently charged with the responsibility of:

- Coordinating all efforts at government and non-governmental level, including with development partners on women empowerment. shall be strengthened to focus on:
  - Coordination of gender equality policies and programmes as well as women empowerment



- Coordination of monitoring and evaluation activities within all public institutions
- Coordination of gender indicator development and application in policy benchmarking

**i. National Technical Team of Gender Experts (NTTGE)**

NTTGE shall be strengthened by inaugurating membership of gender experts from Academia and observers from development partners. Its function shall be to coordinate gender mainstreaming at sector level, and with the following specific functions –

- Think Tank on Gender Issues (to develop a road map for action oriented programmes for GEWE);
- Reviewing of national policies from gender perspective
- Reviewing of gender action plans
- Perfecting gender indicators
- Monitoring gender benchmarking
- Recommending rewards and sanctions
- Relating with community based structures on gender equality
- Relate with the Ministry of Women Affairs
- Make recommendations to FMWASD and other relevant institutions within GEWE framework

**j. Stakeholders Committee on Gender Equality (SCGE)**

SCGE is a committee of stakeholders at the State and Local Government Levels. It shall consist of representatives of the Private Sector Organisations (PSOs), NGOs, CSOs, and International Development Partners working in States and Local Government Levels. The Committee shall be accountable for the implementation of the gender equality and social justice policies at the State, Local Government, and Ward levels. At this level, the following functions are to be met –

- Capacity building;
- Institutional and legislative reforms;
- Curriculum reforms;
- Management Information System – Gender statistics
- Local initiatives and networking etc.

The Committee is to institute innovative ways of promoting gender equality principles in all organizations (public, private, and civil society organizations), and also within cultural and religious groups.

**k. Local Government GEWE Unit**

The Local Government Council occupies a vantage position in mainstreaming gender equality principles into traditional structures, the cultural life of the people. Importantly, the LGA is responsible for the delivery of basic needs, especially in the area of physical and social services, including potable water, electricity, road networks, markets, health care services, environmental protection, sewage etc. It is therefore important to engender LGA policies, procedures, and practices

As an institution closest to the people, the LGA is in the best position to work with traditional structures in advancing women empowerment and gender equality principles and practices. To fulfil its role in GEWE framework, the LGA must be able to fulfil the functions listed in Box 5.6

### **Box 5.6. The Functions of LGAs in GEWE Framework**

- Coordinate all structures at the Local Government level targeting GEWE
- Strengthen the Gender Equality Unit of the Local Government
- Create Critical Mass for GEWE in each LGA
- LGA Critical Mass to mainstream gender into LGA departments
- LGAs to imbibe gender equality principles in its policies, programmes and activities
- Advocacy, Sensitisation, and Awareness on GEWE at the Ward and Community level
- Network with Community /Ward level framework
- Targeting GEWE issues and concerns in its policies, procedures, and practices

## **5.2. Operational Strategies**

This section reviews the lapses of the national Policy on Women and incorporates an implementation strategy that will promote gender equality rather than just women empowerment as a national principle and as a core goal in all macro-policies.

### **5.2.1 Operational Principles of the National Gender Policy**

The execution of sectoral programmes or priority issues of the National Gender Policy will be set within the macro-policy planning framework of any government of the day. While there will be a set of mandatory activities towards the achievement of its goals, all sector policies and programmes will be reviewed from a gender perspective, and augmented with gender-specific goals and strategies. This will ensure that the planning, implementation and especially, resource allocation as well as monitoring and evaluation will be part and parcel of government policy commitments. Gender mainstreaming of all macro-policy guidelines, policy thrusts and strategies will be a guiding principle.

Because governments change and macro-policy frameworks may also change, the operational strategies of the NGP will be constantly reviewed and re-adapted to fit into contemporary structures. Among its other mandates, it shall be the responsibility of the Gender Equality Commission to adapt gender programming frameworks to prevailing macro-policy set-ups. A set of generic guidelines to be adapted for developing the operational framework of the NGP at any point in time are given in Table 5.3.

#### **I. Community-Based Committees on Gender Equity**

At the ward, community and household levels, gender equality principles often confront unalloyed resistance. It is therefore important to make micro-level institutions a central pillar in this instituted change towards gender equality and social justice. Local institutions shall be made accountable for the institutionalisation of the proposed gender frameworks at the grassroots. Important mandates for these local structures therefore include –

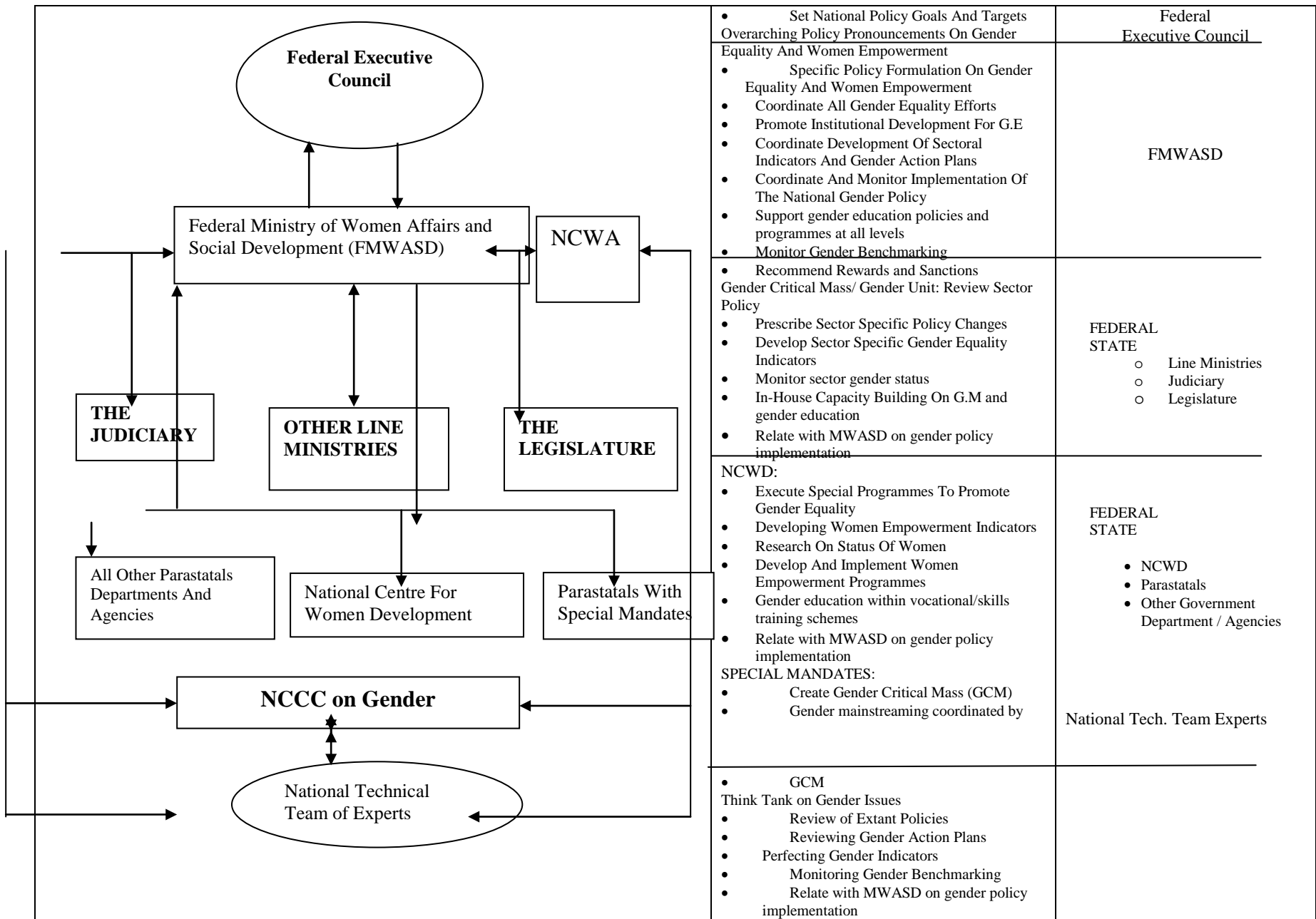
- Sustaining cultural and religious harmony
- Serving as watchdog for equity and social justice

- Public enlightenment through local initiatives and networking
- Mobilise grassroots vanguards of gender culture
- Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation

Notably, the success of this institutional framework to ensuring a process of gender equality and social justice for the country is dependent on strong political will and national commitment to gender equality and social justice. It is also dependent on the success of the Nigeria's fragile democratic political structures. The proposed national machinery must be properly financed.

