

# JOINT PROGRAMME ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Photo: UN/Jan-Patrick Schielek



## EDITORIAL



Dear Reader,  
On 28 July '11, after intensive consultations, the Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment was officially launched.

As UN Resident Coordinator, I am pleased about this important milestone. I am confident that through the Joint Programme the UN system will collectively make a tangible difference in the lives of women and men in Kenya.

The objectives of the programme are twofold, namely; (i) to support national priorities towards the implementation of the gender gains in the Constitution of Kenya and; (ii) to ensure the UN's development assistance in the country is increasingly coordinated and harmonized under one programmatic and budgetary framework in support of national gender priorities.

Aeneas C. Chuma  
UN Resident Coordinator

## Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Kenya

"I came from having nothing to owning and running my business," says Charity Kachanja, a 34 year-old business woman and farmer who has four daughters and lives in Central Province.

At a young age, following the trend of rural-urban migration, Charity moved to Nairobi looking for a better life. Faced with high standards of living and scarcity of jobs, along with her husband she soon returned to Central province. On their small plot of land, they grew just enough food to feed themselves. In 1995, they began a jiko (traditional stove) manufacturing business hoping to increase their income. The business barely broke even, and Charity felt that it could only reach its full potential if they sought formal training on business management.

Through UNDP supported District Business Solutions Centres (DBSC) and the Women in Business and Investment project, Charity was able to receive training on entrepreneurship, finance, marketing, production and managerial skills.

"I now understand how to confidently manage my money and my peo-

ple," Charity comments, as she prepares lunch for her 10 full-time employees.

Women, being the backbone of rural economies in Kenya, play a significant role to ensure their families' well-being. Charity has performed beyond



Charity Njeri Kachanja at her pottery plant.

Photo: UN

expectations, producing 500 jikos a week and making a monthly revenue of Kshs. 600,000 (\$7,500).

"To fight poverty in Kenya, women need to be accepted and supported," remarks Charity. In line with MDG 3, the ultimate goal is to promote the social and economic empowerment of women, as they constitute a vulnerable social category that is critical in sustainable development endeavors.

## New Report on Mainstreaming Gender in Science and Technology

A survey on gender mainstreaming in Science, Technology and Innovations (STI) has revealed gender disparities not only in admissions to higher education institutions but also in employment and promotion of women and girls in technical and science based fields.

The findings of the report entitled 'Mainstreaming Gender in Science and Technology Policies and Programmes in Kenya, published by Kenya's National Council for Science and Technology in collabora-

tion with UNESCO reveal that "the capacity of women to engage in science, technology and innovations in Kenya is grossly under-developed and under-utilized."

Findings in the majority of institutions surveyed indicated a lack of policies on gender mainstreaming. Those who have managed to implement such policies lack specificity on gendered roles and end up abating the gender bias in science and technology. Also missing was resource allocation.

The report recommends urgent measures to address the situation, among them:

- adoption of affirmative action policies to support women's representation in decision making in science and technology institutions,
- establishment of special scholarships for women joining scientific research based institutions or technical training, and
- sensitization of management and policy makers on integration of gender in science and technology.

## Leadership Training for Kenyan Female Members of Parliament



Leadership training participants outside the Swedish Town Hall

Photo: UN Women

Since 2006, UN Women has supported a programme for leadership development for executive women leaders through funding from the Government of Sweden.

A one-week training programme took place in Stockholm, Sweden, between 21 and 27 May 2011. The training, a continuation of Phase I that was held in Mombasa in January 2009, was attended by 12 Kenyan female Members of Parliament - three Ministers (Hon. Dr. Sally Kosgei, Hon. (Prof) Helen Sambili and Hon. Dr.

Naomi Shabaan), four Assistant Ministers (Hon. Linah Kilimo, Hon. Beatrice Kones, Hon. (Prof). Margaret Kamar and Hon. Wavinya Ndeti), the Assistant Deputy Speaker (Hon. Dr. Joyce Laboso) and four nominated MPs. Four members of staff from UN Women were also present.

The programme aimed to strengthen the leadership capacity of female members of parliament, explore the link between gender and leadership and allow the parliamentarians to share experiences and learn from Swedish parliamentarians and other female leaders.

Institutions visited as part of the programme included Segeltorpsskolan School where participants learnt about the leadership style of the school management team, Uppsala University, whose representatives gave an inspiring talk on gender equality in University settings, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish Parliament, which currently has 47% female representation.

One participant commented, "I learned to appreciate myself and others. It was a wonderful experience, especially sharing our challenges in leadership".

### For more information, please contact:

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