**Figure 5.2. National Mandate For Gender Equality (Government Institutions)**

	General Functions	Domain of Operations
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**Table 5.1 - Responsibilities for Gender Equality (Government Institutions)**

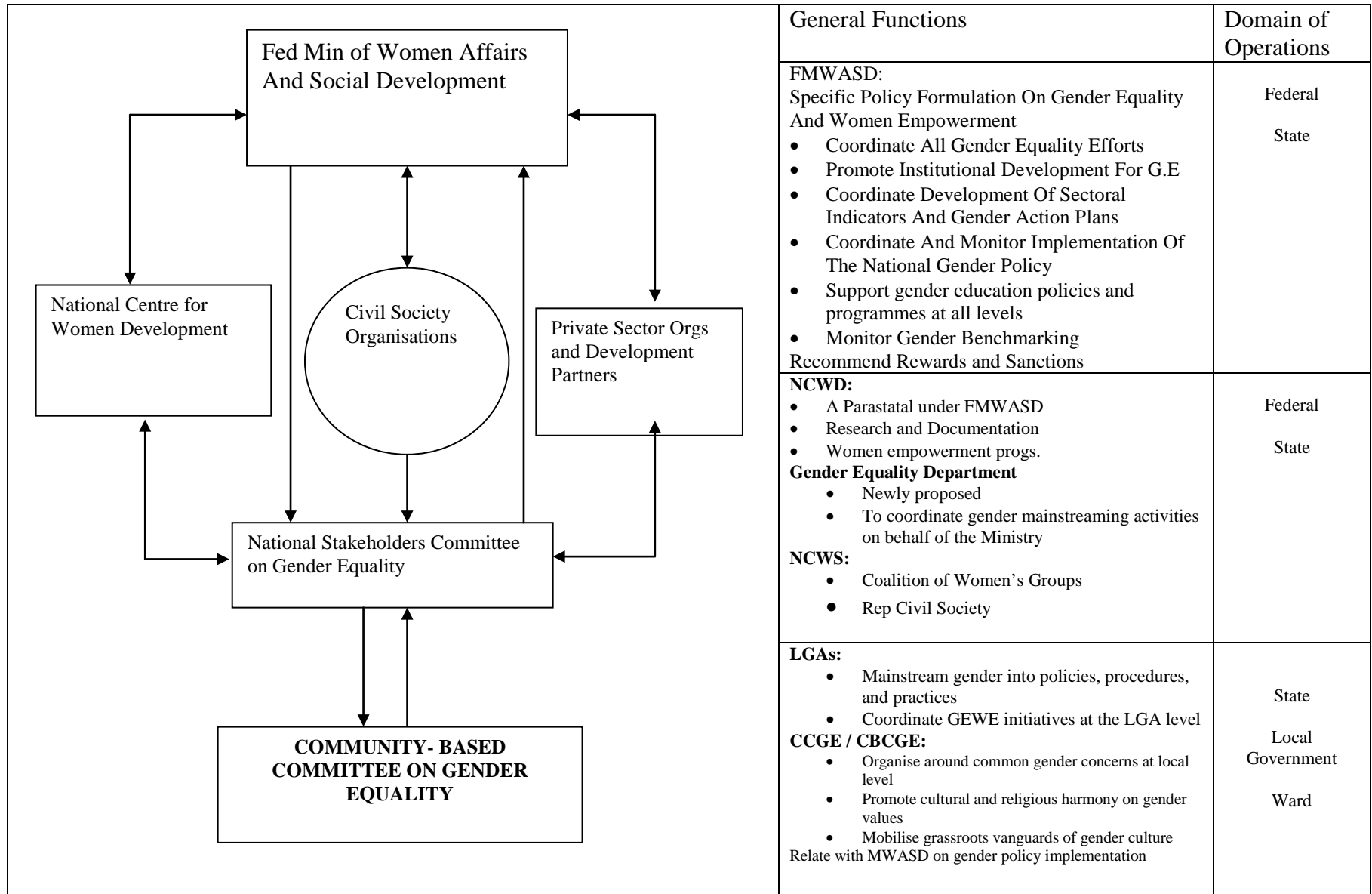
<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>CURRENT MANDATE</b>	<b>STRENGTHENED MANDATE</b>
Federal Executive Council	Set National Policy Goals And Targets	Overarching Policy Pronouncements on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs	Gender Equality Policy Formulation Capacity Building for gender mainstreaming Coordinate National Technical Team of Experts Monitoring and Evaluating Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific Policy Formulation on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment</li> <li>• Coordinate all Gender Equality Efforts</li> <li>• Promote Institutional Development for G.E</li> <li>• Coordinate Development of Sectoral Indicators and Gender Action Plans</li> <li>• Coordinate And Monitor Implementation of The National Gender Policy</li> <li>• Support gender education policies and programmes at all levels</li> <li>• Support capacity building on gender budgeting nation-wide</li> </ul>
National Council on Women Affairs	Make decisions/policies on women empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate policies and programmes on gender equality</li> <li>• Facilitate policy making and programme development on gender equality</li> </ul>
National Consultative and Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality(expanded to include gender experts from Academia and observer members from development partners)	Coordinate all efforts on gender mainstreaming in the different line Ministries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate sector-wide Development of Gender Indicators and Gender Action Plans</li> <li>• Facilitate the Implementation and Monitor of The National Gender Policy in all sectors</li> <li>• Facilitate the institution and implementation of gender education policies and programmes at sectoral levels</li> <li>• Facilitate capacity for gender budgeting within all sectors</li> <li>• Monitor Gender Benchmarking</li> <li>• Recommend Rewards and Sanctions</li> </ul>
National Technical team of Gender Experts (NTTGE) (expanded to include independent gender consultants)	Coordinating gender mainstreaming at sector level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think Tank on Gender Issues</li> <li>• Review of Extant Sector Policies</li> <li>• Reviewing Gender Action Plans at their sectors</li> <li>• Perfecting Gender Indicators at their sectors</li> <li>• Monitoring Gender Benchmarking at sectoral level</li> <li>• Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
Other Line Ministries Gender Desk Officers	Mainstream Gender In Ministries Mandate	Gender Critical Mass/Core Team/Gender Unit: Review Sector Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prescribe Sector Specific Policy Changes</li> <li>• Develop Sector Specific Gender Equality Indicators</li> <li>• Monitor sector gender status</li> <li>• In-House Capacity Building on G.M and gender education</li> <li>• Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
Judiciary	Non-Specific	Gender Critical Mass/Core Team (As Above)
Legislature	Women's Caucus Committee on Women Affairs	Gender Critical Mass/Core Team (As Above)
National Centre for Women Development	Developing Gender Indicators Research on Status of Women Develop and Implement Women Empowerment Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Execute Special Programmes to Promote Gender Equality</li> <li>• Developing Women Empowerment Indicators</li> <li>• Research on Status of Women</li> <li>• Develop And Implement Women Empowerment Programmes</li> <li>• Oversee women empowerment programme development within other line Ministries and Parastatals</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote gender budgeting for women empowerment programme</li> <li>Gender education within vocational/skills training schemes</li> </ul>
Other Parastatals	Non-Specific Gender Desk for mainstreaming	Gender Critical Mass/Core Team\ (As Above)
<b>Parastatals/Commissions With Special Mandate</b>	<b>Non-Specific on Gender Equality</b>	<b>Special Mandates</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Bureau Of Statistics</li> </ul>	Gender Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Statistics Unit</li> <li>Gender Data Bank Management</li> <li>National Gender Status Reporting</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Planning Commission</li> </ul>	Gender Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender Unit to Mainstream Gender in Macro-Policy Formulation (NEEDS)</li> <li>Benchmark for Gender equality</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> <li>Prioritise gender issues into national planning concerns</li> </ul>
National Orientation Agency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Gender Responsive Culture</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal Character Commission</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate all Equal Opportunity Concerns</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent National Electoral Commission</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Gender Aware Party Principles</li> <li>Promote Gender-inclusive democratic values</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Rights Commission</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Gender Aware Legislation In Legislature and Judiciary</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Service Commission</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Gender Equality principles in recruitment, training, and promotion criteria governing the public service employment</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal Aid Council</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Access to Gender Equality Laws</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education Commissions (NUC, NERDC, NAPTIP, UBE, Mass Literacy Agency etc)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institute Gender Education at all levels</li> <li>Collaborate with NTCGE for gender curriculum development</li> <li>In-house gender education</li> <li>Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
Nigeria Labour Congress		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Gender Equality principles in labour issues (both for public and the private sectors)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstream gender issues into Labour/Trade Unions</li> <li>• recruitment, training, and promotion criteria governing the public service employment</li> <li>• In-house gender education</li> <li>• Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</li> </ul>
Women's Organisations and Civil Society Coalition Groups		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close and effective relationship with government structures on GEWE</li> <li>• Capacity building of members on GEWE</li> <li>• Awareness and enlightenment Campaigns on GEWE</li> <li>• Advocacy and mobilisation of traditional structures on GEWE</li> <li>• Feed back reports to MWASD and its organs for policy response on GEWE issues and concerns from the grassroots</li> </ul>
Local Government Council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate all structures at the Local Government level targeting GEWE</li> <li>• Strengthen the Gender Equality Unit of the Local Government</li> <li>• Create Critical Mass for GEWE in each LGA</li> <li>• LGA Critical Mass to mainstream gender into LGA departments</li> <li>• LGAs to imbibe gender equality principles in its policies, programmes and activities</li> <li>• Advocacy, Sensitisation, and Awareness on GEWE at the Ward and Community level</li> <li>• Network with Community /Ward level framework targeting GEWE issues and concerns</li> </ul>
Community-Based Gender Equality Structures		<p>Organise around common gender concerns at local level  Promote cultural and religious harmony on gender values  Mobilise grassroots vanguards of gender culture  Relate with MWASD on gender policy implementation</p>



**Figure 5.3. Stakeholder Partnership On Gender Equality**



**Table 5.2. Composition of The National Women’s Machinery on Gender Equality**

<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>COMPOSITION</b>
Federal Ministry Of Women Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, State Officers</li> <li>• (50% Technocrat Staff)</li> </ul>
National Centre for Women Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National, State Officers</li> <li>• (50% Technocrat Staff)</li> </ul>
National Consultative and Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directors of line Ministries</li> <li>• Head of Parastals with special mandates</li> <li>• Representatives of Academia</li> <li>• Observers from International development Partners</li> </ul>
National Technical Team of Gender Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Gender Unit of MDAs</li> <li>• Rep of Development Partners</li> </ul>
Stakeholder Committees on Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Consultative and Coordinating Committee on Gender Equality</li> </ul>
LGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GEWE Unit</li> <li>• Gender Equality Critical Mass</li> <li>• GEWE Technical Staff</li> </ul>
Community Based Committees on Gender Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDA representatives</li> <li>• Opinion Leaders</li> <li>• Religious Leaders</li> <li>• Community Based JPs</li> <li>• A Customary Court Judge</li> </ul>

**Table 5.3: A Framework for Engendering National Macro-Policies**

<b>Policy Issue</b>	<b>Pointers for gender mainstreaming in the macro-policy</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
Overall Vision	Is the overall vision consistent with a need for gender equity?	Gender aware vision of macroeconomic development outcomes
Policy Goals	What are the overall policy goals of government? Do these goals recognize and reflect gender-linkages in their rationale? Are there specific goals for gender equity?	Specific goal for gender equity
Macro-policy framework of implementation	What are the major macro-policy thrusts? Which aspects of the policy thrusts will promote the application of gender equity principles Which aspects will worsen gender inequalities? Is there a focus on women empowerment within the components of the macro-policy framework?	Participation of both men and women in conceptualising programmes Both women and men as beneficiaries of all sector programmes
Major strategic objectives	Are there targets set for gender equality?	To promote gender justice, gender education and gender equitable quality for life for the country
Sectoral programming framework	Is there a focus on women empowerment in each sector's programmes? Do all sector programmes reflect the application of gender equality principles?	Gender mainstreaming in all programmes Gender mainstreaming in participation Gender mainstreaming in organisational culture
Resource Allocation	Is the public framework for budgeting participatory? Is it informed by gender status analysis from all sectors of government administration?	Participatory budgeting (inclusive of representatives of female and male interests) at all stages of the budgeting cycle Gender responsive budgeting in public sector
Programme/project Monitoring and Evaluation	Are there adequate substantiated and verified indicators to monitor the impacts of policies? Are gender indicators integral to other policy or programme monitoring processes?	Gender indicators will be monitored Gender differences in impacts of programmes and projects
Policy monitoring and evaluation	Are there indicators to assess the implementation of gendered aspects of policies	Gender indicators in benchmarking processes

Source: Adapted from NISER (2005): Technical Report on Gender Mainstreaming in SEEDS. Working Paper 3. Submitted to UNIFEM, Abuja

### **5.2.2. Application to the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)**

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) is the extant macroeconomic policy framework. The operational strategy for gender equity will adopt its planning and programming structure for the reasons presented above. NEEDS major policy goals are centre around poverty reduction. Its other policy goals are wealth creation, employment generation and value re-orientation. These goals are closely related with the gendered profile of poverty – that is, lack of productive (wealth) assets, lack of capacity for remunerative employment and the impacts of negative social, economic and political culture on women. SEEDS is the state-level policies reflecting the principles, goals and strategies of NEEDS. SEEDS and LEEDS are therefore to complement national efforts at lower levels of government.

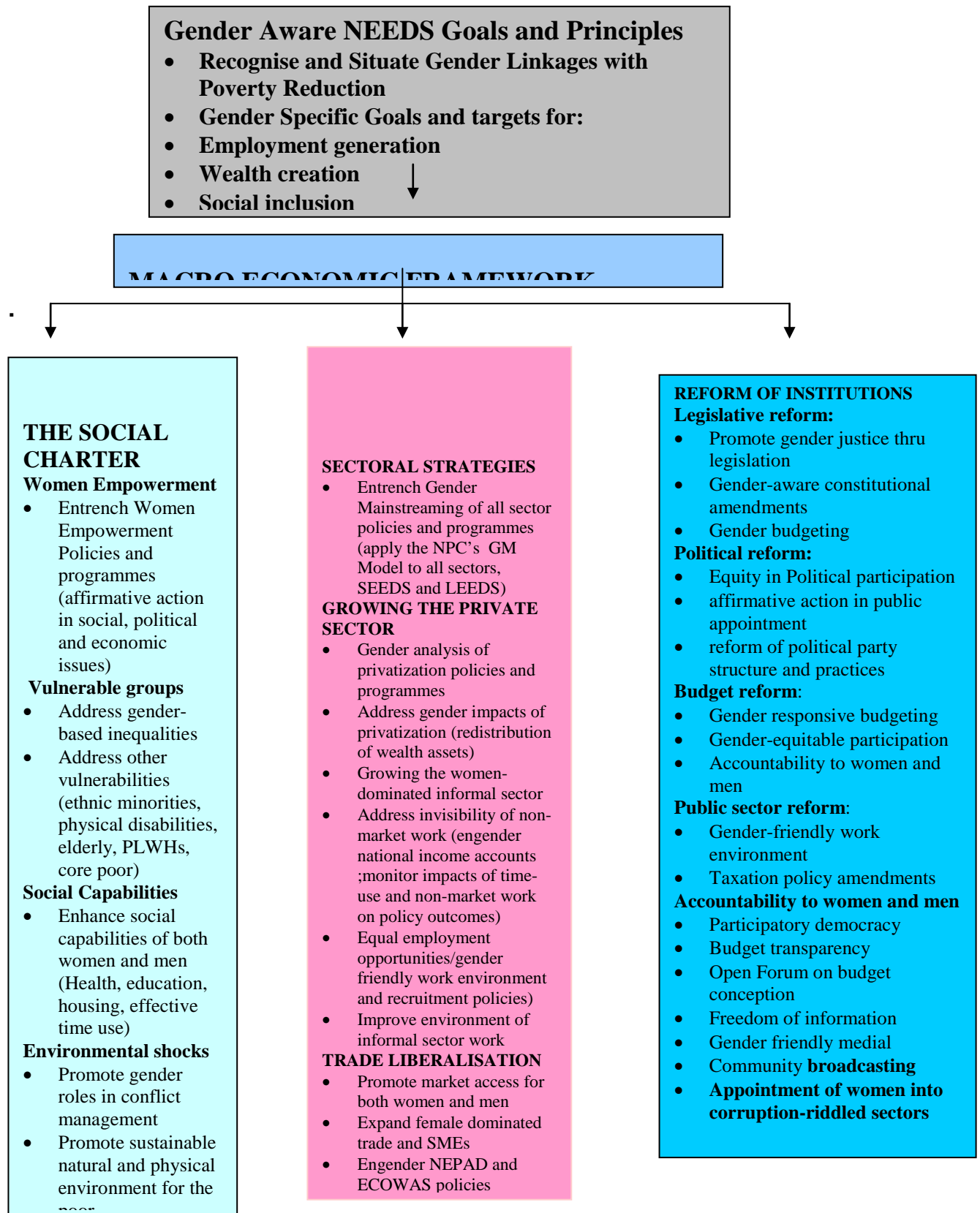
The macroeconomic framework for NEEDS includes an agenda for human development and social welfare (Social Charter), sectoral programmes and an institutional reform agenda. Its strategic objectives therefore go beyond economic growth to include other social and political values that reinforce poverty of the vulnerable such as women. Engendering the NEEDS policy framework is illustrated in Figure 5.4.

**Social Charter:** NEEDS and SEEDS/LEEDS shall promote women empowerment within its Social Charter but also situate the need for women empowerment programmes within other sectors. It will incorporate the concerns of other vulnerable groups, especially people with special needs. Gender issues within these groups will also be addressed.

**Private Sector development:** Growing of the private sector has great gender implications. One is the ability for women, as well as men to operate effectively in the market economy. Attention will be paid to these dimensions through a regular review of all sector policies and all the reform policies from a gender perspective. Compensatory programmes will be initiated to ensure empowerment of women. Regulatory programmes will be initiated to remove all obstacles, social, political, cultural to the participation of women in the market economy. All privatisation of social services will be reviewed for their impacts on women and men. Privatisation of water, basic education and basic health services will be firmly rejected and resisted at all policy levels.

**Reform of Institutions** hold a great opportunity to regress gender imbalance in power structure, especially at the level of political participation and executive appointments through advocacy for the 50-50 AU quota. Accountability mechanisms will be strengthened to include the voices of women and responsiveness to women's needs as well as those of men. Women have proven to be more transparent and focused leaders in many areas of national development. The Policy advocates the appointment of more women into sensitive sectors of national development such as education, health, finance and budgets, trade, agriculture, information, communication.

**FIG 5.4 Operational Framework for the National Gender Policy: application to NEEDS**



## **5.3 Specific Operational Principles**

### **5.3.1 Gender as a Cross-cutting Issue**

Gender is now to be treated as a cross-cutting issue in development whose considerations must permeate every level of policy, programmes and practice. This approach is premised on the recognition of the inter-relatedness of cross-cutting issues in development and the need to address them in an integrated manner.

Apart from gender, other issues such as environmental degradation, bad governance, the scourge of HIV/AIDS and poverty have emerged as important developmental concerns that need to be addressed, not as enclave programmes but that which have multi-dimensional impacts on development. For instance, HIV/AIDS is recognized as having, not only health related impacts but also as having economic impacts on the productivity and income of households, and also socio-cultural impacts on victims by way of stigmas and community relations among others. Importantly, environmental degradation is now seen as both a cause and effect of development with impacts on households and communities relations.

This principle will involve several elements, among others, the requirement to incorporate gender perspective in all policies, the significance of capacity building for gender competence, the need to engender resource allocation mechanisms, the identification of priority areas for promoting women empowerment or closing gender gaps in development, the availability of gender-aware management information system, including sex-disaggregated data, data from male or female focused sectors and gender-aware monitoring and evaluation system.

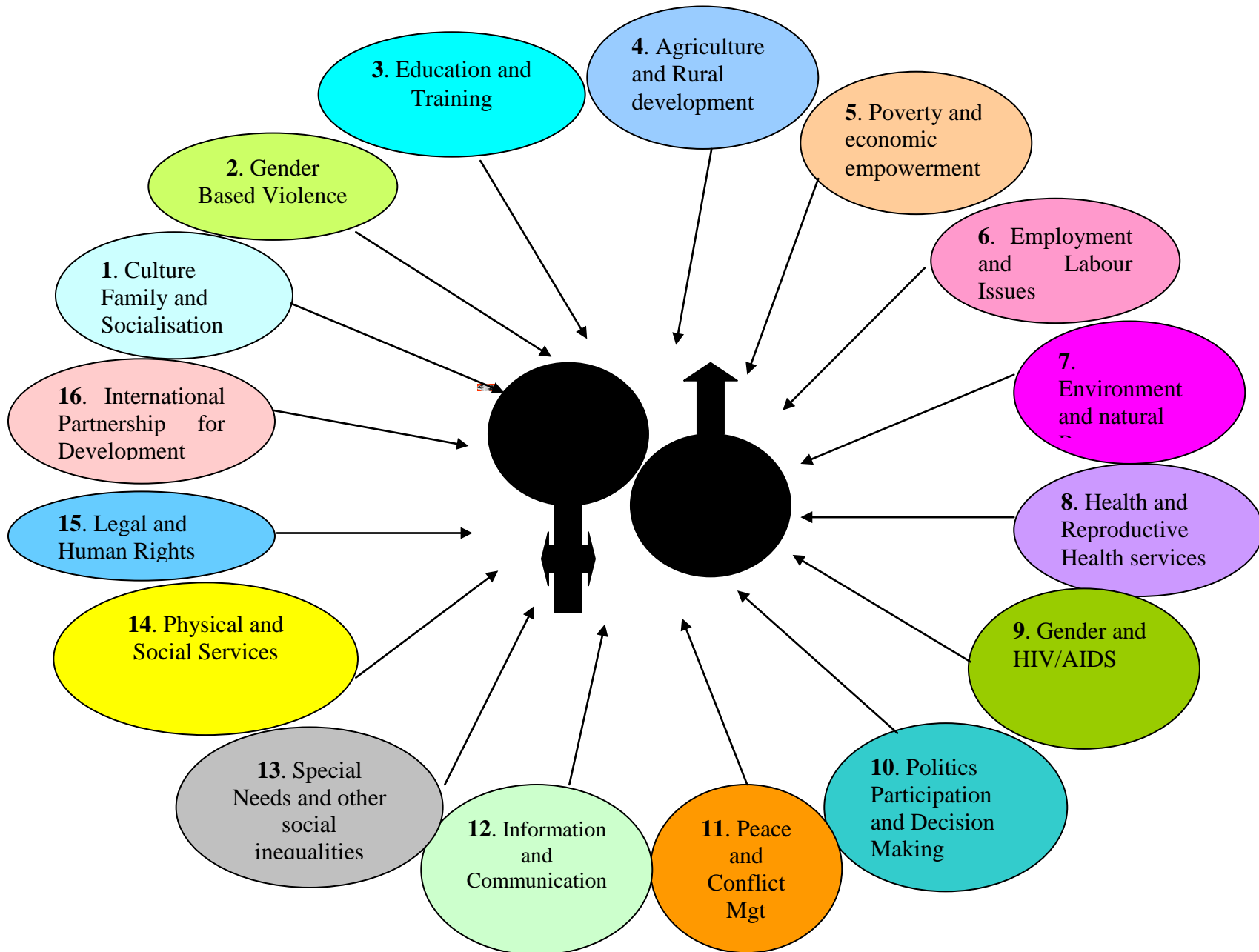
### **5.3.2 Gender Mainstreaming as a Tool for Institutionalising Gender Equality Frameworks**

Gender mainstreaming is “...*the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.*” (UN Economic and Social Council, 1997).

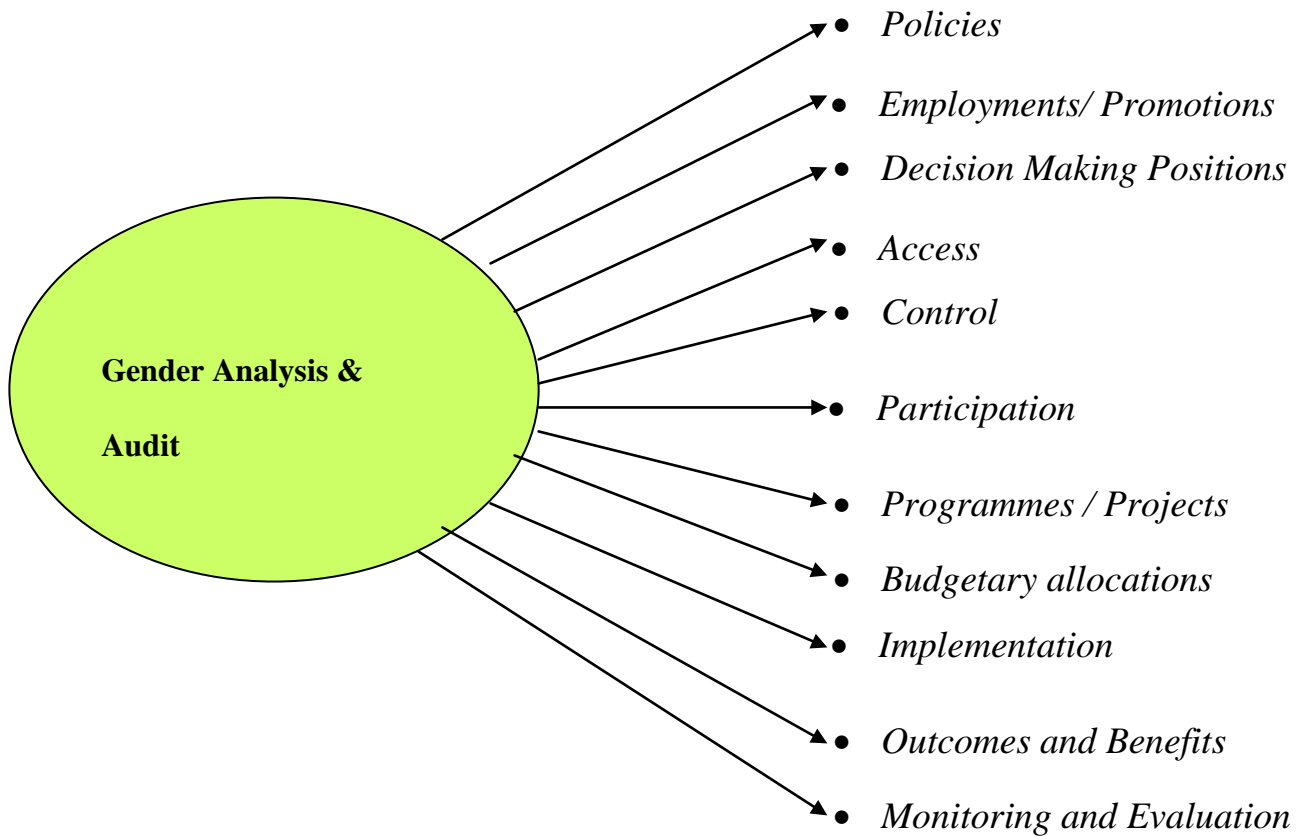
The success of this national gender policy technically rests on how operators of the policy are able to follow due process in the use of ‘gender mainstreaming’ as a tool for institutionalising change in gender power/role relations. The following steps are important entry points to using the tool of ‘gender mainstreaming’ at broad institutional levels-

- Taking holistic approach to gender mainstreaming, and constantly examining sectoral response to gender mainstreaming (see Figure 5.5)
- Take practical steps for gender mainstreaming in each sector (see Figure 5.8)
- Apply appropriate tools to gender mainstreaming (do a gender analysis and/or gender audit before instituting plans for a regular gender mainstreaming exercise (see Figure 5.4 and Box 5.7)
- Gender mainstreaming at institutional level is a coordinated effort, and shared responsibilities of stakeholders (see Fig. 5.7.). Appropriate networking skills are required.

**Fig. 5.5. Gender Mainstreaming As A Tool In Sectoral Development**



**Fig. 5.6. Gender Mainstreaming Platforms<sup>2</sup>**

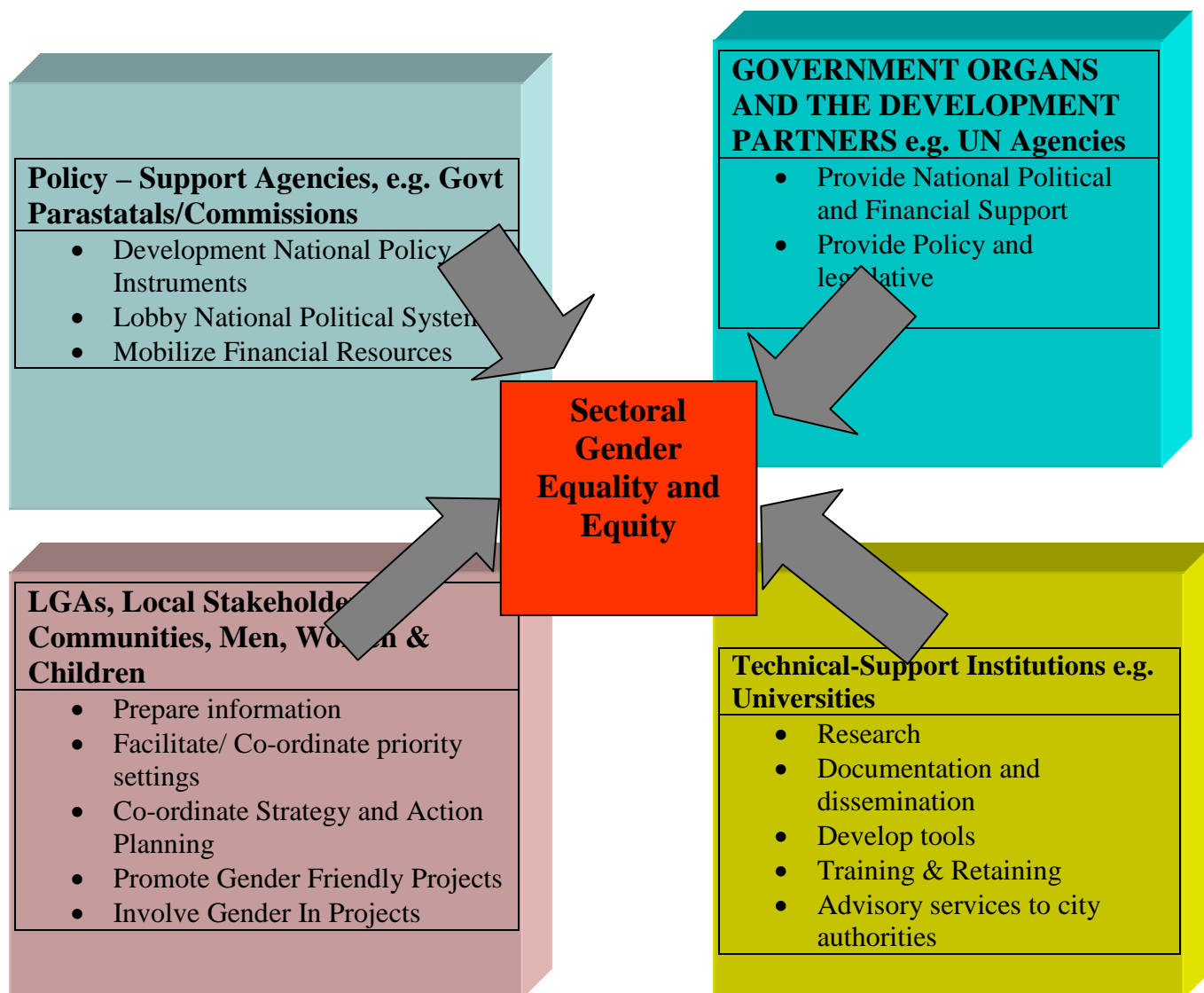


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<sup>2</sup> Figures adapted from E. Eghobamien, 2006 – Draft Conceptual Framework for Mainstreaming Gender Equality in CIDA Nigeria Program



**Fig 5.7. Sectoral Roles Of Stake Holders For Gender Mainstreaming**



**5.3.3. Adaptation of the Gender Mainstreaming Approach to NEEDS**

The National Planning Commission has a central role to play in enforcing gender mainstreaming into all sector policies and programmes and especially state SEEDS and LEEDS. The NPC has developed a gender mainstreaming process for SEEDS which will be adapted to all sectors of the economy. Capacity building in the use of the SEEDS GM Manual shall be the responsibility of the NPC but in cooperation with the FMWA.

**Oversight Functions on Gender Mainstreaming**

All sector policies as well as state and local government development policies, in the present instance, SEEDS and LEEDS, will be reviewed to reflect due attention to gender equality

principles. Clear and unambiguous gender-specific policy statements will be developed within each space.

Capacity building in the application of a unified gender mainstreaming framework for overall and sectoral policies, programmes and institutional culture will be vigorously pursued in order to entrench a culture of gender awareness at all levels in the country.

The gender mainstreaming framework for SEEDS will be actively utilized to operationalise the policies and programmes of the National Gender Policy. The Tools of the gender Mainstreaming Manual are generic and therefore amenable to application to any macro-policy framework as well as micro-level projects. These Tools and any other accepted national gender mainstreaming framework will be constantly applied to ensure that all policies, programmes and projects will promote gender equality and women empowerment. The application will guide the production of Annual National Gender Action Plans (NGAP) in all sectors.

### **Box 5.7**

#### **The Gender Mainstreaming Tools of the National Planning Commission**

Tool 1: A compendium of gender-related concepts that must inform the mind-set in the process of gender mainstreaming

Tool 2: A logical clarification of the conceptual linkages of gender with NEEDS goals and planned outcomes; for identification of priority gender concerns; for identification of verifiable indicators (encouraging the use of gender analysis tools)

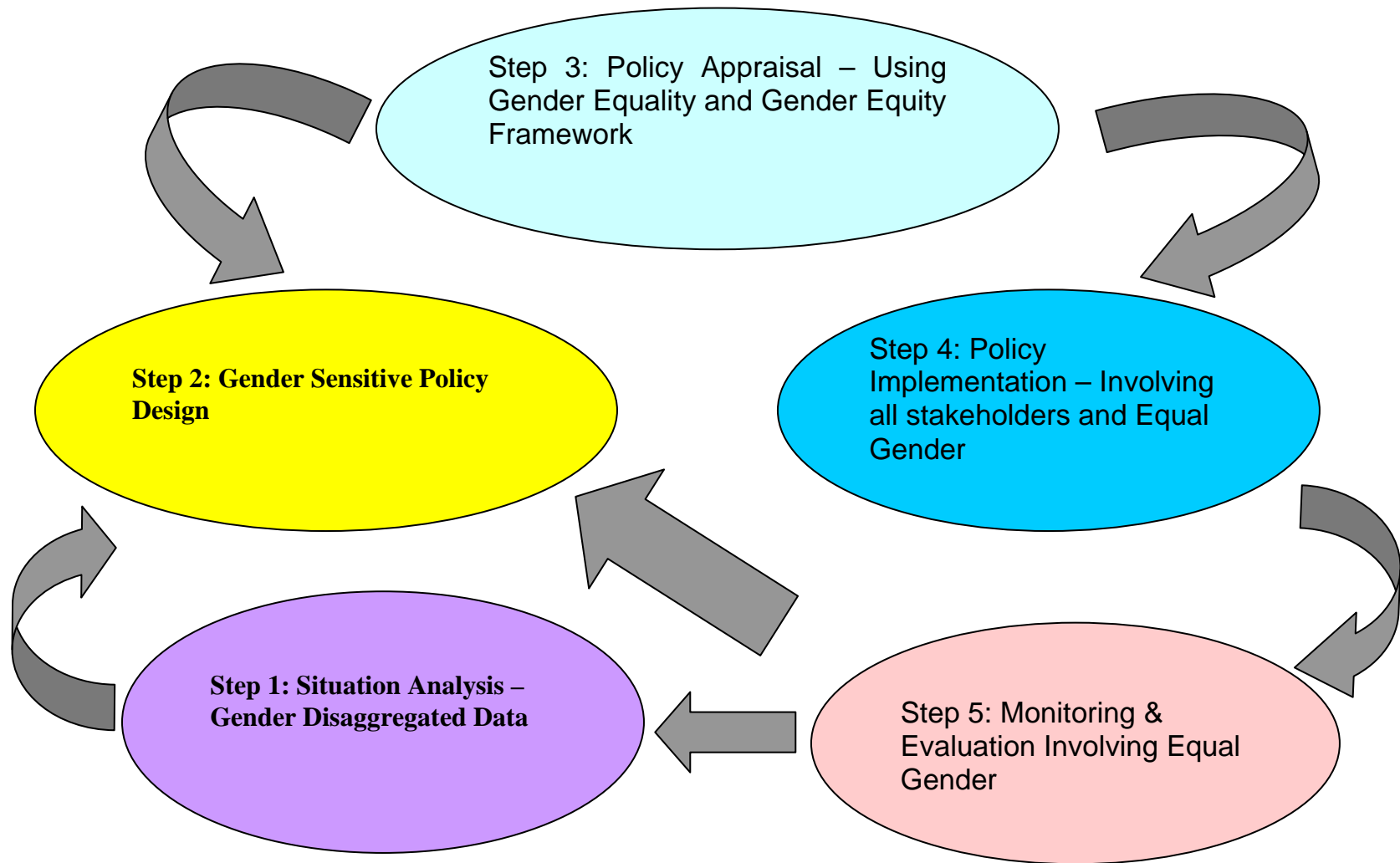
Tool 3: A generic tool providing a situation analysis in a context-specific manner (sectoral, states, LGAs, rural/urban) that justifies targeted gender-mainstreaming action, allows a prioritisation based on severity of gender gaps.

Tool 4 : A tool for re-articulating sectoral goals, targets, strategies for gender-responsiveness and for ensuring that gender concerns are sustained throughout programme and project cycles – preventing policy evaporation.

Tool 5: A gender-aware monitoring and evaluation Work-plan for the Policies and Programmes

*Adapted from national Planning Commission(2005): Gender Mainstreaming Manuals*

**Fig. 5.8. COMPOSITE AND PRACTICAL STEPS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING**  
Adapted from Planning Commission, 2005: Gender Mainstreaming Manual for SEEDS



#### **5.3.4 Periodic Gender Action Plans**

There will be periodic gender action plans (NGAP) to be developed by the gender units of different ministerial departments. This will emanate from periodic gender assessment at all levels, both public and private. The gender assessment will be integrated into other national policy assessment exercises, for instance, the SEEDS Benchmarking, Project Monitoring Reports, Budget Appropriation and independent budget assessments and so on. This is expected to be the basis of fiscal programmes for annual and medium term planning periods at sectoral levels.

#### **5.3.5 Macro-Micro Linkages in Policy and Practice**

In particular, and to achieve sustainable impact of macro-policies and implementation structures in the country, gender equitable participation will be especially emphasized through the application of specific gender quotas for participation at the community level, to include informal sector activities, community development activities and household gender relations. This will be facilitated by the activities and interactions of the Stakeholder Committees and Community-Based Committees at the Local Government, Ward and Community levels.

*An example of best practices in this framework are the Community Implementation Committees of the World Bank Assisted Community Based Poverty Reduction Programme currently operating in some states and which is being expanded to all states of the federation<sup>1</sup>.*

As a reflection of the entrenchment of a gender culture across the board, gender equality in policy and programme conception, formulation, implementation, resource allocation or budgeting processes as well as monitoring and evaluation.

#### **5.3.6 Monitoring And Evaluation Strategies**

Monitoring and evaluation shall be integral part of the National Gender Policy Framework. While monitoring is an internal assessment framework carried out during the life of a programme and/or policy, evaluation is usually a mid-term or post-programme and/or policy impact assessment. Hitherto, both aim at ensuring that programme and/or policy objectives are reached, while strategies could be altered where constraints are observed, especially constraints that could derail the original programme/ policy objectives and goals.

The monitoring and evaluation framework for the National Gender Policy aim at achieving the following -

- Identification of gender indicators which could help track down the progress (or otherwise) of the National Gender Policy;
- Assist stakeholders to operationalise the National Gender Policy as this relates to specific sectors and/or organisations;
- Facilitating regular assessment of impact (negative or positive) of gender mainstreaming programmes and activities on policy targets

- Determining whether targets are met, and whether the envisaged behavioural changes have occurred;
- Monitoring the extent to which resources have been used efficiently or otherwise;
- Measuring the long-term impact of policy on women and men, and the extent to which policy has helped to close the gender-gap, and enhanced social justice.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, through this special committees and Agencies, especially National Centre for Women Development, shall provide the monitoring guidelines for collecting data on monitoring indicators from government departments, the private sector and the civil society organisations. The Ministry shall distribute the monitoring guidelines to all relevant organisations for both collection and dissemination of information on gender equality and social justice issues and concerns. The Ministry shall hold an annual monitoring and evaluation meeting with all stakeholders, while also using this process to undertake an annual review of monitoring and evaluating indicators. The gender-aware monitoring and evaluation tools developed by the National Planning Commission shall guide the operations of an M & E framework for the National Gender Policy being proposed (see Annexes 4a and 4b).

Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism within the national gender equality and social justice framework shall hinge on the following conditions –

- The level of financial and human resources allocated to the monitoring and evaluation process;
- Setting up of effective structures and mechanisms for inter and intra institutional linkages with the Ministry of Women Affairs
- Capacity building for staff who handle gender equality and social justice policies and programmes;
- Quality of data collection and utilisation
- Making data on gender equality and social justice readily available to stakeholders

### **5.3.7. Assessment of Gender Impacts**

#### **Impacts of the Gender Policy**

Both short- and long- term impacts of the National Gender Policy shall be measured looking first at the internal mechanisms created by government and organisations at mainstreaming gender concerns and issues (short term); and the extent to which the gender policy framework has benefited the total society, and/or altered structures that traditionally created social injustice, and women dis-empowerment.

### **Impacts of Policies and Programmes**

There is need, not only to pre-empt the likely differential impacts of government and other institutional policies through ex-ante policy analysis, but also to monitor the impacts of macro policies at the micro level, that is on the lives of women and men at the grassroots. This will require a set of baseline instruments and indicators that is adaptable to any sector or population group.

The above, call for the institutionalization of gender statistics as an instrument of policy at all levels of public and private institutions and the development of appropriate gender indicators. The National Bureau of Statistics, the Planning, Research and Statistics Department of all line Ministries shall collaborate with the NCWD to generate gender specific and sex-disaggregated statistics and other situation reporting within all their statutory data systems. It is noted that already, efforts are being made within the reform of the National Bureau of Statistics to collate and publish all gender-related data into a single volume. This attempt will be constantly augmented by action plan reports from the contemporary macro-policy and sector policy reviews.

#### **5.3.8 Gender Indicators for Gender Impact Assessment**

Effective monitoring and evaluation requires a robust framework of indicators which will derive from the objectives of national and sector specific objectives. Bearing in view that the National Bureau of Statistics will collaborate with the Ministry of Women Affairs to engender the national data bases, it is expected that statistics so developed will be based on expected outcomes of state goals and priorities in all sectors. Two levels of indicators are therefore proposed here for gender assessment.

#### **International indicators**

**a.** The United Nations developed specific indicators which could be used to assess the performance of nation state as regards the achievement of gender equality. For example, the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (1995) established a Gender Development Index (GDI) and a Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). Nigeria is also committed to the implementation of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action with their respective priorities concerns. Some of the indicators from these documents are guiding the actions of national governments, including Nigeria, and against which the country's gender equality progress will be measured. These indicators cover all the priority areas specified in the BPA, and in particular the following –

- Women's participation in political decision-making;
- Women's access to professional opportunities;
- Women's earning power and participation in the economy etc.

**b.** The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided an international commitment to human development in general, and to gender equality in particular. If gender becomes a cross-cutting issue in attaining the MDGs, then countries must provide indicators that could help measure the attainment of the following with due recognition of women and men's needs and concerns –

- Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger;
- Achieving universal primary education;
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women
- Reducing child mortality
- Improving maternal health;
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Developing a global partnership for development

**c.** The World Economic Forum came up with the following critical areas in measuring the extent to which women have achieved equality with men –

- Economic participation;
- Economic opportunity;
- Political empowerment;
- Educational attainment;
- Health and well-being

**d.** The African Centre for Gender and Development has also come up with the African Gender Development Index (AGDI) which consists of:

i. Gender Status Indicators (GSI) in three critical development blocks -

**Social Power** or 'Capabilities' consisting of two components:

- Education with five indicators;
- Health with six indicators

**Economic Power** with three components:

- Income;
- Time-use or employment;
- Access to resources

**Political Power** which takes into account the participation ratio in:

Public Sector:

- Participation of women and men in Executive
- Participation of women and men in Legislature
- Participation of women and men in the judiciary

Civil Society

- The number of women, as compared to men, who are heading or managing NGOs;

- The number of women leading community-based or grassroots associations or unions.

All indicators measure gender differentials only.

ii. The African Governance Progress Scoreboard (AGPS) consists of indicators to track the commitment to global and regional conventions from the aspects of signing, ratifying and domesticating the various protocols.

### **National Indicators**

The national indicators for measuring gender equality and social justice within the country will be guided by the country Constitution, the Macro-policy (currently NEEDS), implementation of this National Gender Policy and other specific policy documents relevant to gender issues and concerns nationally. Importantly, the efforts of the country at domesticating the various international declarations, conventions, and treaties on gender equality and social justice will provide a benchmark for developing these national indicators.

### **CWIQ Indicator**

The newly adopted survey of Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (CWIQ) is an appropriate instrument for assessing gender impacts of policies. This survey framework is currently very narrow and its focus on gender is limited to gender-based violence. The CWIQ framework should be engendered in all its area of coverage by making individuals rather than households the unit of assessment and administering the instrument on female and male economic agents within households and communities. All data analysis should be carried out with gender of respondents as a category of analysis. The indicators of MDG goals should be adapted for expanding the scope and relevance of CWIQ.

### **Nigerian Statistical fact Sheet**

Reports sectoral development indicators. This currently has no gender concerns. Indicators of gender-based participation in sector activities and productivity differences should be incorporated in the profile.

### **Nigerian Human Development Report**

This annual report presents most of the human development indicators of the HDR for Nigeria. The Gender Development Indicator (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) need to be domesticated - modified to reflect the gender indicators that are most relevant to Nigeria.

### **5.3.9 Gender Benchmarking**

Gender indicators shall be incorporated into all instruments for policy benchmarking in the country. Currently, SEEDS benchmarking is being implemented. The Ministry of Women Affairs, in partnership with Development Partners shall ensure that gender indicators are developed and incorporated; while assessors are trained for gender-benchmarking. The funding of Gender Monitors and Observers shall be part of the



government budget for the exercise. Development partners may facilitate these mandates through special funding and technical expertise.

Within this framework, gender responsive strategies shall be adopted for all macro-economic policies, such as is currently done for SEEDS Benchmarking.

**BOX 5.8:**

**GENDER INDICATOR PLAN FOR SEEDS  
BENCHMARKING**

All indicators of programme impacts, programme participation and access to facilities shall be constructed in a sex-disaggregated manner. For instance, indicators for number of new schools or number of trained teachers will be applied in a gender sensitive manner. All state level empirical evidences shall be disaggregated by gender.

Access to social and physical infrastructure shall be assessed for women and for men because of differences in wealth status of women and men, time-use of women and men and gender roles for welfare provisioning are defined for women and for men.

Review of policies and budgeting shall include a review for gender-responsiveness  
Assessment of service delivery shall include delivery of services that promote equal opportunities for women and men.

**5.3.10 Resource Allocation And Resource Mobilisation**

A necessary condition for the success of the proposed National Gender Policy is the availability of resource (human and material) for its operationalisation. Human resource requirement shall include –

- Capacity building for operators of the policy at national, organisational, and local institutional levels, especially in the area of gender mainstreaming;
- A strong communication network amongst stakeholders to facilitate sharing of information and data banks;
- Effective data collection and data utilization within the gender equality and social justice networks
- Adequate staffing of gender equality and social justice institutions.

Adequate financial resources shall be the cornerstone for measuring the success of this policy. It is expected that both governmental (national, state, and local governments) and private sector organisations will mainstream gender budgeting into their respective annual budget items. It is proposed that a certain percentage of government's annual budget (to be determined by the executive council) be put aside for the operation of the National Gender Policy.

Resource support is expected through partnership arrangements that could support gender mainstreaming efforts at institutional and organisational levels, and community advocacy and enlightenment programmes which shall enhance gender equality principles and thereby bringing about changes in traditional gender role relations. Target financial supports are expected from -

- Development Partners;
- Public-Private financing; and
- Civil Society Organisations.

## CHAPTER 6:

### CONCLUSIONS AND FORWARD LOOKING STRATEGIES

#### 6.1. Conclusions

The main thrust of the National Gender Policy (NGP) is to promote gender-sensitive and gender responsive culture in policy planning and national development. A major tool for the required social transformation shall be the promotion of gender mainstreaming in all public and private policies and programming priorities and in all organisational and community cultures in Nigeria. Gender equality principles shall therefore become a cultural norm, while women empowerment shall become a corporate responsibility.

Core strategies for achieving the objectives of the National Gender Policy have been identified as follow-

- Policy reforms through mainstreaming of gender concerns at all levels;
- Gender education and capacity building, so as to ensure necessary technical expertise and positive gender culture;
- Legislative reforms which ensure gender justice and respect for human rights; and
- Economic reforms for enhanced productivity and sustainable development, especially that which addresses the needs of women and children, and other vulnerable groups.

A major challenge is how to move from the policy prescriptions projected in this policy document, to the actualisation of the policy frameworks. Although an elaborate operational framework has been proposed in the policy document, it is also important to note that many noughts need to be tied together because of the overarching institutional restructuring required in order to meet the demands of this policy document. To achieve the policy goals, the following elements must be considered and adhered to –

- Political Will
- Gender as a Core Value for Transforming the Nigerian Society
- Confronting Patriarchy
- Coordination, Networking, and Monitoring

##### 6.1.1. Political Will

Creating a gender responsive and equitable society requires support from the highest level of governance, in particular, the Presidency. The Presidency, the Federal Executive Council, the Legislative and the Judiciary must embrace gender equality principles and practice for any meaningful change to occur. Presently, the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and its organs have the mandate for women empowerment and the entrenching of gender equality principles both in policy and practice. A major challenge that may be facing the Ministry is the extent to which it could facilitate the necessary transformation required for a gender equitable system across sectoral interests (i.e. both within public

and private institutions), and at the grassroots. The success of the gender policy framework therefore depends on the extent to which it attracts high level support in government, and conceiving it within the realities of the government's macro-policy plans, including its resource allocation framework.

### **6.1.2. Gender as a Core Value for Transforming the Nigerian Society**

The National Gender Policy Framework is anchored on gender equality principles, and a process in which women's roles in reproduction and production are not only valued, but are seen as being at the core of the wealth of the nation, and on which national development is anchored. The recognition of women's role in development had earlier led to increasingly diversion of human and material resources at both international and national levels to all segments of the society, including the previously marginalised womenfolk. Despite this apparent preoccupation with women-focused welfare and development programmes and policies, the confines of culture and social traditions, legal, religious and economic structures continue to limit the roles of women and to hinder them from benefiting from the development process. The development reality today, is more emphatic on the truism – *'a nation that is not engendered is endangered'*, more importantly, as the 'gender variable' occupies a central stage of national development.

A major challenge for this National Gender Policy Framework therefore, is confronting traditional structures that continue to impede women in the process of development, and which provide a breeding ground for gender inequalities in our society. Importantly, this policy must be able to clearly show how the 'gender variable' is intimately linked to our development path as a nation, and that to ignore the 'woman's question' in national development policies and plans is an attempt to slow down the nation's development. It is therefore important to embrace 'gender' as a core value for political, and socio-economic transformations.

### **6.1.3. Confronting Patriarchy**

A major task in the implementation of the National Gender Policy is how best to confront patriarchy, exacerbated in the culture of male supremacy. The patriarchal cultural norm remains hidden and protected within traditional institutional structures held in abeyance, and almost in sacredness.

To make a meaningful change in gender role relations, in the pursuit of gender equality culture and principles, men and women must share mutual respect, while there must be a reconstruction of gender power play. In this wise, gender role relations traditionally based on exercise of power over the other gender as a way of life, and as the norm must change for an option of mutuality. This in itself becomes an important tenet of democratic ideals.

The goal of the National Policy Framework is to provide equal opportunities for both women and men, and to change the current gender imbalances which have been oiled by the principles of patriarchy in history. Rather than emphasise the negative situations of women alone, the policy aims at improving the equality between women and men, while

at the same time espousing men to the possible gains of reducing the gender gaps and ensuring gender equality in all facets of life. The society, and in particular men, have a lot to gain by supporting equality for women –

- Improved fatherhood and motherhood, as the state and the private sector share social responsibilities for these;
- A more enduring gender role relations as women and men balance their roles and responsibilities within the private and public spheres of life;
- Freedom of choice and balance of power in matters of sexuality and reproduction
- Exchange of social skills between men and women;
- Improved quality of life at the household level, with talents and potentials of boys and girls properly nurtured and tapped for development;
- Improved leadership terrain through the full use of leadership skills and styles of men and women
- A more humane social terrain as the needs of men and women, old and young, boys and girls, rich and poor become the focus of policies and development plans; and
- A sustainable national development.
- 

#### **6.1.4. Coordination, Networking, and Monitoring**

The mandate for gender equality and women empowerment cuts across sectors, and institutions. A major challenge from this, is how best to ensure that these role functions are effective, and accountable, not only within government, but also within the private sector and the civil society. It is also important that these sectoral and institutional interests share the same understanding of the gender equality and women empowerment vision and mission. This can only be achieved through a well targeted coordination, networking and monitoring efforts. The following become mandatory to ensure effective coordination, networking and monitoring –

- Drawing up of a National Gender Action Plan to be updated every five years, and adaptable into Sectoral Gender Action Plans for public and private institutions (see Annex 2);
- Ensuring a well coordinated gender mainstreaming framework within and across public and private institutions;
- De-centralising gender mainstreaming responsibilities using short, medium, and long – term strategies
- Clearly allocate monitoring and evaluation responsibilities within institutions.
- Use participatory mechanisms throughout the Gender Management System

#### **6.2. Forward Looking Strategies**

The approval of the National Gender Policy is the first step in accomplishing this vision of change and social transformation. It is envisaged that the National Gender Policy shall be operated within the current structures of governance. However, to ensure that the proposed change is more enduring, and for long-term sustainability, it is important to reconsider the structure within which the National Gender Policy shall operate. A major challenge within the present arrangement is how to coordinate the gender mainstreaming

efforts across sectors (public and private) without over-tasking the present structure. Again, it is also important to clearly separate mandates for ‘women empowerment’ and ‘gender equality’, being the two legs of the National Gender Policy. Otherwise, the pursuit of one may over-shadow the other if this process of change is not well articulated.

A solution may be found in creating supportive institutions and/or institutional reforms. It is therefore proposed for the future, the creation of a Department of Gender Equality which remains within the arms of the Ministry of Women Affairs. This Department may be located within the Ministry and/or within the present National Centre for Women Development. Where the latter option is considered, the government may consider changing the name of this centre to – ***National Centre for Gender Equality and Women Development***. The Gender Equality Department is to take on gender equality specific roles. Such roles shall be mainly supervisory (i.e. supervision of activities of ‘Gender Critical Mass’ (GCM) within the Line Ministries and within other government organs), coordination and monitoring of gender indicators within private sector institutions and agencies, documentation (gender statistics and national gender status, working closely with the National Bureau of Statistics); monitoring of gender benchmarking, and mainstreaming of gender equality concerns in national planning (work closely on this with the National Planning Commission), and recommending rewards and sanctions for gender equality index in each sector.

The Gender Equality Department shall define broad operational policies, indicators for the effectiveness, and timeframes for implementation and monitor performance (see Box 6.1. for other specific functions of the Gender Equality Department). Regular reports from this Department will guide intervention activities and programmes to be carried out by the Ministry of Women Affairs, units within the National Centre for Women Development, and other government and private sector institutions.

Although all the institutions (public, private, and community level institutions) are to be involved in collecting and collating gender disaggregated data to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation processes, the Gender Equality Department shall be responsible for the overall coordination of assessing the progress of the implementation of the National Gender Policy, and shall be responsible to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.